

Chapter 0: Introduction (Luna's Story)

Princess Luna walked through the empty remains of her former castle in the middle of the Everfree Forest. Broken glass and crumbled walls littered the castle and she soon found herself standing in front of a broken staircase that has been magnificent and the main entrance to the throne room, but now it wasn't even a memory of its once former glory. With a quick flap of her wings she took herself to the top and looked on the throne. It was still standing but small parts of it had fallen apart, the rest of the room didn't fare as good. Glass splinters covered the floor and the walls just barely stood upwards, the carpet that had led to the throne was since long gone and only dust led the way forward.

Her mind was full of memories of how it had once looked like and seeing it in this state made her feel sad. The first time she was there since her banishment she didn't think of it much but now she could see it clear. Close to the throne shattered remains of the elements of harmony that she had once wielded laid, even if she could find a way to repair them it was too late for her to ever wield them again. Slowly she moved forward to the broken glass window behind the throne leaving only hoof prints in the dust after her. The look outside did nothing to improve her mood, the dark forest stretched as far as her eyes could see and the exterior of the castle wall had been taken back by the forest, a forest in which the sun nor the moon ever shined. Darkness lasted forever here but it was not the the darkness of the night that loomed here, it was something else.

Saddened by the state of her castle she moved towards the broken staircase when she heard large crashing sounds from downstairs. She figured it was just a wall or some of the old bookcases that finally has given in and such she flew down the staircase without thinking about it. Downstairs two different kind of hoof prints in the dust, one looked like her own but the second looked much larger and there being no way of it being hers.

"This wasn't here when I first arrived," she said to herself loud enough so that only she could hear it. A kind of desire to find out what could have caused these hoof prints rose within her. She

used her magic and summoned forth a small orb of light that hovered high over the large hoof prints. The orb slowly started moving in the direction of the hoof prints, she followed after thinking about what kind of creature could have caused it and whether it had found a home in her old castle or if was one of the forests creatures.

The orb led her deeper and deeper within the castle and after every room she could recall beautiful memories of what had happened a thousand years ago, times when the halls and room of the castle was filled with the voices and laughs of ponies, now their emptiness caused an emptiness in her heart. Seeing her entire castle like this just made her even more sadder and wonder why Celestia would let the castle fall into this state, she knew that she would never let her sisters castle look like this if she could do anything about it but she's unsure about whether Celestia would do the same, looking at the state of the castle Luna came to the conclusion that her sister wouldn't be doing that. Nevertheless those thoughts didn't stop her from wanting to find out what the creature is, it actually made her more inclined to find the creature, maybe she could find more friendship from it then that which she receives from her sister.

She went further and further in to the castle but every hall and every room she recognised even in this destroyed state, soon enough she found herself standing at the entrance to the basement. The orb continued down but she hesitated a little bit. As much as she knew the castle inside and out, being a royal princess always prevented her from going down in to the dirt that was the basement a thousand years ago. She wondered if the stories she had heard when she was younger about what was going on down there, it no longer scared her but she felt bad that sometime in her life she had allowed something like that to happen to ponies. Because of that she decided to go down there, it didn't matter if she could never make her wrongs right, she just wanted to see with her own eyes the horrors she had allowed to be done.

She was breathing heavy when her last hoof touched the dusty basement floor, the darkness was thick and not even the light from the orb was enough to light up the room, so she used more

of her magic to make her horn a light source with a bright cobalt blue glow so that she could finally see how it looked like down there. Small prison cells were lined up against both walls giving room for only a small pathway in between. All the cells contained a bed but nothing else, some cells had completely fallen apart and some partly while others looked new with the exception of the dust covering everything. The entire place looked like no pony had ever been down there for a very long time, not even the weird hoof prints from earlier yet the orb continued moving, but she didn't care about that anymore, she just wanted to find out more about the place. At the end of the pathway between the cells was a small door opening in which the orb flew through, the cells didn't worry her even the slightest, she had always known that castle had a dungeon but she had expected to see more remains in them, but nothing indicated that any pony had ever been in them.

Beyond the door opening lied a small room where she saw torture equipment of all kinds, even some that she had never heard of. The orb was hovering in the middle of the room and it seemed like it had reached its end goal, from what she could see there was no other door than the one she just came in through. On one of the walls steel chains hung with room for four sets of hooves to be trapped, dusty just like everything else in the room but with no sign of it ever being used, when she looked closer she realised that none of these things looked like they ever had been used but it didn't change the way she felt.

"I'm sorry for causing you this," she said to no pony in particular in a low sad voice. "I never knew you yet I'm the cause of this, I'm truly sorry." Like expected no pony replied to her, she was truly alone in the castle and she started to wonder if the weird hoof prints had been a figment of her imagination. From upstairs the sound of a large crash similar to the one from before reached her ears and she quickly turned around towards the door. The cobalt blue light showed nothing out of the ordinary in the cell room yet she felt uneasy about the situation. A heavy blow caught her off guard and hit her on the throat, the hit made her fall down to the ground and glide all the way to the wall, the hit also forced her to

have to catch her breath and lose track of her attacker if she had seen whoever it was. With her throat hurting she tried to stand up but instead she felt a powerful magical force lifting her up. All her garments and her crown flew away and no matter how hard she fought back with her magic the grip on her didn't budge. In fear she could only helplessly watch as both her front hooves got locked into the steel chain with a tight grip, shortly thereafter the same thing happened with her hind hooves and she was left hanging in the air with the chains holding her up.

With the magical force leaving she focused her magic on the chains but they wouldn't budge, with a last try both her orb and her horn died out leaving the room completely dark. Worry was reaching her as she could feel the cold breath of somepony being nearby, probably the one who did this to her and she feared what would happen to her.

"The time for revenge is now Princess Luna!" screamed what looked like a disgusting ghost as it flew towards her but then dissipated when it touched her and left her feeling cold. She realised that she was alone in the darkness with no pony ever coming to look for her here.

Chapter 1: Books and Parties (Twilight's Story)

"Pinkie Pie!" Twilight Sparkle screamed at the pink pony who was jumping around in the library overexcited for the upcoming party. Already had she started preparing even if she's not one of the organisers of the party she still had brought with her various party stuff in huge quantities, they all lied in the library not only making it hard to move in there they also make it almost impossible for Twilight to grab the books she want, even with the help of magic. She was trying to read on of many rare books that she had been tasked with taking care of by princess Celestia. "I can't concentrate with you jumping around making so much noise. This is a very important book which in detail describes Equestrian history during

the times of Nightmare Moon, no other book does that so it is of uttermost importance that I finish reading it."

"Oh Twilight stop being so boring and lets party!" Pinkie said with enthusiasm while containing to jump around and accidentally touching a few of the stacked up party stuff which falls down with a crash. "These books will be here waiting for you but this party will only be once. We can't let Rarity down by not being fully prepared. We need to party before the party."

"I don't believe it will be that kind of party," Twilight said sighing. "Rarity likes to keep her parties very elegant. So can relax for a moment? There's a lot of good and valuable books here, there's even ones about partying where you might learn a thing or two from."

"I already know everything about partying Twilight," Pinkie responded but didn't stop her jumping for even a single second. "No book can learn me anything about partying, but I can learn them a lot about partying. Where's the books?" Pinkie didn't wait for an answer from Twilight but dived right into a pile of party stuff and books. The purple unicorn could do nothing else but sigh and direct attention her attention to one of the rare books. It was a book named *The Dark Ages of Equestria*, it featured a kingdom named Bolivianite which lied in close proximity to Canterlot that was under Queen Ametrine's rule for a time, she was a unicorn with close ties to both princess Celestia and Luna. When Nightmare Moon appeared the kingdom fell under her darkness and switched sides, in the end the kingdom was betrayed and left to crumble in its ruins. She got so in to the book that not even Pinkie's constant talking disturbed her attention.

"Pinkie!" she yelled to the pink pony's surprise.

"What is it Twilight?" Pinkie asked and climbed out of the pile of stuff she was under. "Is it finally time for the party? These books are really boring, they only repeat things that I already know of."

"We need to find Spike immediately and send a letter to warn princess Celestia," Twilight

responded stressfully. Her hear was beating heavily as she tried to take in what she had just read but couldn't, instead she found herself panicking over it. "Spike!" Her yell got no reply so with her magic she moved a lot of books and party things out of the way hoping that maybe the little dragon had found himself stuck underneath the mess.

"You do remember that princess Celestia took Spike with her on a trip to the outskirts of the lands?" Pinkie asked and tried to calm down the panicking unicorn. Twilight had for a moment forgotten that her assistant was out of town together with the one pony who could solve this crisis. She stopped in her tracks and listened to the words that the pink pony was telling her, they didn't mean much but for some reason she couldn't explain they made her think clearer but she was still heavily worried over what might happen.

"I believe princess Luna is in great danger and I don't even think she knows about it," she hastily said and used her magic to transport the book she had just read. "We need to find a way to warn to warn but the latest word from Canterlot said that she went away on some secret trip so warning princess Celestia needs to be our to priority, if there's anyone that can help Luna it will be her. Do you have any idea where princess Celestia might have gone?"

"Not a clue," Pinkie quickly responded. "I thought you knew, but what is it that's upsetting you so Twilight? It can't be that bad?"

"Look at this," Twilight said and pointed with her hoof to the open pages of the book. "It tells the story of a kingdom that joined Nightmare Moon's quest but was later destroyed and the inhabitants were never heard from again. The pony who wrote this book remembers how he heard queen Ametrine's last screams." She looked over to Pinkie who was concentrating on reading the pages.

"When the princess is all alone," Pinkie recited from the book. "Travels and parties will keep those close to her occupied and her castle will be her final resting place." She jumped up looking like she was once again ready to party. "Twilight, it's just a book. Don't believe everything you read from

there." The words annoyed Twilight who remembered that no pony listened to her when she warned about Nightmare Moon and she turned out to be right that time. She wasn't going to give up easily this time as she had intention of not trying to stop the catastrophe before it happens. With her magic she tried to find the correct geography book, she remember reading about some ruins of a former castle in one of them but she couldn't remember which one. Some of the books almost hit the jumping Pinkie Pie on the way which made the pink pony stop.

"What are you looking for Twilight?" she asked and tried to see which books her friend was transporting.

"A certain book about Equestria's geography" the purple unicorn replied while quickly reading through a few books. "But I thought you didn't care, it's all fiction and stories to you?" Almost immediately she regretted her harsh choice of words, but she held back her desire to apologise seeing an opportunity to get her friend on her side so she read through a few other books pretending she wasn't listening to her friend.

"You're my friend Twilight," Pinkie said saddened by the words. "Of course I care, but sometimes you can go a little bit too far with the book reading. But I'll help you look for the book." With a magnificent jump she dived down into a pile of party stuff and emerged with a large book in her mouth. "Is it this one?" The words came out muffled and she almost dropped the book in the process. Twilight took one small look at the book still pretending to be mad and not so interested, on the cover it said, *Outskirts of Canterlot*. She remembered having read it once but finding it to be quite boring, it didn't provide any good details on the areas nor was there any history associated with them, big parts of the maps even lacked names even though it was clear that historical monuments existed there. Among one of them was an unnamed ruin at the size of a large castle that was quite close to Canterlot. The realisation struck her like lightning and she quickly snatched up the book from her friend.

"How do you always find these books so quickly Pinkie?" she asked and started turning

the pages of the book. "Here it is, look!" She pointed her hoof towards a page with a map detailing Canterlot and its outskirts, in an unnamed part of the map separated from Canterlot by a large village was lines detailing that something in the size of a large castle existed there. She turned the page to where pictures of the map was listed and among those was a small picture of a large ruin that looked like it had once been a castle. "That has to be the place where Ametrine led her kingdom from. The solution to saving Luna has to be hidden somewhere in there."

"Twilight, I don't understand what you're talking about," Pinkie said with a confused look.

"Don't you see?" Twilight asked. "Luna will get in trouble when her friends are gone, the travel and parties the book wrote about is princess Celestia's travel and Rarity's party, we have to reach the ruins before Rarity's party starts or else we might be too late." She slammed the book together with a large sound and grabbed her backpack and thought over what might be needed. It was a long way to go and not much time left which really worried her but with a plan and a destination she felt a lot safer.

"Didn't book also say it would happen in Luna's castle?" Pinkie asked while reading the first book trying to find the text again. "Shouldn't we be heading there instead? If Luna is anywhere it seems to indicate that she is in her castle." Pinkie's realisation hit Twilight so hard that she stopped packing her backpack and let the items she kept floating in the air fall to ground. She thought about that it would be faster reaching Luna's castle in the Everfree Forest but a lot more dangerous.

"Does it say anything about how it can be stopped?" she asked as she realised that even if they were to reach Luna they had no idea how to save her or what they were going up against, Ametrine had lived for a thousand years ago and it has to be some really powerful magic that they were going up against. The thought of going up against magic stronger than Luna's scared her. For a second she thought about the elements of harmony but with Celestia gone she had no way to reach them.

"It says that there is a spell hidden in the library of Bolivianite, it is the only thing that

can stop whatever spell Ametrine used," Pinkie said as she closed the book and pushed it over to the purple unicorn.

"That explains what we have to do," Twilight said and put the book in her backpack but had to remove a few items as the book took up almost the entire backpack. "We need to reach the ruins and that now, Rarity's party will have to wait. The fastest way in reaching there is to take the train to Canterlot, then we might have to walk but if we're lucky we might get some of the guards to give us a ride there. Come on." With that she moved out of the library out to a sleepy Ponyville where the sun was setting down, she felt excited, worried and scared. She was going up to something completely unknown for her and that scared her as she had no idea what the powers she might be going up against is, but even with that in mind she couldn't erase Luna from her mind and what might be going to happen, she makes herself feel a little bit better thinking about learning a new spell.

"We can't miss Rarity's party Twilight!" Pinkie yelled from inside the library. "Rarity will be very sad if we don't show up."

"Pinkie it's more important to save Luna, Rarity will understand," Twilight responded and used her magic to fly her pink friend out of the library despite protests. "It is a high society party, I doubt you'll even remotely like it, so it's no big lose for you."

"Fine," Pinkie answered like she was really disappointed. "But you owe me a party when we get back."

"Don't worry Pinkie you'll get it," Twilight said sighing. "I think Luna will throw you a royal party after we save her." She let her friend down to the ground as it was starting to get exhausting having her floating in the air. Without further due they both ran towards the train station while Pinkie mentioned lots of things that they would be missing by not going to the party.

Chapter 2: Memories (Luna's Story)

The sun was standing high in the sky as Princess Luna was standing on a grass field outside of a beautiful castle that stretched up to the sky. Windows existed on every floor with magnificent colours and motives of the night. At the top towers reached up for the sky with signs of a half moon at the very top of the roof. The entrance was filled with glowing decorations and a well kept road led to it. Around the castle a forest that recently had started growing surrounded it but it would take ages before it would be fully grown.

"This, this is my castle," Luna said to herself almost crying over seeing it like this. She remembered it very well and how Celestia had helped her raised the castle so that both could live there. It was different from the beaten down castle she had just recently been in. "Could it have been a dream?" She couldn't make out how she could have gone from being trapped in the basement to being free standing in front of the castle from a thousand years ago. All her memories from after the banishment was still there and nothing felt like a dream, the last thing she saw was some weird ghost like being flying towards her and then only darkness. The thought of what happened to her scared her, she could come up with tens of different reasons for how she got there but none of them were pleasant.

From the distance the sound of a carriage coming towards the castle reached her and thinking it might be the same creature again she directed her attention towards it. The carriage was gold coloured with red rubies decorating the door with black windows that were impossible to see through. Two beat up pegasi mares was pulling it and it looked like they might collapse any second. To her surprise it looked like the carriage didn't notice her which made her relieved but she couldn't bear seeing the pegasi be treated that way so she made up a plan to save them.

The carriage stopped at the castle's entrance where a blue unicorn with a green coloured mane and tail came out of the castle to welcome the carriage. The unicorn was a mare and she looked like she was raised in a high society, she reminded Luna of someone she had known a long time ago but she couldn't exactly remember.

The unicorn bowed down in front of the carriage door that opened and a galant red unicorn mare with a long blood red mane and tail, the red unicorn's size matched the one of Luna's something that was very rare. She was wearing a long red dress decorated with gemstones that covered half her body that made it impossible to see her cutie mark, wrapped around her horn a large golden crown was sitting dazing everypony who would look at it. Behind her a mare and a colt, both earth ponies jumped out of the carriage holding up the back of the red unicorn's dress with their mouth so it wouldn't touch the ground.

"My presence has been requested here," the red unicorn said with a tone of superiority to the bowing unicorn. "Your queen better have those plans ready by now, I grow impatient of waiting and you'll be the one taking the punishment."

"Right this way my queen," the bowing unicorn said and led the red unicorn followed by the earth ponies in through the castle door which closed behind them with a large slam. The two pegasi started slowly turning the carriage around while talking to each other, none of the words were nice but it seemed deserving from what they had to go through.

With an open opportunity Luna slowly approached the pegasi trying not to scare them away. No other pony was nearby and if there was any guards up on the castle walls she couldn't see them.

"Do not fear, I'm here to help you," Luna said to the pegasi who ignored her and continued to talk bad about some queen named Ametrine, the name rang a bell in her head but she was unable to recall where she had heard it before. Instead she repeated what she had said to the pegasi but this time in a higher voice so that it would be unable for them to not hear her. But still they acted like she

hadn't said anything, if it weren't for the fact they were talking to each other she would have thought that they were deaf. Once again she repeated her words but in a more annoyed tone. The two pegasi simply kept on talking to each other and walked right towards her like they didn't see her. She was too annoyed at them to kindly step aside so she remained where she stood and watched how they without caring walked into her.

The impact didn't hurt as she thought it would, in fact she didn't feel anything. The two pegasi had walked right through her and she couldn't understand how it was possible, did she not exist? She fought the thought out of her head, refusing to accept it she decides to find out what is going on and with her only clue being the red unicorn she sees no other way than to follow her.

She remembered very well the first time she and Celestia walked through the castle doors for the first time, it was a beautiful event for both of them and one they shared for a long time thereafter. But now there was no happiness for her by walking through the doors, only fear of what she had become. She was incapable of opening the door and had to walk right through it, that it even crossed her mind she had to thank the two pegasi for but it really scared her, she really felt like she was a ghost, one that can observe everything but that no pony ever will see, hear or even touch.

The grand entrance hall was full of ponies running around carrying multiple things to different room of the castle. On the floor a giant red carpet lied leading the way to the stairs, the roof was painted with moons but she recalled that once there had been both moons and suns on the roof, her foolishness then made it go away. She really hoped that she wouldn't have to see it again, that it wouldn't be her punishment for what she had done. The lights on the walls weren't bright and gave the room a sense of darkness, she thought that she would remember those that had served her but to her dismay she didn't recognise any of the ponies running through the room.

She figured that there would only be one way to that the red unicorn could have gone, somepony being called queen would not settle any less than going directly to the throne room. The

staircase looked familiar to the broken one she had visited earlier but it still ignited memories within her. How she and Celestia for the first time ran up on them chasing each other to the chock of the guests, or how she and her sister used to meet respectable together for the first time by standing on those very steps.

It was when I was young and foolish, she thought for herself and tried to walk up the stairs, to her chock her hoof simply went through the stair and touched down on some kind of ground beneath it. Once again she was forced to fly up the stairs but when she carefully landed her hooves on the second floor she didn't fall through but could walk on it. How this thing worked she had no idea but she figured she had to find out if she couldn't find a way to get out of it. With quick steps she moved to the throne room fearing what she might find there.

The door was closed when she arrived but it was of no issue for her as she simply walked through it and ended up in a large room but badly lit. The room was mostly empty with the exception of a window behind the throne with a large moon inscribed on it. On the floor a red carpet led the way to the throne. On it a younger version of herself sat, they looked almost alike but the younger version had a lighter coat, cobalt blue coat and she was still wearing all her garments. In front of the throne stood the red unicorn and it seemed like they were communicating.

"Celestia should be the least of your concern," the younger Luna said with a tone that gave away overconfidence. "I'll easily be rid of her, no it is your task that should worry you, it is of uttermost importance that Canterlot falls."

"She is your sister after all, are you sure old feelings won't submerge when you face her?" the red unicorn asked with respect.

"She was my sister but she is so no longer, she thinks she can hide in her new castle. I got rid off] every trace of her from this castle and I shall do so with her new one as well. Soon her precious day shall be but a distant memory as the night rules." The younger Luna stands up from the throne and closely inspects the red unicorn with suspicion. "But why you Ametrine? You have served me well but

I'm not the only one you have served, why do you want to get rid of Celestia? Power or is it something else?"

"My queen Luna," Ametrine replied. "My daughter is held prisoner in Canterlot, Celestia has refused my requests to come and see her. For this I will see her burn in her own sun so that I can be reunited with my daughter. That is why I turn to you, queen Luna."

"Your ambition is strong and your cause is just," the younger Luna said and relocated herself to the window. With her left front hoof she touched the window which for a second glowed with a cobalt blue light, a red ruby had been inscribed on the window next to the moon. "As an agreement to our cooperation. Together we will see our enemies burn and your daughter will be freed. Now go and ready your army, tomorrow both our forces will march on Canterlot and rip open its gates." She gave away a loud laugh that gave a distaste in Luna's mouth, she recalled laughing in the same crazy way and all the evils that followed thereafter. But the conversation and the window was things she only had small fragments of.

Is my memory really so bad after a thousand years? she thought while watching Ametrine walk out of the room. Something with the red unicorn woke up memories of destruction from within. But it wasn't her that was the cause of the red unicorn named Ametrine who laughed as everything burned and chaos ensued. An image appeared in her head full of fear and mistrust, of how she and Celestia together defeated Ametrine, it was her first real fight without the elements of harmony. She was scared but her sister gave her the strength she needed to pull through, but even now just watching Ametrine returned all the fear she had felt then. *Theses memories, why did I repel them? Why do they come back now when it is all too late? She is beyond evil.*

"Thank you my queen," Ametrine who had stopped at the door said calmly and then went through. Two guards helped escort her out and soon she was gone.

"We shall see Ametrine, queen of nothing," the younger Luna said when she was sure that

no pony could hear her. "Before I defeat Celestia I will have you burn and your kingdom crumble under my hooves. I have not forgotten who you are nor do I take kindly to liars, your daughter is in Celestia's care by her own will, apparently you didn't treat her very nice. But this will all be of the past soon enough as the everlasting night will rule you all." She laughed again and black light started shining around her horn. It rapidly spread and for a minute it held her entire body hostage.

When the black light disappeared Luna was faced with watching her biggest mistake in life, a black creature was standing fully armoured where the younger Luna recently had been. There was no doubt in her mind of who the creature was but she didn't dare to look away, she wanted to face her mistakes on her own.

"Now Celestia you shall know how it feels to not be loved," Nightmare Moon said laughing and then with an unnatural speed she flew through the window which broke into thousands of pieces, most of the pieces flew outside but some of them found their way in and a small glass piece which had a small sun inscribed on it reached Luna.

It looks like I didn't do as good job as I thought I did, she thought with tears in her eyes as all her thoughts now moved to her sister as she watched it closely. *Celestia, I am so sorry.* With the thoughts the walls around her started breaking apart and turning into nothingness, she could only helplessly watch as it all break apart with her last thoughts being of her sister, then everything went dark.

Luna felt her legs aching as they were held up by chains, she slowly opened up her eyes but saw only darkness. *It must have been a dream,* she thought as she pulled the chains in an attempt to get free. When that failed she tried to at least bring the room some but even her magic failed. "We know you're in here, show yourself." It had taken her the dream to figure it out but she finally understood now. In front of her a translucent unicorn glowing red. Its eyes watched her closely and she knew who it was and could only fear what would happen next as some of the stories she heard about the unicorn came back to her memory. "Queen Ametrine!"

"You stupid princess," the translucent pony said angrily in a voice that hurt Luna's ears. "You're still as stupid as always, I tried to make you remember, to have you begging for mercy and forgiveness for what you did. But no your stupidity once again comes through." It slowly moved around in the room. All Luna could see was it moving around so she once again started pulling in the chains in another attempt to get free and escape.

"If you're not Ametrine than who are you and what have we done to you?" she asked trying to get answers on what is going on. "If you're sad you should see how we have it. But trying to make it better by hurting others won't make it better for you, we learned it the hard way, please don't make the same mistake we did."

"Quiet you fool," the red glowing pony said and stopped in her tracks. "If you cared you would know but you do not care, you walk around in disguise all day long pretending to be somepony else but in truth you are and will always be Nightmare Moon, you are evil in it's true form and evil needs to be banished. Prepare now as I shall be your end."

"You don't want to do this," Luna replied pulling harder in her chains and trying to use magic as the translucent pony slowly moved closer to her. She knew that no matter how much she tried to get free it was all in vain but she didn't want to just give up so she kept on trying wondering why the pony was so slow was it to scare her?

"Intruders, no it cannot be!" the glowing pony said in frustration to Luna's surprise. "Mother, I'm coming for you." The pony stopped glowing and left only darkness but for a split second Luna could see the shape of a red unicorn mare in her size running away.

Why did she run off like that? Luna wondered but was thankful for it, with the unicorn being gone she tried using her magic again to set her free and with a click the chains released her hooves and she fell down to the ground. Nothing more than her legs hurt from being stuck like that so she lid up the room and took off after the red unicorn.

The dust on the floors revealed that multiple set of hooves had ran there, all of them was in the same size but only one of the sets were leading out of the basement so she had an easy time following. They led all the way to the castle doors where they ended on the hard ground of the forest road. The moon was the only source of light in the darkness so Celestia was doing her duties even while away, but Luna couldn't think about that now so she checked around to see if she could spot the red unicorn and in a small clearing she saw her running into the darkness of the trees and disappear. She could think of nothing else to do so she followed the mare into the Everfree Forest to all the dangers that lurk inside the darkness.

Chapter 3: Recruit With Secrets (Twilight's Story)

The wind was breezing through Twilight's mane as she sat in the train towards Canterlot with her head out of the window looking at the dark sky with its star formations and the moon that constantly reminding her of why she's here. Behind her Pinkie Pie was screaming out random words as the train quickly closed in on Canterlot Station. There were a few other ponies in the same wagon as them, some of them sleeping with earplugs and others reading a newspaper or simply looking out the window. Canterlot was like always a beautiful view that gave Twilight joy from seeing, it saddened her that her visit her would be so short.

Pinkie was the first pony out of the train as it stopped on the empty station, high lamppost gave the station some light but even so it was very dark but Twilight restrained herself from using magic to light up her way as the guards most likely wouldn't take kindly to it. Whenever princess Celestia was away from Canterlot the security heightened by quite a bit but she that would require guards and she was incapable of seeing any like there usually is during the night.

"Come Pinkie, it's this way," she said and walked past the main road to the castle. High music was coming from some of the houses they walked past and it sounded like a lot of ponies were partying tonight, this made Pinkie excited as she had prepared the entire day to party only to get

disappointed but she managed to somehow keep herself from jumping in at the nearest party.

"Where do you think everypony is?" Pinkie asked and looked around her. "Usually these streets are full of ponies."

"I wish I knew," Twilight responded but kept on walking without paying much attention to the empty streets. "It seems like they all are partying, but even during the night the streets are never this empty. Either way, we have to hurry up or else we might be too late. I know of a shop nearby that is open all the time, we can get some supplies that we might need from there."

It took a few minutes of walking but finally she noticed the sign to the for her well known shop that had supplied her many books for free that she couldn't get anywhere else, in exchange for the free books she had carefully spread the word of the shop among the royals but even then the shop never really picked up business.

The door to the shop was a glass door with a sign that said *Open* so she opened up the door which easily glided up without a sound. They both walked in where a well lit shop awaited them, right in front of the door was a desk with the cash register and some of the things the shop sells on top of it but no pony was to be seen.

"Anypony here?" Pinkie yelled and jumped behind the desk to see if somepony had fallen asleep there. Twilight went instead to the back of the shop where she knew the books were being kept. Not much had been changed since she was there as a filly, she even recognised some of the items that were for sale.

Business isn't very good here, she thought as she moved deeper in. The books were kept on two large bookcases and was properly lined up in alphabetical order. From the looks of it no pony was back there and there would need to be a hidden doorway or something. *Weird, they have never left the shop unattended like this*. With an ease touch of her magic she checked the walls which were solid with no indication of anything hidden.

"Finally safe," she heard a mare's voice from the entrance saying, it did not sound like the high pitched voice that Pinkie has nor did it sound like the shops owners village voice, it was more Canterlot like. She quickly moved back to see who it was that had just arrived but she was still prepared that it might be somepony that didn't want anything. Hiding behind a drawer she saw a white unicorn around the same size as princess Luna with a pink long mane and tale and a cutiemake consisting of three fleurs de lis, one large yellow and two smaller purple ones.

"Who are you?" Twilight asked. "And what is going on here? Where is everypony?" The white unicorn jumped out of surprise when she noticed Twilight.

"You're not like them are you?" she asked with a fear in her voice. "Please, I wasn't meant to be running. My hooves are all ruined and I even dropped my new dress."

"Oh, a new friend." Pinkie jumped over the desk where she had been searching and shook the white unicorns hoof. "I'm Pinkie Pie and this is my bestest friend Twilight Sparkle. Do you like parties? Oh, I love parties, we should have a party right now." She gave the white unicorn no chance at all to say anything and it looked like she was anywhere near stopping.

"Pinkie!" Twilight yelled to get her friend to be quiet for a minute. "I apologise for her behaviour, I hope she didn't scare you."

"No parties, please," the white unicorn said with her entire body shaking and tears in her eyes. "I never asked for this, they all party and they want me to do it as well. I don't want this."

"We're not going to hurt you. Pinkie lock the door and be on the look out, we need to figure out what is going on here." She tried to sound as calm as possible but in truth it was scaring her as well, a pony fearing for her life was hiding close by and the streets being completely empty. She figured that there had to be a logical reason for but it was hidden from her and that scared her, not knowing. "Do you know what is going on here?" The white unicorn didn't look like she was in any shape to talking but there was no other way.

"They're, they're all partying," the scared unicorn managed to say. "They wanted me to party with them, but when they start partying they cannot stop. They hunted me here, I knew of no other place to hide. I'm completely ruined." A few teardrops fell to the ground and Twilight realised that the unicorn didn't know more than she was telling, she had just been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"What's your name?" she asked while trying to figure out how it all was connected. *If everypony is partying the streets will be empty, that explains the loud music we heard but why would all ponies want to party?* She puzzled it all quickly together while waiting for an answer, first she came to the conclusion that it must have to be something with the music but since she and Pinkie heard and haven't started partying she quickly scratched that idea.

"Fleur de Lis," the white unicorn said after a period of silence. "That's my name. I remember seeing you two at the Canterlot Garden Party, you had that dress, didn't you?" Twilight gave a small smile that someone like Fleur would actually remember her from such a big event.

"That was me," she replied lightly. "It's nice to meet you officially Fleur de Lis." She noticed a smile starting to form on Fleur's face and she remembered that they had entered the shop for a reason. Even if the owners aren't there they would still need the items.

This might be seen as stealing but I'll pay them when everything returns to normal, she thought and picked up a small backpack. In it she placed a rope, a map of Canterlot and some candy that looked old together with binoculars and a compass.

"Twilight, we got some ponies wanting to get in through the window!" Pinkie yelled and Fleur started screaming in fear. Twilight interrupted what she was doing and took a look at the window just as a hoof pierced through, it didn't make the glass fall apart but a large hole was created and it looked like the rest of the glass would break down any second. Multiple ponies stood on the side of the window, some of them she recognised from when she lived at Canterlot and two of them from the train ride earlier.

"We need to find an alternative way out of here and that fast," Twilight said trying to keep

cool. Whatever was affecting those ponies was something she didn't want to be near, not until she had completely understood what it was.

"I know a secret way out of here," Fleur managed to say in a more a calm tone but she still looked very scared. "Some of us higher ups use it to get here so that we aren't seen by the lower ones entering a store like this."

"It's better than nothing," Twilight responded as the glass crashed into a thousand pieces. "Open it up fast, I'll hold them back." Fleur ran to the back of the store with Pinkie following behind as the other ponies started climbing through the broken window. Twilight could see nothing strange about them but she still seated the backpack next to the one already on her back and created an energy shield separating her from the others ponies with all the strength she could muster. The purple shield hold as the ponies recklessly attacked it and quickly started draining her strength. She was trying to look for anything that might explain their behaviour but all she could see was ponies flocking the entire street. All of them were unicorns, not a single pegasi or earth pony was to be seen. Her strength significantly reduced when the unicorns started using their magic against her shield. *They're too strong*, she thought as she started seeing cracks in the shield.

"Twilight hurry up, we found it," Pinkie yelled from further in the shop and the purple unicorn didn't hesitate a second as she allowed her shield to fall to save strength and started running. From behind she heard how the unicorns were recklessly destroying things in their path. Further into the shop one of the bookcases had fallen down and where it had stood a small metal hatch was open where Pinkie was standing and screaming at her to hurry. As she had no idea how far behind the unicorns were and with them being capable of using magic she glided to the hatch while screaming at Pinkie to move. The floor burned her skin until she fell down into the hole hidden by the hatch and glided down a long steep slide. The hatch closed with a crash and Pinkie quickly joined her on the slide screaming happily as she passed by.

The slide ended above a mudded floor in what looked like a tunnel, Fleur was already down there waiting and complaining that her hooves were getting dirty. Twilight landed so that some of the mud flew up and made most of her body dirty but that was the last thing she could think about right now. For the first time she noticed that she was panting and in no condition to be using her magic for quite some time.

"Will it hold?" she asked Fleur and took a quick look where they were. It definitely looked like some kind of underground tunnel but it was quite different from the sewer tunnels she had found while being younger. "Where are we?"

"It should," Fleur answered while using her magic to clear off all the mud on her and nearby her. "Ewh, why would anypony build a secret passageway with so much mud? The more I go here the worst it is. It leads to the outskirts of town and it's just as dirty there, ewh." Pinkie didn't seem to agree with the white unicorn's complaints as she was happily trotting around in the mud. Twilight just couldn't care about how dirty the tunnel is and started moving slowly forward. The mud didn't make it easy to walk and she didn't have the strength in her to do like Fleur who didn't seem to be wanting to help. She simply thought about what she had seen up in the shop but what really worried her was the beatings on the hatch, even though they had gotten quite far into the tunnel she could still hear the unicorns trying to break in.

They continued to walk through the tunnel for quite some time without much happening, the most exciting thing was when Pinkie threw some mud on Fleur which started a word fight that ended as quickly as it started. Usually the quiet would give Twilight time to think but now she couldn't stop worrying, about her brother and friends that live in Canterlot, so when they finally reached a staircase that led up to a metal door that according to Fleur led out of the tunnel she was glad that she could take her mind off the worrying for quite some time.

The door had rust on quite a few places but Twilight still found it easy to open it. The

outside wasn't as dirty as Fleur had made it sound, instead it was the inside the living room of someponys house that she had never been in before. The walls were littered with old pictures which all featured earth ponies doing various labours, a small brown sofa stood under one of the pictures with a wooden table standing in front of it. A few fictional books lied scattered on the table and four recently lit candle was burning. She could hear a quiet humming noise like somepony was singing, but it wasn't coming from inside. She gave the clear to Pinkie and Fleur that they could come up as she watched through the clear window on the wall next to the sofa. It was still dark outside and no ponies were in sight but something still creeped her about the outside.

"Do you hear the song?" Fleur asked when she came up. "It's the same song I hear when I was running, it really makes me want to go there."

"I can't hear anything," Pinkie answered. "Are you sure you're not imagining it?"

"No Pinkie, the song is being sung and whoever is singing it is coming this way,"

Twilight said sighing. "We need to get out of here and that quick." She didn't take any time to wait for a response but instead she went through the house looking for the door which rather quickly found wide open in the hall. All rooms looked like there was someone at home with burning candles and cooked food standing on the kitchen table but she didn't see any pony. As she moved out she made a quick gesture to the others telling them to follow her, just like she had seen from the window it was empty. It was a quite an impressive area of the city with lots of large villas standing along the road, from a few of the villas light escaped the windows but most of them were dark. The song grew louder and over voiced everything else but she could make out the sound of hundreds of hooves stomping.

"Shouldn't we say we're sorry for breaking in to the ponies who live there?" Pinkie asked in her usual voice but Twilight had a really hard time hearing it. Fleur looked terrified and within the brink of putting her hooves in her ears and Twilight imagined that she looked the same but even though she had the desire to quiet the song she also had a strong desire to simply walk up the road and find the

pony singing. Pinkie on the other hoof looked like she usually did, it was like she really didn't hear the song.

"Over there," Twilight said and pointed with her hoof up the road to where a whole horde of unicorns were walking carrying a little red filly in an open sedan chair. The filly's mouth was moving quickly like she was singing. Her mane was blood red and it covered her left eye but was right was red as a ruby. On her flank a little golden crown with red spots was acting as her cutie mark. Twilight could only guess what the filly's talent was but she didn't want to find out, the unicorns walking next to the filly all looked like they were completely in love with her and eyes for nothing else.

"This doesn't look like a good parade," Pinkie said with a nervous tone.

"The filly is controlling them somehow," Twilight guessed and started walking backwards clumsy. "I don't think we should stand here and check it out. I think we need princess Luna's help for this, but first we need to save her. Maybe the ruins will have the answers to what is going here. Are you with me?" Pinkie answered with a simple nod and both their attention turned to Fleur.

"No!" she responded confident. "I want my dress back so I'm going to go and pick her up." With elegant steps she started moving towards the horde of unicorns.

"Since when did your dress become a her?" Twilight asked confused. "You were scared a few seconds ago, when did you get all that courage?" Suddenly it all stood clear to her what was going on. She was still far from recovered after the incident at the shop but now she had to pull herself to the limit to save Fleur. For a second she focused her mind for the spell and then lifted a struggling Fleur up with her magic. "Come Pinkie we need to get out of here now, if I drop her you need to make sure she doesn't get away."

"Okie dokie!" Pinkie responded and they both started running in the opposite direction of the horde. If they had been discovered the unicorns weren't showing it openly as they easily passed the streets without seeing anypony. Twilight was out of range from the song but Fleur was still fighting and

screaming, although less than earlier it was still enough to drain her energy more than she liked.

The gate that led out of the city was wide open when they reached it and no guards were in sight. In the distance Twilight could see the road they were walking on leading all the way down to a village surrounded by a large forest. Quickly they moved through and she took one last look back at Canterlot, no pony had followed them from what she could see so she collapsed from exhaustion on the middle of the road and Fleur got free. To her surprise the white unicorn didn't decide to run back into the city, instead she looked at them both with a weird look.

"Are you okay Twilight?" Pinkie asked while keeping an eye on Fleur.

"I'm fine Pinkie," Twilight responded while breathing heavily. "Are you okay Fleur? You acted kinda weird there."

"I'm fine," the white unicorn answered. "I don't know what I was doing going crazy like that, the dress really was that beautiful. But thank you Twilight, when I first saw you I thought you were kinda crazy but you turned out alright." Twilight could do nothing but smile at the words she received and she looked outwards to the village far away.

"It's quite a walk," Pinkie who had noticed what the purple unicorn was looking at said.

"But I'm sure we can do it."

Chapter 4: Life in the Cold (Twilight's Story)

A cold breeze swept through Twilight's mane as she took her first steps into the village. At her side Pinkie Pie and Fleur de Lis was walking, all of them tired as the sun stood high on they sky. The village wasn't too unlike Ponyville but there were a lot more farms and fields. Rabbits, dogs and cats were freely walking around in the village with no pony in sight of taking care of them. Materials used to harvest the crops were lying around on the fields and it looked like they had been there for some time.

"If I remember the map correctly the ruins should lie just up ahead," Twilight said and grabbed for her book. Just like she thought the map showed that they simply needed to walk straight forward past the village. Quickly she looked at the others who were not looking to keen on going into the village when no pony seemed to be around. *No other way*, she thought and started walking, hesitantly the others followed her. The cats meowed and the dogs barked angrily at her as she walked past them, she did not feel very welcome.

Without seeing a single pony they reached the end of the village with a road leading far

out to a mountain in the distance. Across the flat landscape there was so sign of there ever being a castle. Confused about it Twilight opened up her book to the page with the map and did her best to guess her location with the help of the compass.

"My hooves hurt and we're in the middle of an abandoned village," Fleur complained and sat herself down on the ground to rest but quickly got up again as the road was dirty. "What are we doing here anyway? Everypony knows that these villagers are mean, that's why no pony goes here. Who knows what they are up to now."

"We're here to save princess Luna," Pinkie responded and put her hoof around Fleur in an attempt to say that it was going to be okay. "But Twilight, I don't see any castle ruin here, are you sure we're in the right village?"

"Yes Pinkie, this is it," Twilight answered with her head still focused on the map. The village they were in now felt a lot bigger to her than the one on the map. *Villages grow, maybe this one did it as well but in a different way.* The solution was something she didn't expect but did seem possible so she quickly dug a small hole on the road with her magic. Instead of only being dirt in the hole what looked like small pieces of formed jewels lied there as well. "The ruin is right under us, something must have buried the ruin and the villagers built there village unknowingly over it."

"We have to dig all the way down?" Fleur exclaimed looking like she was about to pass out in any second.

"If the castle is buried there under it will take years for us to dig it out," Twilight sighed and allowed the book and the compass to fall to the ground. "We'll never be able to save princess Luna in time, if she even needs saving. I'm beginning to doubt all this, Canterlot still needs our help but we're not getting anywhere in this condition. Lets find somewhere to sleep." She kept her head low and slowly walked into one of the nearby houses, to her surprise not even Pinkie tried to say anything. It was a large but quite empty house having nothing more than lots of beds scattered around all the rooms and a burnt

out fireplace. There were no windows so she kept the door open to let some light get in. Without as much as a word she lied down on one of the beds to sleep while listening to the sound of hooves walking nearby. *How I could be so stupid? The book was from princess Celestia so of course I had to believe what it said. I should have done more research but there was no more knowledge about it anywhere.* From somewhere she heard her name being screamed but she didn't want to listen, not now.

Pinkie's hooves gently hit her which annoyed her so she rose up to tell the pink pony to be quiet but instead she received Pinkie's hoof in her mouth the second she opened it. Fleur made a gesture that told her to be quiet and when she thought about it she still heard the movement of hooves from nearby but none of them were moving. It was the sound of something in a similar size to them so she ruled out the animals in the village quickly and the only explanation she could come up with was that it wasn't as abandoned as it seemed to be. Gently she removed the pink pony's hoof from her mouth and listened closely to where the sound was coming from. With the help of her magic she muffled her steps and located the sound to coming from under the fireplace.

A high creaking sound scarred her ears as the fireplace slowly slid to the side. She made a gesture to the others to be ready but Fleur seemed more obsessed with covering her ears than listening to her. After having opened up a passageway large enough to fit a pony in the size of princess Celestia, a set of stairs revealed itself with another high creak and the sound of somepony moving up the stairs quickly.

"I've got you now!" Pinkie exclaimed and did a jump attack as a green unicorn stallion moved out of the passage way. The unicorn's green mane quickly touched the ground as he seemed to have been paralysed by Pinkie's attack. Now the pink pony was keeping him in check without much effort. "What do you want with my friends?"

"Please, I didn't mean to try and escape," the stallion managed to crackle out. Twilight who also had been chocked by Pinkie's attack now regained her senses tried to figure out a way to deal with the stallion. The passageway seemed to go far down under the village but she couldn't see far into

it as there were no light in sight.

"Who are you?" she asked as it was the first thing that popped up into her head. The stallion didn't respond nor did he seem to even notice her presence as his stare was stuck on Fleur who still were covering her ears. This gave Twilight more time to think of new questions she wanted answers to and ways to be able to convince the stallion to cooperate. "All we want to know is how you got here and why there's a hidden passageway in this house." The stallion still didn't seem to even hear her words and she figured out what seemed to be the only way to get the stallion to talk. She gently knocked on Fleur's back and the white unicorn looked up and jumped out of surprised when she save the stallion but calmed herself down as she what Pinkie was doing. Twilight whispered a few things in her ear that she had to say and for a second she seemed to be refusing to take on the task but she still went a few steps forward but with a sweat drops rolling down her body, she really looked terrified of what was going on.

"Who are you and what do you want with us?" she asked but looked away from his face. "You've really startled us and we need to know why." Twilight sighed at the words as it weren't the ones she had said so she moved to Fleur's side in case the white unicorn would need more help interrogating.

"Oh you beautiful princess," the stallion said with glowing eyes that indicated hope. "I've finally found you, that's why I left to find you, please believe me. We have been waiting for ages for you to return. Your mother awaits you down there, we need you so badly. Please have your bodyguard release me so that we can go beautiful princess. It's not worthy of you to walk around like that, we need to get you the jewels, a royal like you cannot walk without them." Twilight saw a glimmer in Fleur's eyes that the white unicorn was very tempted to go but she still had doubts over who the stallion is and why he would call Fleur a princess but she saw no better opportunity to get to the bottom of things than this one. Fleur gave a gesture to Pinkie saying that she should release the stallion but the pink pony looked at Twilight who had to give a nod of approval to get her to release the green unicorn.

"You dirty slave, how dared you touch me?" the stallion exclaimed when he saw how

Pinkie looked like and took refuge at Fleur who seemed to have ignored it but Pinkie looked really hurt.

"Come now my princess, take your other guardian with you but leave the filthy slave behind."

"What do you think you're doing calling my friend names like that?" Twilight asked angrily with sparks emitting from her horn as Fleur and the stallion walked into the passageway.

"Please Twilight, refrain yourself," Fleur responded calmly while looking longingly for something. "If you don't want to come then don't, just don't take it all too seriously." The fireplace started closing itself with the same high creak as Fleur clearly seduced disappeared in the dark. Twilight rushed furiously forward screaming Fleur's name but got stopped by the fireplace as it returned to its original position. She managed to stop herself at the last second and avoid a crash. Pinkie still remained at where she had allowed the stallion to go and she was looking very teary eyed from the words, in an attempt to make her a little more happier Twilight hugged the pink pony and whispered a few encouraging words.

"Stand back Pinkie, we're going after them," she said determined and interrupted the hug. Pinkie looked a little bit happier but she was still very clearly hurt. The air around Twilight started to condense as she released her spell and a bright purple ray of light hit the fireplace blowing it to pieces, shattered wooden fragments flew through the air but was never anywhere near to hit anypony. Behind was the same passageway but with the stairs still visible which she hoped meant that Fleur hadn't reached too far yet.

Together with Pinkie she ran down the stairs using her magic to emit a powerful light that covered the entire passageway. The stairs went down in a circle which almost made her dizzy but thinking about the betrayal gave her strength to keep on going. While she didn't show it hurt her a lot, she had trusted Fleur enough to take her on the journey. The words outside Canterlot had really made her like the white unicorn, so much that she had seen the possibility of a strong friendship appearing in the future only to have it all shattered.

She reached the end of the stairs and she sighed out of relief as she had no idea of how

long she would have been capable of keeping up with it, there was no sign of Fleur nor the green stallion but another view made her speechless. In front of her a large cavern spread itself out and in the distance a castle that glowed red at the touch of light. Even from the distance she could see that it wasn't regular stone or even metal that had been coloured that the castle consisted of but ruby.

"Oh, look at that!" Pinkie exclaimed while gazing towards the castle. "It's marvellous, just look at how it glows so beautifully."

"It's quite a sight," Twilight agreed. "It's nothing like how the book described it, there's no ruin at all here. But I think we need to be careful, I have a feeling that there's more like that stallion." She started crossing the distance but mostly it was the castle and the cavern walls that that stole her attention. The castle glowed red but so did the walls and from she could see it was mostly ruby that they consisted of although there were signs of a few other jewels there as well. It didn't come as a surprise to her that an area such as this one existed, just underneath Canterlot there was a similar crystal cavern that she had been into, she couldn't help but wonder if they two caverns were connected somehow. From what she could see the cavern had no natural light so if she shut down her light the entire area would be pitch black something she wanted to use to her advantage should there exist any kind of creature that wishes to do her harm.

Once they reached the outer walls of the castle they both took a short break to catch their breath before they started looking for the front gates. Even this close the ruby walls impressed Twilight, not a single crack was visible anywhere and it all floated together like it one single ruby that had been used. On one part of the wall a few lights other than her own was being reflected, as she looked at the distance the light came from she saw multiple unicorns all using their magic bringing light to the cavern. They where still quite far away but she knew that they undoubtedly had already seen her light so she saw no reason to let it fade out. *If they're anything like the stallion we are in big trouble*, she thought but didn't pay them any more attention than that.

It didn't take them much longer to find the front gates wide open leading into a large empty courtyard. The gates were made out of a small transparent colourless crystal that very much looked like diamond. The courtyard had its floor made out blue garnet with stairs leading up to the inner castle. Other than the stairs it was completely empty something that gave Twilight a worrying feeling but Pinkie didn't seem to mind it at all.

"Over there!" a mare's voice screamed from behind them and Twilight took a quick look from where the voice was coming from, the unicorn group was much closer than what she had initially thought. They were too many to fight so she saw no other way than to go into the castle. With Pinkie by her side she ran into the courtyard and up the stairs. At the top a large diamond door stood shut blocking their way, Pinkie instantly tried to push it open but when it didn't work she tried kicking it with her hind legs but the door wouldn't budge a single centimetre. Twilight saw no other way to get away than down the stairs where the group of unicorns rushing up and she couldn't help but getting a small growing desire to be back in Ponyville as she realised that the further she kept on fighting the further she were getting away from ever returning to normal.

A glowing light brilliant raspberry energy shield protected her as the unicorns cast their magic at it trying to pierce through but at the same time it drained her strength. They were nowhere near as strong as the ones in Canterlot but their numbers were high enough to really make an effect. Pinkie still tried to kick the door open screaming things about parties at it to no effect.

"A slave will always be a slave," said a sapphire blue unicorn mare with a short light blue mane who walked up to the energy shield and touched it with her right front hoof as the attack took a break. "An impressive work of display here, it must take some power. Tell your slave friend that she need not waste her strength on that door, it won't open for anypony but the queen and her princesses." Twilight didn't have to say anything as Pinkie seemed to get the message but the words really seemed to have hurt her even more as she was showing her teeth in anger.

"Why are you trying to hurt us through words?" Twilight asked as nice as possible but took her side next to the pink pony and showed that she was ready to fight if it had to come to that. "We have done you nothing yet here you are, attacking us."

"You're helping a slave escape," the sapphire blue pony said and shook her head in a way that showed disappointment. "But only a fool would believe that this is the exit. I see it on you that you've heard the young princesses song so you must be somepony special, yet I cannot figure out why you would help a slave."

Pinkie slowly walked up to the energy shield where the unicorn was looking through and screamed out of anger and frustration like all joy had disappeared from her. "I am no slave so stop calling me that you big headed meanie!" She did a quick kick with her front hoof towards the unicorn's face but she didn't even budge.

"Call yourself whatever you want but it doesn't who you truly are," the unicorn said and looked back at Twilight. "You're too important for anypony to lose, with your power we can finally bring queen Ametrine's final wish to come through. The young princess is already in Canterlot as the foolish princess Celestia has left, the older princess is in the Everfree castle keeping princess Luna entrapped but she doesn't have the power to kill on her own. That's why we need everypony like you to stop this madness and do what we all came her to do, Ametrine's wish must be fulfilled. I will not ask you again, lower your shield and hand the slave over or we will bring it down along with you."

The unicorn's words were starting to make things fall into place for Twilight, she was at the right place but at the wrong time. It was the castle ruin in the Everfree Forest where she should have gone but she realised that she no way of knowing it so she didn't start beating herself up for the mistake. *At least I can still make a difference here and save princess Luna, I just have to fight my way through this.* A small plan formed in her head as she joined Pinkie at the shield staring into the unicorn's red blood eyes. "You hurt my friend with words and expect me to join you. I am princess Celestia's student and I

will do nothing to harm her sister, princess Luna will always be a valuable friend to me. I learned that the hard way but I'm sure where I stand, I'll never betray my friends." The sapphire blue unicorn spit on the ground after hearing the words and ordered the others to attack as she disappeared down the stairs.

The magical energy was pouring through Twilight as the attack on the energy shield drained her power, she was channeling another spell that started making her dizzy as the raspberry coloured energy emerged from her horn. She carefully bided her time and lowered the shield in a moment when the attack had paused for a second and hoped her plan would work. The energy blinded her for a second and when she regained her sight she saw the attacking unicorns lying on the floor but some of them were already getting up again. As she tried raising the shield again her legs failed her and she fell to the ground. Magical projectiles were starting to fly past her as the attacking unicorns resumed their attack but she couldn't push herself up to stand again. There was no pain just weakness. Her plan had failed and she could do nothing to keep on going and it hurt her from within, how she had failed her friends. Her entire body was screaming for sleep and she realised that fighting to keep her eyes open would be a fight she would lose.

Something lifted her up as she was drifting away, she saw something pink and coloured balloons. *Pinkie*, she thought as her friend moved her in a high speed. She worried over what was going on and what would happen now. She got taking in through something that looked like a small passageway with voices speaking.

"Hold on," the voice said but she couldn't figure out where it came from. "She's dying! Hurry up already! We can save her with ease as long as we reach there! Hurry!" Holding herself awake were becoming a struggle she couldn't win and she allowed herself to be taken where her body wished her to go, her sight went black as she closed her eyes and her body felt much lighter than ever before. A voice was screaming her name and it sounded like the voice was crying but it was all too far away from her now.

A warm fluid were entering through her mouth with a taste she didn't like but it filled a hole within her that she didn't know she even had. Her strength were coming back and she could feel sparks emitting form her horn but her legs were still failing her. More fluid entered and she wanted to spit it all out but even her mouth failed her but she felt stronger for every second. With a heave effort she lifted up her eyes and was blinded by a strong light. As her eyes adjusted she started seeing shapes of ponies standing around her, a pink one stood out in particular and she tried to say something but no words left as her mouth moved.

"You're safe!" the pink pony of joy and hugged Twilight very hard. "Don't you ever do that again." Pinkie had tear in her eyes and Twilight never wanted the hug to end, she actually happy for the first time since the journey started so she smiled at the pink pony as to say that everything was going to be alright.

"This is a happy moment no doubt," a mare said with a voice that Twilight recognised.. "But our enemies do not rest as we do so we must hurry even though you are weak."

"Where am I?" Twilight asked as she looked around the room she was sitting in. Ponies of all kinds were sitting around her in a circle watching and talking among themselves. Among them were a light yellow unicorn who stood away from the group close to Pinkie, her mane and tail were long and red coloured with stripes of pink and purple. All the ponies were starting to make Twilight worried as she remembered the unicorns who attacked her and she could think of nothing else than that she was being held a prisoner.

"This is Sapphire," Pinkie who had figured out that her friend was very confused said and pointed at the light yellow unicorn.

"Know this, you are in safe care here," Sapphire said before Pinkie could continue talking. "Our enemies are upon us and soon they will find us. Do not worry, saving you is not the reason why. But you are powerful and we need ponies like you. I saw what you did back there, maybe you can

stop Verdite, but we must hurry."

"Why should I trust you?" Twilight asked and pulled herself up, she was still unsure about who these ponies were. That Pinkie seemed to trust didn't give her enough reason to do so as well. "It could very well be that you are one of the unicorns who attacked us and now wants to trick me into doing your bidding." A long silence ensued and she could see that the ponies around her weren't liking what she was saying and their stares really felt like she was betraying somepony. Even Pinkie seemed to not like the words but she refused to apologise for it, no matter how much it hurt them she knew inside of her that she was doing the right thing being so careful.

"Twilight they saved both of us," Pinkie said breaking the silence. "When you collapsed they came through a hidden passageway and saved us. They gave you a magical drink that helped you get better." A feeling of regret reached Twilight as she listened to her friend's words but she still felt like she did right thing being cautious.

"Alright, you've convinced me Pinkie," she said and looked on Sapphire. "Who is this Verdite and what has she done to you?"

"Verdite is the heir to Ametrine," Sapphire said going straight to business like she had never heard Twilight's doubts. "She is the queen of this castle and the one who gives all the orders, Together with her daughters she rule this castle giving privileges to unicorns while using pegasi and earth ponies as slaves. We are a small group that wishes to change this but she is too strong for us." All the ponies in the room nodded and seemed to agree on what Sapphire was saying but Twilight could see that they all was scared. "We've never had an opportunity like the one we have now, they plan on fulfilling Ametrine's last wish and that will leave Verdite vulnerable. She has to channel her ancestors power that has taken a thousand years to gather, without it they stand no chance against Luna. That's where you come in, we will keep the remaining guards occupied while you interrupt Verdite. We have no time to waste so we better get going. I have filled your bags with the drink I gave you."

Twilight hesitated for a second but after looking at Pinkie she allowed herself to be escorted to a wall where a small passageway led deep into the darkness. Pinkie said a few words of goodbye to all the ponies and went into the passageway, Twilight followed shortly thereafter but stopped to ask Sapphire a question that bothered her. "Why isn't the older princess capable of killing princess Luna?"

"It is not that she cannot, it is that she will not," Sapphire answered calmly. "Even with their ancestors power they are still weak compared to Celestia. They wish to lay Canterlot in ruin so that they can rebuild the kingdom Ametrine had planned. They have reached as far as their power can reach so now they need power from the outside. Luna is weaker than Celestia but her power can give Verdite the advantage she needs to finish her plan. Amber needs to kill Luna here, only then can her power be theirs, that is why she will not kill Luna anywhere else. Now go, this will lead you all the way to the main chamber. Remember, time is not your friend here."

Twilight thanked for the answer and went in through the passageway after Pinkie, behind her she heard how the opening closed in and she used her magic to create light. She couldn't help but to think about the answer she had received and it really bothered her. *If Verdite is more powerful than princess Luna, then how I am supposed to stop her?* From further in she heard Pinkie yelling at her so she continued on but the image of how all the ponies were scared was stuck in her head and that scared her. It didn't take long until she found Pinkie standing next to a panel that looked like it probably would open something up.

"You ready?" she asked her friend who nodded in approval and pressed the panel. With a loud creak that no pony could have missed a part of the wall opened up to a large circular room filled with light. In the middle of the room sat a red unicorn at a well of light with her back turned towards Twilight and Pinkie. The unicorn had a long blood red mane and tail that looked magnificent. Light was spreading through the red unicorn's body and it looked like she was filled with magical energy.

The room was unlike the outside of the castle as the floor, walls and even the roof was all filled with golden pictures of how a red unicorn first defeats a black winged unicorn and then a white winged unicorn. Twilight figured it was the red unicorn at the middle defeating princess Celestia but she wondered who the black winged unicorn was, it didn't look like Luna.

The red unicorn remained at her place like she never had heard anything so Twilight slowly sneaked around in order to get a better view at the situation. There she saw that the unicorn's cutie mark was a well where light poured out from, similar to the one she was sitting at.

"So you have come with you slave?" the red unicorn asked and Twilight had her fear that they had been discovered before they even entered the room confirmed. "If I didn't know better I would think you tried to insult me. But lets not get stuck on that, I am Verdite, you have probably heard about me."

"Why don't you meanies stop calling me that?" Pinkie screamed and rushed towards Verdite. The red unicorn didn't move and as Pinkie approached she got thrown away by red glowing magic and fell heavily on the floor.

"Pinkie!" Twilight screamed and made a move towards her friend but stopped as the floor swallowed her friend without leaving a trace of her behind. Anger was building up inside of her and she threw a few magical projectiles against Verdite but they all where stopped by a red glowing energy shield. "Why would you do that? I won't let you go through with this!"

"Then stop me," Verdite responded and a large magical orb flew towards Twilight. She had no time to think but let instincts throw her to the side and have the orb missed her with a few centimetres. The orb hit wall with an explosion which hit her hard and threw her a few meters. Her entire body ached from the fall but there seemed to be no wounds.

"Why?" Twilight asked as she raised herself to her hoof and realised that she really had no chance of coming out of here alive. *Why didn't I get the others? Only the elements of harmony are*

powerful enough. A large creak echoed through the room as another passageway was revealed but she payed it no attention. "Why are you doing this? What has Equestria ever done against you?"

"Revenge of course," a familiar voice said and when she looked towards the new passageway she saw Sapphire leaving it. "Equestria and its princesses has never seen us fit, today we change all that and you will be the first to witness the change."

"Why would you save me if this is what you want?" Twilight asked while trying to position herself in a way that she could avoid both her enemies attacks if they were to try as Sapphire laughed at her question.

"Power of course," the light yellow unicorn said laughing and moved towards the well where she touched it with her hoof as the light engulfed it. "You are strong but stupid. Why only use Luna's power when we can get more? But you had to go and almost kill yourself instead of simply following along, at least our power has given us the ability to create elixirs beyond your imagination." With one swift movement she moved her hoof out of the light and out of it a ray of light came hitting an energy shield that Twilight just barely managed to get up in time.

"What of all those ponies I saw down there with you?" Twilight asked while fighting to keep control of the shield. She was familiar by now with the feeling of her energy disappearing like this but every time it hurt her as she knew that she could have been more powerful if she only studied more and maybe then it wouldn't have been her last chance.

"Worthless slaves to give you a feeling of security," Sapphire said and allowed the ray of light to die out. Twilight couldn't figure out why but for some reason Verdite was starting to look annoyed over how the situation was going. "All of them are where they belong now, along with those filthy slaves that kept our castle under their village for so long. Only unicorns are fit to rule. Sadly you are not one of them filthy slave friend." The light yellow unicorn put her hoof back into the light of the well but this time it didn't engulf it, instead the light spread all over her body and only her screams could be heard as

the light covered her entirely.

Twilight didn't like Sapphire at all but to see her end like this was something she couldn't support. She wanted to do something but she knew that it wouldn't have much of an effect but she still thought it was worth a try. *Everypony deserves a second chance*, she thought and started casting small but fast multiple projectiles against Verdite who she believed was the cause of it. They all were blocked by the same shield as earlier.

The light disappeared without leaving a single trace of the light yellow unicorn and for the first Verdite moved as she turned to watch Twilight through the shield and said. "Such a pity fool, she betrayed you yet you fight to save her. She was too much talk and inability of dealing with the issues at hand. You on the other hand is just a nuisance."

"I do what I feel is right," Twilight responded and kept attacking the red unicorn while at the same time moving around the room to make her harder to see as the projectiles were making it hard to see through the energy shield. "It might not always be the best but I let everypony get a second chance. Because you you know what? They deserve it!" She could feel a magical force lifting her up in the air as she fought against the red glow covering her but no avail. The force threw her down on the floor and she heard Verdite saying a few words but she couldn't make them out as the floor swallowed her and she landed heavy on a stone floor.

Her entire body was aching but she forced herself up and noticed that she no longer was in the same room. Instead of the golden circular room she was in a rectangular stone room which contained nothing but walls and bars barring the way out. In the corner she saw Pinkie sitting looking sad but when the pink pony saw her that mood instantly changed.

She went up and hugged her friend as to say sorry but she could see that Pinkie didn't believe she had failed. "I'm sorry Pinkie. I failed." Her legs collapsed and she fell down, not out of pain but of embarrassment that she wasn't good enough.

"Don't worry Twilight," Pinkie simply said and gave her another hug. "I know of something that will get us out of here." She didn't have the chance to continue what she was about to say as loud steps from multiple hooves walked across the room behind the bars. It was the green unicorn from earlier together with two guards that held spears pointed at Fleur de Lis dressed in a beautiful red dress covered with rubies as she walked over to a wooden pole that stretched itself from the floor to the roof.

Fleur was crying and begging the guards to not do anything as she was roped tight and the green unicorn simply smiled. Twilight didn't have to know what was going on, she could guess it quite well and it wasn't going to be pretty. A side of her wanted her to watch it all happen without doing anything, Fleur had left her and was far from forgetting about it. But another side of her said that even the white unicorn deserved a second chance.

Fleur continued screaming as the guards put various things around the pole as it was some kind of ceremony. She was looking all around her and for a second her eyes met with Twilight. "Please Twilight, I'm sorry." The words sealed the deal for Twilight and she decided to try and help.

The entire room lit up in a brilliant raspberry light as Twilight's spells attacked the guards and hit. The guards simply laughed it off like it had never hit and continued with what they were doing. She didn't understand what had gone wrong, nothing made sense to her anymore other than she was up against something much more powerful than her and she had already failed, she wasn't strong enough.

The green unicorn smiled at her in an evil grin like he was trying to humiliate her but he didn't have to, she was doing it well enough on her own. One of the guards who had finished planting stuff around the pole and looked bored took his spear shoved it towards Fleur's throat. Twilight could only close her eyes as she didn't want to see it and Pinkie was doing the same thing but it didn't shut out Fleur's screams and it pained her to have to hear it.

Chapter 5: Journey Through the Forest (Luna's Story)

Princess Luna ran on small road going through the thick forest using only her magic to bring light on the otherwise dark place. A but ahead of her a red unicorn was running in a high speed that impressed her quite a lot. *I've never seen anypony run so fast.* She had a hard time keeping up with the unknown unicorn but felt that she had the advantage, the forest wouldn't last forever and as soon as they got out she could easily follow the unicorn from the air where she was faster.

The forest was known for all it's creatures and she could see all the eyes staring at her like they would jump out any second but no creature ever did a move. She didn't fear the creatures and she was confident that she could defeat any creature that would dare to attack her but her focus was on the

unicorns in front of her. If she had been discovered the unicorn didn't show it but Luna had her fears, something with the unicorn reeked of power. She had been taken off guard the last time and she wouldn't let it happen again yet when she faced her enemy she was unable to do anything.

The dream she had was still on her mind confusing her over what had happened thereafter. She remembered everything about the night now and it was no doubt in her mind about who queen Ametrine was. But she couldn't recall ever meeting the queen again afterwards, all she remembered was facing her sister and committing the fight where she had lost and been banished.

Why Ametrine of all ponies? The question confused her but also made her wonder what the unknown unicorn's motives are. Queen Ametrine had ruled a castle with nearby villages that she called her kingdom, she swore herself loyal to princess Celestia but chose to rule her kingdom in a way that Celestia didn't appreciate, it was a society where unicorns received benefits whereas the pegasi and earth ponies were used as slaves. The memory still brought a smile to Luna's face when she went with her sister to stop the madness Ametrine was committing. It should have ended there but the queen received a second from Celestia to redeem herself and from the outside it seemed as she was committed to it, but Luna always had her doubts but she couldn't for the life of her remember how it all had gone down. When she came back the kingdom of Bolivianite was gone and she had always thought that her suspicions were correct, but Celestia had only said that she had no part in it's disappearance which now made Luna wonder if it wasn't she herself who caused it's destruction. It seemed like something unbelievable to her but she had done many things as Nightmare Moon and she couldn't remember them all, or didn't want to remember them all.

The unknown unicorn ran out of the forest where the river that went through Ponyville passed by the forest. The unicorn seemed to be heading towards Canterlot and nothing indicated that she was having a hard time running through the darkness without using magic to bring light as Luna thought the unicorn easily could do.

From the nearby town she could hear music being on like some really big party was going on there, she wanted to go in and see what it was and maybe meet Twilight Sparkle and her friends again which she hadn't done since the wedding, but with a big regret she refrained from it and took off into the air and followed the unicorn. She no longer had any difficulties keeping up and could easily have gone far ahead if she knew where she was going towards.

Canterlot rose up in the distance sitting high atop its mountain resting like the issues going on during the night didn't concern it. She was surprised as the unicorn ran by the city and she hoped her advisors would be capable of running the city when she was gone, probably longer than she had at first planned. One of the roads rising high into the mountain connected Canterlot with a nearby village that she hadn't given much thought to before. The villagers sometimes came with their harvest to sell in the markets and that was the only time she ever got to see them, it wasn't a look she liked nor did she like what she had seen the villagers doing in the marketplace but as the younger princess it wasn't in her right to judge them.

The unknown unicorn entered the village with the road to Canterlot and entered a house on the very edge of the village. From what Luna could see of the village from the air it wasn't much of a sight but even during the night it was loud. Dogs barked and cats meowed highly, it was to herself or the unknown unicorn she couldn't tell but she very much wondered how the villagers were capable of sleeping with so much noise. Not a single pony could be seen and all the windows were dark so she figured that she had arrived there undetected and she landed easily at the house the unicorn had entered knowing that no pony would be causing a riot due to the fact that she was in the village.

The door was wide open but she still carefully moved in and shutting down her light, she didn't want to risk being ambushed again. No pony was to be seen in the house but beds were everywhere in the room, only one of them looked like it had been used recently. Next to one of the beds was a large hole where pieces of wood lied shattered all over the floor, the hole seemed like it led into an passageway

with stairs and as she couldn't see the unknown unicorn anywhere else in the house she decided to venture in.

The passageway was pitch black so she had to summon forth her light again and the staircase which headed deep down in a circle was lit up in a cobalt blue light. She couldn't see any other light source in there so she guessed that the unicorn either had already ran down or knew the stairs by heart and didn't need any light.

When she reached the bottom she entered a large room whose walls reflected her light all over the room. The walls spread a red light and in the distance she could see a red castle where the red unicorn was standing in front looking straight at her. *It can't be*, the red unicorn's face looked very much like on she had seen not long ago. It became clear for her that the red unicorn wasn't Ametrine as she had first thought but one of her grand children. Why was being targeted still didn't make any sense to her but she thought it would have to do something with Ametrine and the war against Celestia, why else would she had seen an old memory of her talking with Ametrine the day before her banishment.

Sounds of horn echoed throughout the entire room as the red unicorn turned away and ran into the castle. Luna figured that she had truly been discovered now and took no rest as she flew towards the castle. *A Crystal Cavern*, she thought as she could see the room more fully from the air. Down below on the castle's courtyard unicorns were preparing themselves with armour and weapons as the red unicorn ran through them without stopping for as much as a second.

"Bring her down!" a voice screamed from below and she could feel a spear flying past her. More spears followed soon thereafter but this time she was prepared for it and got to raise her energy shield in time which blocked the spears.

I have no time for this, she thought and blasted the unicorns with her magic which scattered them but drained more energy than she had imagined it would. At most the unicorns were knocked over but they were already starting to get up again and resume their attack. As she didn't want to

spend more time and energy at them she retreated into the castle past a large door made of diamond that was slowly closing.

The inside of the hall she was running through was beautifully painted in gold and red with pictures from all over Equestria hanging, some of them she remembered seeing over a thousand years ago but they still looked like they were new. The red unicorn was no where to be seen as she delved deeper into the castle and it more and more started looking like a maze to her. Although she had defeated Ametrine together with Celestia she had never been in the inside of the castle, the battle had raged on the outside so this was all new to her. The outside of the castle had also been different than from how she remembered it but while it kept the same form as she remembered it now consisted of ruby rather than stone as she remembered it.

From below she received the first sign that she was getting somewhere in the castle as a mare was screaming for help and pledging for her life. Her principles stopped her from just ignoring it and she didn't want to give the red unicorn the satisfaction of doing whatever was happening to the mare so she hurried towards the screams in hope of maybe getting an ally that could tell her what was going on.

It wasn't hard for her to follow the screams and soon she saw herself walking down a set of stairs. Unlike the rest of the castle the walls weren't coloured in gold and red nor did it look like they were made of gems, instead it was just normal stone and she wondered if it could be some kind of remains from the original castle. It didn't take her long to be down the stairs and reach a room that looked like a prison but the cells were all empty. From beyond a closed wooden door she could hear the screams coming from.

Trying not to waste any seconds she rushed at the door as the screams intensified. With a quick kick with her front leg the door flew open and in the room beyond a white unicorn dressed in a red dress similar to the one Ametrine was wearing in her dream. The unicorn was the same size as herself but she was tied to a pole going from the floor all the way up to the roof. Three unicorns were standing

laughing at the white unicorn, two of them were armoured with spears while the third one was unarmed. Two cells existed in the room and one of them contained two ponies she recognised well, Twilight Sparkle and Pinkie Pie. They both had their eyes shut and soon Luna saw why, one of the guards shove his spear towards the white unicorn's throat and the scream stopped for a second as the spear shattered when it hit the cobalt blue energy shield she had managed to summon forth to save the white unicorn but she felt how her energy was slipping out of her in a rate she never before had felt for using a simple shield.

"What?" the unarmed unicorn screamed and approached the cell with Luna's two friends.

"How did you do it? You're but a simple unicorn?"

"She didn't do it," Luna said determined and felt the gaze of all the ponies on her, even Twilight and Pinkie looked surprised to see her but at the same time she could make out a smile on the purple unicorn's face. "We did it and we demand that you let these ponies go in the name of your princess!"

The three unicorns all broke out into laughter and it was the unarmed one who first managed to control himself. "You're a joke right? We all know who you are, princess Luna. Your power is useless here, My queen's power render yours useless." The unicorn took no rest but attacked with green glowing magic soon followed by the magic of the two armed unicorns. Luna blocked the attacks with ease and counterattacked with a quick magic blow that knocked out all the attackers and rendering her breathless, it had been a very long time since she last felt so weak as she did now.

Can't give up now, she thought and used as much of her magic as she dared to cut open the white unicorn's rope and free Twilight and Pinkie from the cell. The purple unicorn looked at her with worrying eyes as she knew what Luna was feeling but she tried to ignore it, she didn't want to show herself weak, not again.

"Princess Luna," Twilight said worried and tried to check up on the princess but Luna pushed her away. "Thank you, but there's some things you need to know about this

castle."

"You shouldn't be here Twilight Sparkle," Luna responded panting while trying to sound strong. "What would drive you to go a place like this?"

"You princess," Twilight answered with Pinkie nodding in response. "We came here to save you as we thought you would be in danger. Instead it was us that ended up in danger and you saved us. The queen wants you to come to her together I believe we can defeat her, I wasn't powerful enough to do it on my own. I'm sorry princess." Twilight's face looked really sad as it seemed it could burst into tears any second.

"Your services are much appreciated Twilight Sparkle," Luna said. "You did what few would dare to do but your journey have to end here. I think I caused this so I must go alone now. Leave with your friends while you still can." She turned around back to the stairs and went up, behind her she could hear Pinkie and the white unicorns screaming things to her but it was Twilight's word that stuck to her.

"Princess, she wants you to come to her, you're walking into a trap," the purple unicorn said but Luna was already too far away but she heard it. She knew that she was stupid letting them walk away, she knew they could make it out but it was herself she was worried about. The castle had drained her energy and even now before she had even faced the red unicorn she was already feeling weak. She looked back one last time to make sure she wasn't followed but the hallway was empty. A part of her was relieved that they listened and another sad that they couldn't see through her charade.

The hallway was just as she remembered it and she still had no idea of where she was going to go. High voices were coming from one of the hallways in front of her, as the screams had led her to save Twilight she thought that maybe these voices could lead her to the red unicorn, and she didn't know where else to go. The closer she got the more she started to recognise the voices speaking, they sounded very much like how Ametrine sounded but it seemed it was a mother and daughter that was

talking.

"You shouldn't have worried," the older voice said. "You jeopardised our plan but all seemed to have worked out for the better. Just don't forget that I'm not weak and helpless just because I have to spend all my time in here."

"I'm sorry mother," the younger voice said. "Have the intruders been taken care of? If they were powerful enough to get through our forces they could cause a lot of trouble."

"Powerful, yes," the older voice laughed out. "She was but nothing compared to me but she is about to be executed together with her friend and their powers be united with me."

In front of Luna an open door stood before her leading in to a circular golden room with lots of paintings. The door looked identical to the wall and if it wouldn't have been left open she wondered if she could have found it. In the middle of the circular room she saw two red unicorns sitting close to a well that emitted light, they both looked alike with their mane and tails but differences existed. One of the unicorns had light flowing through her entire body and wrinkles on her face made her look old. Her cutie mark was a well where light poured out from. The other unicorn looked much younger and similar to the one she had trapped Luna in the castle and for the first time she saw the unicorn's cutie mark. It was a red ruby that almost looked invisible on the unicorn's red body. Something inside Luna said that it wasn't just a normal ruby but that something special, she had vague memories of Ametrine having a ruby looking exactly like that one but she couldn't remember what it was used for.

She took a deep breath and tried to constantly stop her panting that had been reduced a bit but still annoyed her, with it she took her steps into the room. Twilight's warning still rang through her head but she felt safe and well capable of dealing with the unicorns, this time she wouldn't be ambushed, she would be ready for anything they could throw at her. The two unicorns continued talking like she wasn't there as she entered with quiet steps.

"We have come!" she screamed at the unicorns as she noticed what the paintings on the

walls illustrated. It was one of those unicorns defeating Celestia and herself, only she wasn't herself but Nightmare Moon. "You trap me in my own castle without as much as a word, now we have come to make you answer for what you've done, heirs of queen Ametrine."

"Good, you know who we are," the older one said while clapping her hooves. "I am queen Verdite and this is my daughter, princess Amber. We will however not answer for anything, it's you who must answer for your crimes!"

"We've paid for our mistakes already," Luna answered quickly. "What do you want with us?"

"You killed one of our family members!" Amber responded harshly, Luna got the impression that she was a lot rasher and impatient than her elder mother. "Don't pretend that you've forgotten it, she bowed down for you and all she wanted was to see her daughter again but you took it away from her! How would you feel if you saw your own mother dead without an explanation?" Amber shot a wave of red magic towards Luna who blocked it with her shield. The impact forced her front legs to crumble under their weight and she fell down but could regain her balance quickly.

She's stronger than I thought. Luna tried to hide her panting and look strong as she started circling the room. The light coming out from the well looked an awfully lot like some kind of power and she imagined that it was there the unicorns got their power from. "Ametrine wanted more than to see her daughter, she was never the good kind." She remembered what she had said during the day in the castle after she had met with Ametrine.

"Calm yourselves," Verdite said in the same calm manner as before. "It was an unfortunate turn of event that happened back then when a young filly's heart was crushed, not even her mentor would give her any closure. But that filly is no longer alive today and it is all in the past, or should be. A banishment to the moon isn't enough to heal the wounds we have endured over the ages. Our pain is the same as that filly's and here you are, the culprit. A princess of Equestria who everypony seemed to

have forgotten that you are the same as you were back then. But we do not forget and we want our closure without forgiveness."

"You're no better than she was,' Luna answered angry over how the situation had turned. "Earth ponies and pegasi were treated horrible under her rule, nothing changed even though she promised to change it. She was a false tyrant that didn't deserve to rule." She could see the anger appearing in Amber's eyes and she wondered how long it would be until the next attack would come.

"Don't you dare say anything about her!" Amber yelled out in anger and sent magic projectiles towards Luna. It came exactly how she wanted and with ease she threw herself to the ground to avoid the projectiles but not without sending out her own towards the well. It took her a lot of energy to attack and when the red energy shield blocked her attack it didn't make her feel more confident as she fought herself back to her hooves.

"Even a stupid pony could see that coming," Verdite said unaffected of everything that had been happened around her. "Do you see the paintings around you? They're not just paintings but prophesies. It is already determined that you and your sister shall be defeated. I have waited a long time for it to come true and now finally you are here, your friends executed and their power now mine. It will be my pleasure to absorb your power, although it won't be pleasant for you, but that shall be your punishment." A large red wave covered the entire room and slowly made its way towards Luna. She raised her shield with plenty of time before impact and wondered why they would give so much of a warning.

The cobalt blue energy shield shattered as the red wave it hit and Luna fell down to the ground in exhaustion. Pain pierced her entire body as the red wave hit her and threw her into the wall. She tried to raise herself up again after the wave had disappeared but her legs wouldn't listen, she lied there immobilised with no magic and she could only watch in pain as Amber walked up to her.

"This is for Ametrine," the red unicorn said and spat on Luna. Verdite started chanting

a few words but she couldn't make out what they were but she did feel how her life was being drained from her. Light similar to the light from the well came out of her body and made itself into Verdite.

"Your power tastes wonderful, princess Luna," Verdite said laughing as Luna slowly faded away from existence.

"I'll prepare the forces for our invasion on Canterlot," Amber said and walked away from Luna's body. "Melanite should already have turned Celestia's underlings against her but we shouldn't underestimate her power."

"Go quickly and with my blessing," Verdite answered in a tone that sounded like she really enjoyed what was happening. "Soon revenge will be ours and the kingdom we have waited a thousand years for shall finally be ours."

Forgive my arrogance Twilight, I should have listened to you, Luna thought as everything went black for her.

Chapter 6: Catastrophe (Twilight's Story)

Twilight Sparkle stood in the stone room and watched as princess Luna refused to accept any help and left them to fend for themselves. Fleur de Lis and Pinkie Pie stood next to her calling on the princess. She didn't feel anger, only disappointment over the fact that she hadn't been good enough.

"Come Pinkie," she said and made it clear that she was let down but a plan formed in her head. "We can't stay here."

"Where're we going?" Pinkie asked. If Twilight didn't know better she would have a hard time believing that the pink pony in front of her actually was Pinkie Pie, all joy seemed to have been stripped from her.

"I know princess Luna told us to leave," Twilight responded and towards the stairs. "She's heading right into a trap Pinkie and we have to do something to prevent it from happening, and that fast."

"What about me?" Fleur asked, she was still in chock and marks from where her tears had rolled down was visible. "You can't leave me here all alone. I can help."

"Just like you helped us before?" Pinkie asked frustrated before Twilight could say anything. "You're just gonna run off the second somepony calls you a princess and offers jewels."

"I'm sorry for that," Fleur answered with new tears rolling down her cheeks. "It was a moment of weakness, after all that had happened I just..."

"You can come with us," Twilight said leaving Pinkie confused. "You won't get anymore chances than this so don't ruin the little amount of trust I have for you." She didn't wait for a response but walked up the stairs as she didn't feel like going through any drama but she did notice that Fleur shined up a little bit and she hoped that Pinkie would understand her decision later on. *If this didn't affect her so much she would have done the same thing.*

The stairs led up to a golden hallway with lots of paintings hanging around, none she recognised. Voices talking came from one of the directions but she recognised one of the voices of being Verdite's and she had no intention of going back into her grasp. Just a little bit up ahead the hallway spread out in three different hallways and she had no idea of where to go.

"Into the well chamber or the library?" Fleur asked as she seemed to have noticed how Twilight could make up her mind of where to go. "There's also the banquet hall, the throne room and similar but I doubt they would do us much good. I got to see a map of the castle and I even got to see a few of the rooms when they captured me so I know the way around."

"The library should do," Twilight responded and dreamed away of what kind of books a queen like Verdite would keep. She came to the conclusion that it probably would be books about dangerous magic but she thought that even those could potentially give valuable information. "If we're going to find out what is happening then that is the place."

"Just don't lead us into a trap," Pinkie said as Fleur started leading the way. Even though

she didn't have to she reassured that it wouldn't be a trap they were going to but Twilight doubted it made Pinkie feel any safer.

I just hope we can save Luna in time, she thought. There's something in here that prevents magic from being used normally, that's why I couldn't raise a shield to protect Fleur and why the guards seemed unaffected by my magic. Luna could, but she didn't look well afterwards.

The way to the library wasn't short and was full of crooks and turns that made Twilight wonder if she would ever had been capable of finding it on her own. To her relief the castle had been empty but they passed through a window where unicorns fully armoured were marching out of the cavern. She didn't have to guess where they were heading as she already and she prayed in her mind that princess Celestia would get back to Canterlot in time to stop the invasion.

"We're here," Fleur said when they reached a large room filled with bookcases that didn't leave a single centimetre of space to push in any other book. "There better be some books with spells on how to fix my hooves because they hurt and look bad." Twilight didn't mind what she was saying as she was stuck in a dreamlike trance, the amount of unread books she saw was unbelievable for her. A lot of the books were rare copies of books that had been thought lost forever. It contained everything from Equestrian history dating back all the way to the very first ponies to simple tips on how handle your everyday life.

Which one to start with? she asked herself while looking at the books. They all looked so tempting for her and usually she would have taken the time to read through every single one of them but now she was under the pressure of time and had to pick one.

"Twilight," Pinkie called for her with an open book on the floor. "This one might be interesting to you." She checked the book which said, *Betrayal of the Moon and the Sun*. At first the book seemed uninteresting to her but knowing Pinkie's track record of finding books she decided to give it a try. The pages contained detailed information about the castle and its inhabitants including all the wars it

had been through. Her interest in the book seemed to even attract Fleur away from the cosmetic books as they all found themselves sitting around the book and Twilight decided to read only the summary of the events to save time.

At the time of Bolivianite under queen Ametrine's rule one event would change everything. The princesses of the day and night, Celestia and Luna launched an all out war against Bolivianite as they didn't like the way queen Ametrine was ruling her kingdom. When the queen heard of this she immediately assembled her armies but she was tricked, the two sisters came without any armies from their castle and instead of fighting the soldiers they fought the queen. The princesses strength were overwhelming but the older sister allowed the queen to rule her country as long as she did it on their terms. So the queen bowed down to the princesses and all would have been fine.

Years after the war the queen had a daughter but instead of being allowed to raise it on her own princess Celestia took the child as to raise it as her own. The queen never got to see her daughter which angered her, this was at a time when the two sisters were starting to grow more and more apart from each other and the queen saw an opportunity to get her revenge. She sought an allegiance with princess Luna, the younger sister and together they would take over the older sister's new castle in a city called Canterlot. But the younger sister had another plan, taken on her form as Nightmare Moon she betrayed the queen and a fight ensued. Although the queen fought valiantly the younger princess easily overpowered her and left her mortally wounded in the ruins of her own castle. There the queen decided to use a spell that would transfer her power to her daughter and she swore that she would have her revenge on a certain day.

After Nightmare Moon's failed assault the queen's daughter decided to see what remained of the place where she had been born, she found it in the ruins with her mother lying dead in the middle of it. A fit of rage took her and she demanded that the responsible ponies would be punished severely. But princess Celestia refused to listen and said that she had already suffered enough and didn't anypony else to have to suffer for her mistakes. The older princess response angered the daughter even more who took her refuge

in magic and there found the spell her mother had used. There she vowed that she would fulfil her mothers wish for revenge but that she would go further than that, she would rebuild her the entire kingdom and take her revenge not only on princess Luna but also princess Celestia who she considered had hurt her more than the younger princess.

In order to avoid the attention of Canterlot, the daughter who now went under the name Apatite chose to build a village over the ruins of the castle. Beneath she formed the ground as to look like a natural cavern and from there she rebuilt the castle. Her revenge never came to pass but she left daughters that all continued her legacy. In order to contain all the magic a well was built in one of the room and one of the daughters became its guardian where she would have all her ancestors power. As time went on they learned how to transport that power to the daughters who didn't guard the well but one always had to guard the well.

Queen Verdite was the first one who changed it all, her first daughter remained a blank flank even up to her adulthood which pained the queen and fights were common among them. Things didn't grow better when the queen had another daughter who quickly found her cutie mark and the love of her mother. To make matters worse princess Luna returned and they can't even come to an agreement of when they should make their move.

Time is running out, may queen Verdite watch over them and make them go towards victory. Maybe we can use that against them, Twilight thought as she finished reading the summary. It hadn't given her the information she wanted about the spells but it did give hope that the spell powering the queen could be interrupted.

"We got to fight three of them?" Fleur asked sighing. "Why can I never be lucky for once?"

"Twilight!" Pinkie once again called out completely ignoring Fleur's complains. "I think this is a book you should read. It looks like even Verdite was reading this." Twilight quickly listened to

her friend and took the book and skimmed through it. On the front it read, *Magics of Life*, on the first page it was signed by queen Verdite who had even written down some page numbers. Most of the spells detailed in the book wasn't all too special even though she didn't know many of them, but it was the truly special spells she looked.

One of the spells had a large red ruby as the picture and she was about to skip it when she realised that Fleur's dress was full with red rubies. *There's something with them and rubies*. She quickly read through the description of the spell and requirements for committing it. It detailed a spell where the caster could store an anti magic aura that prevented ponies from using magic in a red ruby. Depending on the user's strength the area it would affect a larger or a smaller area. The anti magic aura constantly drains power from the user as long as it's active and should be turned off.

"Fleur, do you remember seeing a large red ruby being somewhere in this?" she asked and Fleur looked like she was thinking for a moment.

"Only on this dress I got," Fleur finally answered. "They didn't take me to so many rooms."

"They're too small to be the one we need," Twilight responded. "There was none in the room where Verdite was so it has to be in a place they feel it would be safe."

"What about the throne room?" Pinkie suggested. "That's where I would put mine if I had one." Twilight saw no reason not to try out the suggestion nor did she have a better one herself. For safety she packed the book down in her backpack where the other book had been. To her surprise she saw three bottles filled with a translucent fluid lying in the bottom of the backpack, she remembered what Sapphire had told her and she hesitated on keeping them. In the end she choose to move them over to her other bag to make room for the book and then followed Fleur with Pinkie silently watching the white unicorn's every single step.

The throne room was not much of a sight and Twilight really had expected to more out of

it. The room looked like it hadn't been used for a very long time as dust covered the floor. The walls were made out of regular stone and the throne itself was split in half with one part standing at the end of the room and the second part lying next to it. There were no windows or anything else in the room with the exception of the throne and the dust. They all headed directly to the broken throne where two red rubies lied stuck in the stone of the throne. *Now to destroy them.* She quickly checked in the book if there was any quick way to destroying the rubies but it stood of no such thing.

Two high crashes echoed through the room as Pinkie got bored of waiting and smashed the rubies with her hoof to the surprise of both unicorns.

"Pinkie, how'd you do that?" was all Twilight managed to say as she watched the broken pieces of the rubies. One of Equestria's strongest materials had been easily destroyed by a single kick like it only was glass.

"Just a little kick," Pinkie answered and forced a smile. "No big deal at all, unlike some others." Fleur was the first one to try her magic with a simple light spell that seemed to work fine and bring light to a room that need it. Twilight also used a weak spell and was relieved to see that it worked without draining so much power as her spells previously had done.

The aura contained within the rubies must have made them fragile, she thought as she laid up a plan with the other two ponies. It wasn't much of a plan really but she was confident that it would work now that the anti magic aura was gone. *It must have been weaker than intended and instead of preventing magic it made the caster weak, that has to be how.*

Her thought process was interrupted by a sudden and high laughing scream. "Power! It is finally mine! To all slaves who still remain, princess Luna is dead, her power completely drained and with it so is your hope of ever being free!" The laugh continued on as Twilight abandoned her plan and screamed at Fleur to lead the way to the well room, she recognised the voice as that of Verdite's. She refused to believe what was happening yet she had nothing to prove it different. Pinkie was trying to calm

her down but she pushed her friend away, all she could think about was princess Luna and how she once again had failed those who she cared about.

I am but a failure, she thought with tears rolling down her cheeks. *Princess Celestia is never going to want to see me ever again, why should she? She's a princess, she has no room for failures like me. One simple thing and I couldn't even carry that out.* She continued beating herself up out of disappointment as Verdite's laugh was becoming more distant but she could still hear it well, taunting her of her failure.

At the wall directly under one of the paintings of a red unicorn defeating a black winged unicorn princess Luna lied without any signs of movement. Twilight was quickly next to the princess checking for a pulse or anything else that could indicate that she was alive. Of that she found none and her tears landed on the princess body.

"Twilight I," Fleur started saying but interrupted herself as she found that no words could make the unicorn happy. Pinkie was also crying and she tried to hold Twilight up to no avail, the purple unicorn held on to the princess body using various spells to try and revive her.

"Princess," she cried out with a whisper. "I'm so sorry, forgive me for my failures." All she wanted was to remain where she was and not move anywhere until the princess came with her. Deep inside she knew that such a thing would never happen but she wanted to believe it was possible, that was all she had left.

"She isn't dead Twilight," Fleur said which brought a small glimmer of hope to Twilight.

"How'd you know?" Pinkie asked with a voice full of weakness as tears ran down into her mouth. "You should leave us, we don't want you here."

"Show me," Twilight said ignoring Pinkie's plead.

"Look into the light," Fleur answered as Twilight made her way to the well. It glowed a lot more than it had done when Verdite was sitting next to it. She stared into its middle but saw nothing

other than light spreading to different direction and soon thereafter retreating back into the well before it could reach far. Pinkie was screaming behind her to be careful and not listen as she moved her hooves into the light. It covered her with a warm feeling but she was hearing whispers everywhere around her. Whispers of pain, happiness and ruthlessness. Before she could do anything the whispers manifested into ponies, the ponies that the voices once belonged to before their power was absorbed. Ponies of all kind stood all around her but the one thing they had in common was that they all were unicorns. Multiple red unicorns were mocking her but they stood far away from the rest of the unicorns who were whispering things to her. In the far back, even further back than the red unicorns a translucent image of princess Luna was starting to appear growing more solid for every second.

"Luna!" she called out but the image of the princess didn't move at all, instead all the other unicorns were starting to approach her even closer. They scared as she didn't know how to fight them off and soon they completely covered the princess and she pulled out of the light to avoid the unicorns and the warm security from the light disappeared as quickly as it appeared. "She's dying. I don't know if this is going to work but it should." She pulled forth one of the bottles with the disgusting fluid she had gotten from Sapphire and with the help of Pinkie she made the princess drink it.

It took several minutes before the princess moved her legs slightly and Twilight jumped out of happiness. Luna's legs started kicking heavily and Twilight had to move away to avoid getting hit as they kicked the empty air. The princess wings was the next thing that started moving as she flapped up and down as if she was trying to fly. *I actually did it*, Twilight thought as a smile appeared on her face and she tried to wipe away the marks her tears had left on her face.

"I think she is dreaming," Pinkie suggested as Luna continued to move but with no signs of waking up. "It doesn't look like a good dream." She carefully shook the princess without it having any effect at all. Twilight did the same with her magic but she fated no better.

"Will she wake up?" Fleur asked.

"It's up to her," Twilight said determined and moved back to the light well. It was simply a theory she had and not one she truly believed, everything in here told her that the princess was gone regardless of her efforts. "I need to find a way to destroy this thing." A few tears rolled down her cheeks as she ventured into the light again. She didn't want to show it, she didn't want to show that she had given up all hope.

Chapter 7: Death of a Princess (Luna's Story)

Darkness was everywhere around her, no matter which direction she looked or how many times she close her eyes and opened them could she see anything other than darkness. The pain had stopped but not her regrets. Princess Luna was stuck in a place she had never heard of, it felt like she was floating on water but there were only air her hooves and wings touched when she moved them. She tried flying around but it seemed like she was getting nowhere.

After what felt like days for her a small glimmer of light appeared in the distance. For a moment she hesitated as she thought that maybe Equestria would be better off without her, her arrogance had led her to this place so maybe this is where she should be. Then she thought about what Verdite and Amber had been talking about, how they were planning on invading Canterlot. She didn't want to go on

because of her but because of the ponies that looked up to her, she decided that they deserved a princess that would help them no matter what and not give up and actually listen to them, something she had been to arrogant to do.

As she approached the light became brighter and she could make out a picture it showed. It was Canterlot and Bolivianite's castle but it was long after her fight with Ametrine together with Celestia. Soon she came close enough to the light to see ponies running around the grass fields and painlessly the light pulled her in with a flash that blinded her.

She felt a soft ground under her hooves and her surroundings were echoing of screams with the scent of smoke in the air. When she opened her eyes she truly saw what was going on, Nightmare Moon was flying above the stone castle with Ametrine standing below. Armoured ponies were running around all over the place in fear. The only light that reached the fields was that of the moon shyly lighting up the place. She realised that she was standing on a battlefield mere moments before her defeat at the hands of her sister but she only had vague memories of any fight before that, Verdite has spoken of her betrayal but she had a hard time believing it as she couldn't remember it. *So many memories repressed.*

"Why are you doing this?" Ametrine cried out clearly wounded as her castle was burning and falling to pieces. "We had a deal."

"You had a deal!" Nightmare Moon answered harshly and sent one of the castle's walls crumbling down. "I don't make deals with backstabbing ponies. Don't think I didn't know what you had planned, No wonder your own daughter abandoned you." Ametrine was sent flying back by Nightmare Moon's magic and it was clear that she was suffering.

"Maybe so," Ametrine answered coughing of pain. "But you'll never take Canterlot without me, my army is already gone and it will never join you. Princess Celestia will crush you, you were always the weak one."

"Look above you," Nightmare Moon responded laughing. "The night is above us and it

will last forever. I have already won." Ametrine stood firm against the winged unicorn's magic but had to give up and she fell down on the ground as another wall crumbled down under Nightmare Moon's magic. Luna was running towards the place where the fight was occurring but she didn't think it would matter, what had happened the last time she saw Ametrine was still fresh in her memory and she saw no reason for it to be different this time. But she couldn't help to curse herself for becoming such a monster, she had never liked Ametrine but she never could see herself doing something like this. She apologised in her mind over the horrors she committed to try and put her mind to rest.

"The very least you can do is spare my daughter," Ametrine coughed out. "She doesn't deserve any of this."

"As long as she obeys under the night," Nightmare Moon laughed out as an answer and used her magic to have a third castle wall crash down upon Ametrine.

"No!" Luna screamed but no pony seemed to hear her. Nightmare Moon flew off laughing as Luna was left alone at the ruined castle. From her castle a light reached up to the moon, she knew what it was and it pained her seeing it but she couldn't help but wonder how it all had happen so fast. One moment Nightmare Moon had been next to her and the next she had been banished to the moon. *What have I become?* she thought and noticed that there were no more screams, all ponies were gone and the castle had stopped burning.

"When the princess is all alone!" a voice screamed from within the castle that she recognised as Ametrine's. "Travels and parties will keep those close to her occupied and her castle will be her final resting place!"

"I'm sorry," she muttered out as the words pained from within, there's so much she regretted but so little she could do anything about it. She took off towards Canterlot when she hear sobbing sounds and out of curiosity she decided to check it out where it came from.

"Mother, please wake up," a little red filly unicorn said crying over Ametrine's body.

"Please wake up, you can't leave me like this. I need you, I'm sorry I chose to study with princess Celestia, she were never there for me like you were."

"What is happening here?" Luna asked herself with a whisper confused over how Ametrine's body could have gone from being buried under rock to outside the castle so quickly. "Canterlot should have the answers, I'm sorry young child. Your mother were an evil being but not even she deserved this fate. Why wouldn't Celestia listen to me?"

"How dare you say so?" the filly asked her angrily with tears in her eyes. "You, you did this to her. It's only right that you share her fate." The words took Luna off guard as she turned around she saw that the filly was looking up at her with angry eyes.

"You can see me?" Luna asked confused and started moving backwards.

"I see your death, princess Luna!" the filly screamed as she grew to the size of her mother in a few seconds. A cutie mark of the moon falling from the sky appeared on the red unicorn's flank. "I'm queen Apatite and you shall pay for what you have done."

"I'm sorry for what I did to your mother" Luna responded, the unicorn scared her even though she didn't want to show it, the whole place scared her. She took one look towards Canterlot in hope to get braver. There she saw her sister covered in light and smiling down on her. She remembered Celestia doing the same to encourage her when they first fought Ametrine, it gave her a warm feeling inside of her as it all returned to her, all her memories and knowledge of the events struck her down and she remembered it all. She remembered that she is not sorry at all. "If my sister would have listened to me your mother would have lost her right to rule and then this would never have happened. Many ponies died here because of me and I'm truly sorry for that, I'm also sorry for the pain this has caused you and your family. But it had to be done, maybe not like this but she couldn't rule anymore. I remember it all now, I've been beating myself up because of this when I shouldn't have. I thought I was sorry but not anymore, I'm ready to finish this."

The words seemed to have made Apatite confused as she stood still for awhile before she finally spoke again. "Say whatever you want I will still destroy you for what you've done."

"Your mother hit you so much that you almost died," Luna said encourage by her new found memories. She could feel that they were real, that she had known it all once before but she wondered why she had repressed it. "That's why you took refuge with Celestia. Your mother wanted to take over the world and make unicorns the supreme rulers while everypony else got repressed. That's what your kingdom consisted of, fight me all you want but it will not change the truth. Nothing you do will change it, I know as I tried to do it. I believed it all too much, I should have listened to myself and my friends instead."

Apatite didn't respond instead she made her attack with waves of red magic. Luna only closed her eyes as she blocked it all with her shield. It felt good for to finally feel that she could use her magic again without going so weak. In a sudden move she counterattacked when Apatite lowered her guard for a second, her magic projectile sent the red unicorn flying down on the ground. Apatite tried getting back on her hooves but Luna had it all under control now and she kept the queen down on the ground.

"You're not worth it," Luna said to the weak unicorn who had given up on trying to fight back. "If this isn't a dream, then don't become like your mother. Nothing good will come out of it, but this is just my death." The realisation had come at the same time as she had remembered everything. It had made sense to her that it was happening, she just didn't expect it to happen like it did. But it didn't scare her, she felt ready to move on knowing that she finally became at peace with herself.

She looked up again to where she had seen Celestia but her sister weren't there any longer and the world around her was quickly disappearing. *You were always there for me sister, but I ignored it. Now it's up to you to save the world. You are my guiding star at this final moment, thank you.* She closed her eyes and waited for it, she knew it wouldn't be long now and she felt prepared. There were still things

she wanted that, but she figured that everypony had that, she had made peace with herself and that meant a lot for her. Her final thoughts went out to the ponies she felt like she should have listened to, then she thought and felt no more.

A large explosion woke her up in the most awkward situation she had been in for a long time. To her surprise a pink pony was sitting next to her talking with a white unicorn. It didn't sound like they were having a nice talk about things. The walls around her had the same golden paintings as the room where she had been defeated. From the middle a purple unicorn walked out of pillar of smoke and she didn't look like she was in the best of conditions. She realised that she was in the room where she had fought Verdite and Amber but lost and somehow she was still alive.

"Princess Luna!" the purple unicorn who she recognised as Twilight Sparkle screamed out in joy and ran up to her. Pinkie Pie and the white unicorn she recognised but didn't know stopped their arguments and turned around to see what it all was about. "I thought you were..." Twilight never finished her sentence as Pinkie interrupted her.

"You're alive princess!" Pinkie shouted out and gave Luna a hug that forced them both to the ground. "I never stopped believing. We need to celebrate this with a party."

"It deserves to be celebrated but no parties please," the white unicorn said. She looked happy as well but she was the most quiet one of the three. "I hope I don't need to remind you what happened before Pinkie, my hooves can't take much more of this."

Luna didn't feel any pain and she felt like she had been resting so long that it cured every ill she had. Slowly she took herself up to her hooves again but not without wondering if it was just another dream. She looked on Twilight and it all seemed real, but so had everything in her dreams done but this looked more present. "I'm sorry Twilight, it was foolish of me to not listen to you. I should have known better, I do now but it's too late."

"It's never too late." Twilight responded with a few tears of joy appearing in her eyes.

"Your back and that means more than anything else. How do you feel?"

"Like I've slept forever," Luna responded and took notice that neither Amber nor Verdite was in the room. She knew what it meant and it was the last thing she wanted to have to deal with right now but she made a promise and she intended to keep it. "They're going to invade Canterlot. I can't sit by and watch it happen, but I don't know how to defeat them."

"We know," Pinkie responded. "A young filly has already made all the ponies there into scary servants, we almost became the same, but we got out."

"I think I know," Twilight said and looked down into the destroyed well where smoke emerged from where light had previously done so. "They were using rubies to distort our magic but they are destroyed now and so is the well. It took a lot of magic but I managed to do it. I believe I can defeat them now that their power is gone but you shouldn't go, you almost died there."

"It is my responsibility as a princess to defend those who look up to me," Luna answered determined. "I will not sit by and let it happen, I am the cause of this. I killed queen Ametrine and that's why they are doing this now. I ask you to help me, I can't go up against them alone. Will you all do me the honour?"

"Of course we will," Twilight responded for all three of them. "We need to be quick if we're going to get there before them, they are leading an army so they'll be slow. But before we go you need to drink this, and no spitting out." She pulled out a bottle containing a translucent fluid. Luna agreed to drinking it as she wanted to honour her promise and actually listen. The fluid had a disgusting taste that almost made her throw it up but she managed to keep it down by sheer force of will. It didn't make her feel any different but she figured Twilight had a reason for having her drink it.

"I should be able to carry you all on my back," she said forcing the last of the fluid down her throat and leaving a not so good smelling breath. "We'll move faster in the air then we'll do on the ground."

"I'm not going," the white unicorn declared loudly to everyponies surprise. "Don't get me wrong princess, I would be honoured to go with somepony royal as you. There's lots of slave workers here still trapped, I know where they are and I think they might be able to help us."

"Do so Fleur," Twilight responded. "We'll rendezvous at the Canterlot entrance during dawn. Pinkie, I think she has earned herself your friendship by now, sobcan you go with her? The faster you can free them the better."

Pinkie looked suspiciously on Fleur for a little while before she replied very unenthusiastic. "Okey, dokey, lokey." That was all Twilight needed to her and with the help of Luna she managed to seat herself on the princess's back. They waved each other off and wished good luck to the other team and Luna took off flying in a high speed. She remembered how to get out of the castle and with the exception of the tight hallways it went easy.

When they finally exited the castle the courtyard and the nearby cavern was completely empty and the armies Luna had seen when she arrived only had broken armour and weapons littered on the ground as as proof they ever existed. She had to walk up for the staircase into the abandoned house that served as the entrance to the cavern. Once outside of the house she could resume her flight, the animals that had made the village their home earlier where mostly gone and only a few stray ones remained. Equipment that previously had been left in the open had been destroyed and arrows covered the walls of the village houses.

"How did it feel?" Twilight asked out of curiosity.

"Like nothing I had ever imagined," Luna answered not really wanting to discuss the subject. "I learned what I had abandoned. But lets not focus on the past now, we have more important things to focus on now." Twilight didn't respond but Luna guessed that the unicorn had nodded as a response. Carrying her was easier than the princess first had thought it would be which she was glad for but she could still feel the weight upon her.

Canterlot had been visible all the way from the village but it was first when they flew over an army of unicorns around halfway there that Luna saw how the state of the city. Fire was spreading everywhere but the smoke weren't reaching far above the city which it hard to see from a distance. One of the castle towers had crumbled down and broken the roof on a part of the main castle but no fire was visible there. The sight only served to make her angry but she couldn't focus so much on it as the unicorn army had discovered her and were trying to bring her down. They were no problem for her to fend off and she didn't want to waste any energy on them as she soon would outfly them but it still took a lot of her concentration to keep out of the way of the attacks.

"How is the state of the city?" Luna asked when they finally reached far out of the army's range and she could divert her attention towards other matters. "Pinkie mentioned that a filly had taken over control of the inhabitants, is there anything else I should know?"

"It's only unicorns the filly has taken control over," Twilight responded. "I didn't get to see any others but from what I heard it sounded like the rest was partying. The filly looked royal and she took control of the unicorns by some kind of song, it almost caught Fleur and me but Pinkie was unable to hear anything."

"Sounds like the heirs of Ametrine, she was always convinced of the unicorns superiority. Seems likely that her heirs are the same."

"We should probably take it easy and check how things are looking. Much have changed since me and Pinkie were there. We don't know either if they brought with them one of those magic blocking rubies nor how Verdite has been affected by the destruction of the light well." Luna agreed on it and landed on one of the castle's still remaining towers and Twilight jumped off her back.

Not much had changed in the interior of the castle, a few burn marks on the walls and some of the furniture had been destroyed but other than that the castle still had its colourful look. They carefully looked through most of the rooms still untouched by the destruction but the whole castle looked

like it had been left alone from the army. Luna theorised that it had something to do with both her and Celestia not being in the castle which made the castle a quiet uninteresting target.

"How dare you sister?" a familiar voice said from the grand hall which had been hit the hardest from the falling tower. The door into the room had been broken down which gave Luna a good sight in to it but she couldn't see the pony who the voice belonged to.

"Relax blank flank," a much younger voice said and Luna figured it was Amber's sister. "This whole city belongs to me now, everypony here are rallying under my call. Not even this pathetic princess Celestia can stand a chance against me."

"You're still an untested filly!" Amber responded harshly with an anger in her voice. "This city was to be left in good condition. You on the other hoof is burning it down to the ground. This was meant to be my city."

"Our mother might tolerate you for now but it won't last long," the younger voice said untouched by the words. "You are nothing but a disgrace to our family, running around pretending you have a cutie mark. Mother was always secretly disappointed that she ever had you, that's why she entrusted the most important part of our plan to me." Amber screamed a few words in a fit of rage as a response but her sister didn't seem to care as the sound of a door closing could be heard.

"Stay here and observe," Luna whispered to Twilight. "When the moment comes, do what you must do." Twilight seemed to agree so the princess moved into the grand hall without trying to be hidden. She had seen Amber's cutie mark with her own eyes but the talk of Amber lacking a cutie mark made her suspicious that the rubies she had thought to be a cutie mark instead were magic blockers similar to the ones Twilight had spoken.

Amber looked surprise when Luna entered the room but the red unicorn quickly hid her feelings away. The room was a mess and where lots of space had once existed only a little remained, broken roofs and parts of the fallen tower covered the place and the tower itself lied in the middle

blocking of the way to the other with the exception of a few small areas where one could slip through. Where parties once had been held, only destruction remained.

"So you're alive?" Amber asked angrily but Luna ignored the question. She looked around the room in signs for other ponies but she couldn't find any, she was alone with Amber. The rubies were still on the red unicorn's flank and they looked as real as a cutie mark could be. "You survived but you come back here to die."

"How much do you know about your ancestors?" Luna asked trying to win time. "You're fighting a battle over something that never concerned you."

"I know you killed one of my ancestors, what else do I need to know.?" The rubies started glowing and Luna figured that they had been activated but she didn't dare to try using magic to test her theory or attack without magic as she still didn't know how powerful Amber is.

"Did we really?" Luna asked in an attempt to confuse the unicorn. "She did it to herself, queen Ametrine wasn't the ruler you think she is. I heard you and your sister fight, is that how you want to continue? That is how Ametrine was, letting some ponies be worth nothing."

"You know nothing so don't talk!" Amber responded with an intense anger in her voice. She seemed to have wanted to attack but something was stopping her. "I am the most important in my family, I trapped you and if I would have taken your power you would have been dead by now!"

"But it wasn't you who did it," Luna said watching the hatred burn inside the unicorn's eyes and she was trying to use it to her advantage. The battle of words between them had changed from just standing still to moving around each other and she was hoping to bring Amber close to the entrance where Twilight hopefully could do something. "Your judgement weren't considered good enough. We know how it feels because we thought our sister treated us the same way you are being treated. We were wrong but there's no mistaking how they are treating, it must hurt so badly inside of you."

The blow came swift and caught both Luna and Amber off guard but it was the red

unicorns who took both Twilight's hits which forced her down to the ground in pain with shattered pieces of the red rubies flying around the room. Her light red coat was visible from where the rubies had been placed and it was a much lighter colour than the rest of her red coat. She took no time with waiting but furiously attacked both Luna and Twilight with her magic but was blocked by a cobalt blue shield.

The attack went on for minutes without stop but Luna could hold her shield intact without much effort while Twilight counterattacked as much as she could. Neither side looked close to winning the fight but Luna had seen the red unicorns power and had already conducted a plan on defeating her if she refused to grab sense.

"Where's your power now?" Luna asked taunting Amber. "Back in our castle you were powerful enough to attack us with those rubies activated. Where is that power now? You can't blame it all on the well being destroyed."

"My mother and sister has it all," Amber responded with an unsure voice and lowered her attack and defence. One of Twilight's spells hit her but she managed to hold her balance but it looked painful. "The well has nothing to do with it. My mother always hold the control of the power and she determined who would have it, I had for awhile when I captured you and during our fight in the castle. But she took it away once she had your power, she doesn't need the well anymore to hold all that power. My sister took my army that I rallied, this city was supposed to mine after we captured it. Take a look on it now, it's being burnt down to the ground and when my mother comes, nothing will remain of it. I always wanted to see you dead, I've been blind for what has been going on around me because of it."

Luna tried to feel compassion for the red unicorn but she had her doubts if it where real or not but when small teardrops formed in Amber's eyes most of her doubts disappeared. "It does not change what you have done so far but you can make sure it doesn't escalate any further. When is Verdite coming here and how do we stop your sister.?"

"I don't know," Amber replied and fell down crying on the ground. "She never told me,

just that she would meet me here. As for Melanite, you can't defeat her nor my mother. It's all too late now, they're too powerful and it's my fault. Will you forgive me?"

"We'll forgive you for now," Luna said seeing herself in the young unicorn. "Come Twilight, we have no time to waste."

"What about her?" Twilight asked. "We can't just leave her here. She could be capable of helping us."

"That is up to her to decide when the time is right." She remembered how she had been when she asked her sister for forgiveness and it was not in a condition where she was able to do much afterwards. Twilight agreed on it and as they left the room Amber said one final goodbye.

"Princess," she said still tear eyed. "I still want to see you dead." Luna forced a grin as a reply but hoped that it wouldn't never go as far as the words indicated.

Two left I hope, she thought while sharing some thoughts with Twilight. She avoided the subjects she didn't want to speak about that the purple unicorn was interested in but Twilight seemed quite fine with it, although Luna knew it bugged the unicorn that she wouldn't get to know the answers. As the castle was empty they didn't take any precautions while talking and they could get to the entrance hall without any issues. The hall had fared worse than most of the castle and the spark of life it usually had was gone and replaced with sliced rugs, burnt walls and even some parts of the roof had fallen down with debris blocking some parts of the hall off. The main entrance door had been broken down and lied on the floor giving access to the castle to everypony.

It hurt her to see the second castle she could call home in such a state similar to her first. Silently for herself she swore that the ones responsible would pay for it but she quickly caught herself in the act of becoming just like Verdite and she took it all back, under no circumstances did she want to become a creature obsessed with revenged.

The outside of the castle dazed her for a second as she stood on the hill overlooking the

city and tried to understand if what she was seeing truly was real. That the city burned she had already known but what she hadn't expected to see was unicorns she remembered from the castle happily walking close to the fires and sometimes even lit it up even more. If something wasn't on fire it wouldn't be long until somepony set it on fire. All around the streets certain unicorns stood using their magic to get rid of the smoke that otherwise would have crowded the city. Other ponies were being led away in chains by armoured unicorns and among them a parade of unicorns were walking. It wasn't a parade of the enemy soldiers but of ponies she had seen when she watched over the city, the ones she never listened to. In the middle of the parade a red coated filly with blood red mane and tail was being carried in an open sedan chair. The filly's cutie mark was a crown with red stains and Luna knew that it was princess Melanite. All the ponies around her looked like they were having the time of the life with all the cheering and screaming they were doing.

"What has she done?" Luna asked with an anger in her voice. Seeing the inhabitants of the city love their conquerer more than they ever loved her made her eyes glisten with anger and if it wouldn't have been for Twilight she would have rushed down without thinking, anger was overcoming her just like it had when she became Nightmare Moon. In the distance horns were sounding and she could see the army she flew past going up to the gates of the city.

"I have a plan," Twilight said after she had observed the situation. "It's a risky one, but I think we can pull it off."

"That's more than I have," Luna admitted glowing with anger. "Anything but waiting for something that might not come."

Twilight smiled and started casting a few magic spells around the area before she chocked the princess, "Hey princess lazy!" Her call echoed through the streets where it reached Melanite who didn't look very pleased with what she was hearing. "I'm right here and avoiding you!" Twilight continued taunting.

"What is the next step of the plan?" Luna asked not having a single idea of how this was a good idea from the beginning. But she stood firm preparing herself for the battle as the armed unicorns were starting to run towards her under Melanite's command. She had no idea how strong the filly was but she was ready to take that risk.

"Run!" Twilight said to Luna's surprise and as the purple unicorn took her refugee in the castle the princess of the night remained ready to take them all on. "Princess Luna, you have to come. if the plan is to work you can't fight them off here." Twilight continued calling on Luna who at first didn't seem to listen.

She wondered if she could actually take them all on, her arrogance had almost led to her demise earlier. She blasted off the first wave of armed unicorns while blocking their attacks and decided to listen so she retreated back towards the castle where Twilight anxiously was waiting.

"Stop you coward," Melanite screamed from behind Luna and a large projectile passed by her in close range. It hit the wall of the castle directly over where the door once had stood. The entire outer wall collapsed under the impact of the projectile and she had to raise her shield to block falling debris from falling on her. The debris blocked off most of the entrance and it was too risky for her to fly in while it continued to collapse so she blasted off a second wave of armed unicorns and did the only thing she thought she could do in the situations she was in.

"Princess Luna?" Twilight called from within the castle. "Where are you, are you okay.?" Luna was pleased to know that the purple unicorn had made it out okay and she took off into the air to face Melanite.

"Come down here!" the red princess screamed at her clearly jealous of their differences. "Are you too afraid to face me?"

Luna blasted off the unicorns surrounding Melanite and looked the princess in the eyes while keeping herself in the air. "You are the one hiding behind your guards. This city is under our watch,

and we will not let you defile it any longer."

The filly grinned at her when she moved out of the sedan chair. "My sister, always the incompetent fool. You're still here and that's her fault. Do you hear that in the distance? It's my mother coming to get you." Luna had heard the horns and seen the army at the gate but now a red unicorn covered in light was walking among the soldiers and it looked like they were admiring the unicorn.

Verdite, she cursed the name and the moment the queen arrived at. She barely knew the extent of the filly who she thought had matured very quickly powers, having to deal with her mother as well when she still could remember the feeling of how her power was drained from her. She blocked off Melanite's attack as the light covered unicorn entered the city and gave away a high screech. The power of the filly was surprisingly strong for a pony at that age but Luna felt that she could probably win the fight if she could do it one on one but she knew the screech meant that she had been discovered and unicorns from all over the city was coming to assist their new princess against her. She had but one advantage, her wings and she intended to push them to their limit.

Chapter 8: A Kiss in the Dark (Fleur's Story)

Fleur de Lis stood amidst the smoke coming from the destroyed well and watched how princess Luna flew away with Twilight. She admired the princess and most of the royal ponies and usually she would have done anything to help her, even the most simplest of task. But now she felt that she had to amend for what she did but fighting was not something she was good at and she knew that following the princess would only lead to fighting, she intended to do this her way. Pinkie Pie that had been asked by Twilight to stay was looking at her quite intensively, the pink pony had done so their entire stay during the castle. It annoyed her that she wasn't being trusted but she blamed herself over it and she wouldn't have minded some time alone to cry, her hooves were aching badly from all the walking and she had been mere centimetres from being killed. The only positive thing about the entire day had been the beautiful red dress decorated with red rubies and fitted her perfectly. *Back home they're going to be so jealous of this,* she thought.

"Are we going or was this your way of ditching us again?" Pinkie asked standing at the exit to the hallway. The pink pony had been very happy and outgoing when she first met her but as their stay in the castle grew longer she had only gotten more bitter and most of it was directed towards Fleur. They even managed to have a fight when they thought princess Luna was dead, apparently Pinkie had thought that she had shown enough emotions. She had been raised in a high elite family where the only feeling one was to express was happiness, that way of thinking had stuck with her for as long as she remembered but it had been a great benefit in the fashion industry. On the inside however she was crying. Pinkie had shown a moment of going back to the outgoing and happy pony she had been when Fleur first met her when princess Luna woke up but afterwards she had gone back to being bitter.

"I'm coming," Fleur replied trying to sound happy and not being worried at all over the

looks she was receiving. She figured Pinkie hated being with her a lot and only accepted it because it was her friend who asked her to stay. "We need to get to the courtyard first."

With the exception of Fleur's hooves the walk to the courtyard was without any accidents happening but the walk had been quiet and awkward for both of them. The courtyard was empty unlike when Fleur had gotten there together with the green unicorn and his half false promises of jewels and being a princess. Soldiers had been training heavily but when they arrived the green unicorn told them all to hide and call in patrols as more ponies were most likely coming. After that she had been taken down a few dark tunnels until she got to an area where lots of ponies were working as slaves. She had believed that they were doing it out of their own will and getting payed for it. While they were there he had pulled out the dress she was wearing from an old chest and said that it was the old queen Ametrine's favourite dress, he had even dressed her there under the looks of all the slaves and they didn't seem pleased by it. It was probably just a cheap dress that did not belong on a queen but she still liked it and saw no reason for it not to have real rubies seeing how much of it there was in the cavern. Now that she thinks about it she can't ever remember getting his name.

What a fool I was, she thought when she found the entrance to the dark tunnel she had been taken down through. Even though she was no mastermind with magic she still knew the basics of it and summoned forth a light to guide their path down. The tunnel was just as damp as she remembered it being. If she wouldn't have been down there before it would have scared the life of her and it didn't make it any better that she feared that Pinkie would push her down the tunnel any minute.

Sounds from pickaxes hitting the minerals was getting louder the further down they went and Fleur started to slightly worry if the ponies down there would recognise her, the thought made her slow down a little bit.

"Keep going," Pinkie said, who had obviously noticed Fleur's hesitation. She received a small push on her back from the straight maned earth pony and resumed her descent down.

The ground under her hooves changed from cold solid stone to cold but crumbled stone. She had reached the lowest cavern, and as far as her light could let her see there were ponies working everywhere with. Some of them looked very beat down, and some had just recently started working again as they noticed her and Pinkie coming down. There was no supervisor and she thought that she was one. No pony even dared to look her way, but it was clear to her that their presence was known.

"We're here to help," Fleur said to all the ponies working in the cavern. "You'll all be free soon." The ponies started muttering amongst themselves over it, but she didn't listen and went up to a yellow pegasi with a green mane. She looked incredibly thin and ready to fall any second, on her left hind hoof a large steel chain locked her secure within the cavern. It looked extremely hard, and she imagined that it would take a lot of her magic to break the chain, but with the amount of chained ponies in the cavern, it was something she couldn't afford. The lock on the chain looked very simple, but she had never done any lock picking in her life. *Please work.* The lock glowed up in light pink and after a few seconds a click could be heard, and the pegasi was released from the chain. She looked at Fleur saddened and waiting for approval for a second before running to Pinkie for comfort. It hurt Fleur a little, seeing the pink pony being so glad and friendly towards the pegasi.

Chain after chain got unlocked, and pony after pony got free. She was glad that her little spell had worked, but it was more of a guess from her side than a spell she had learned. Although she was the one freeing all the ponies, Pinkie was the one getting all the credit. Already a large crowd had gathered around the pink pony and they all giggled, she imagined that it was something new for them. When it came to her, they all shied away. She didn't know why, but she thought it was because they recognised her. *They probably think I'm one of them.* Usually she was a pony ponies wanted to be around but now it all seemed to have changed for the worst.

The last pony she freed from the chain also fled from her and sought refuge with Pinkie. It had been a simple spell but casting it so many times as she done made her feel weak. She wasn't used to

using her magic intensely, so this was something very new for her. "Was that all?" She asked it in hopes for a honest answer of gratitude, but the laughs had stopped when she approached the crowd. The only positive thing about it was that Pinkie actually was smiling towards her in the way she remembered from Canterlot, her works of amending seemed to work.

"That was all of us," the yellow pegasi that she had freed first answered. "Thank you Pinkie, if you wouldn't have captured the queen's servant, then we would never have been freed. But now I think it's time to leave her here, so that she can feel what we had to endure."

Fleur couldn't understand what was happening, she had been the one to free them all on her own initiative, but somehow they had twisted it around and made it all Pinkie's accomplishment. And wanting to trap her in the cavern, she could barely stand it when she wasn't alone. She didn't want to think how she would react if she was left trapped here. She looked pleading towards Pinkie hoping for an answer, that it had all just been a misunderstanding.

"We can't do that," Pinkie said to the crowd of ponies. "She had stayed true to her word, I think I can forgive her little mishap. If it wouldn't have been for her, then I wouldn't have met all of you guys. And that wouldn't have been fun for any of us."

"Some of us saw you and your unicorn friend when you arrived here," a grey earth pony with a red mane and tomatoes for a cutie mark. "We didn't see her with you, we saw her here, with one of the queen's most loyal guardians, and she received the queen's royal dress! We are not going anywhere with her!" Other ponies stood up as well and declared that they refused to go anywhere with Fleur.

The words teared a rift inside of Fleur, never before had she been so loathed as she was now. Ponies had envied her before, but never outright hated her. The one pony who was on her side looked confused and was unable to do anything, that was if she really was on her side. She didn't know, the mind of Pinkie had been strange. She wanted to express how much she regretted going with the unicorn, but she felt that no pony would listen. Pinkie already knew about it, as she had mentioned it

when they fought, it did little good then.

"She did join the enemy," Pinkie said slightly confused over the situation. "But Twilight told me that she had earned her place back, I agree with her now that she has saved you all."

"A traitor will always be a traitor!" the yellow pegasi declared loudly. "She has corrupted your mind."

Some of the ponies lifted Pinkie up to her demands of being let down. Others took their pickaxes and started hammering on the tunnel leading up to safety. They all shared one thing however, and that was that they all tried to leave Fleur behind. The walls of the tunnel crumbled down before her eyes as the ponies with the pickaxes retreated, she had freed them and now they left her for a horrible fate. A pile of stone blocked the staircase up, even if she hadn't used her magic to release the ponies, she still wouldn't have been able to clear them. She made a call for help to Pinkie, but all it did was echo through the cavern. She doubted it would reach her, and if it did, Pinkie still couldn't do anything to help her.

Her small glimmer of pink light, was all that kept the cavern lit up so that she could see. She was trying to hold it back but tears rolled down her cheeks, no pony was around to see her, yet she still didn't want to look sad. She was panicking on the inside and just wanted to sit where she was and wait for help, like how princess Luna had rescued her. Pinkie knew where she was, so there was still some hope of history repeating itself. All she had wanted to do was to help, Canterlot was her city as well, but never did she imagine that she would be the one to be trapped by the ones she saved. Was this her punishment for what she had done?

She felt something wet touching her left cheek, and when she turned around to see what it was, she saw a red pegasus filly. The filly had a blood red coloured mane and tail, there was no cutie mark on her, but she looked very cute. Fleur remembered freeing the filly but apparently she must have been left by the others as well. Fleur wiped her tears off trying to hide how she really felt, just like she had learned. "Come." The filly's word was straight to the point and indicated no fear.

"Where?" Fleur asked, she saw no exit, and she hadn't seen one when she was there with the green unicorn either. They had taken the same way back but now that way was blocked off. Yet she followed the little filly, if anypony is to know something about the cavern, it would be a pony that had worked there.

"Use your dress," the filly said when they arrived to a wall made of ruby, it looked like it was a part of the new castle.

"How?" Fleur asked. "Who are you?" What had her dress to do with any of this, it was beautiful, but it was most likely a cheap rip off and not the kind of dress she had been told it was. "What are you doing?" The filly had started pressing the rubies on her dress and it worried her, her questions were being ignored and the filly acted very strange.

A red light blinded her for quite some time. While she was closing her eyes due to the immense light, she could hear a loud rumbling coming from the wall she stood next to. *What's happening?* She slowly opened her eyes as much as she could to try and see, the light was emitting from the wall and hitting the rubies on her dress.

"Quickly now," the filly said and Fleur could see a small shape walk through the wall. It took quite some time for eyes to grow accustomed to the light, but when they did she saw that in the wall a small passageway had been opened up. She had her doubts about going in there as it didn't look pretty.

Be brave now, she thought. The filly had been courageous enough to walk in, so why wouldn't she? And she had no better idea on where to go. Slowly she moved in, taking care that her light always was a bit in front of her, so that if anything came she would see it far in advance. The tunnel wasn't cold and damp like the rest of the cavern, instead it was warm and comfy.

The tunnel didn't last for long, and soon she found herself standing in a circular room with ruby walls and a pedestal in the middle. On the pedestal a large ruby lied, it didn't look different from any of the other rubies, but she figured it must have a high value for being hidden. The filly stood

next to the pedestal and watched how she had entered the room. Just like the tunnel it was warm and comfy.

"Herein lies queen Ametrine's real power," the filly said to Fleur's confusion.

"Where am I?" Fleur asked. "What is this place? Why did you lead me here?" From what she could see there was no exit other than the one she had come from, she was still stuck in the same situation as before, only in a different place. She sighed at the thought, there was no getting out for her, that thing was truly clear to her now. The little filly had sparked hope within her of escaping, all in vain.

"Her power sealed away," the filly said, ignoring Fleur's question. "Not even her daughters know about it. You need to take this to Amber, she'll know what to do with it."

"Who's Amber?" Fleur didn't want to give something to one of her enemies and the name Amber sounded very much like one of the queens.

"My granddaughter," the filly admitted causing Fleur to grow more confused. "She doesn't deserve the hate she is receiving, I'm saddened things had to come to this. Over the years, trapped here, I have learned, but my daughters haven't. I was always hidden, first and foremost by own magic, then my own key. Tell princess Luna that I am sorry. I understand. Now go, waste no time!"

"Ametrine," Fleur muttered as the filly faded away into dust. She couldn't believe what she had just seen, an ancient queen had stood before her, yet it should have been impossible, the queen was long dead. She bit herself hard on her lip to make sure she wasn't dreaming, it only hurt. "Leave me out of this, I just want to go home." Her voice shivered at the thought of it, of how her home would look like. She had been lucky that she managed to avoid getting enslaved by the red filly, but she still had to face her in order to return. *Don't have me doing anything else after this, whoever you was.*

As she didn't see any other way out of the room she started to levitate the ruby, wondering if maybe she could use the rubies power to mend her hoof pain, if there even was any power in it. She was from sure of it, but the ruby weighed a lot to her surprise. She had some earlier experience

with gemstones and although it was large it was still too small to be of the weight it was. While she had been capable of keeping her light active while she unlocked the chains, the rubies weight combined with her already used magic, forced her to sacrifice one of her spells. The dress didn't contain any pockets and there didn't seem to be any way to make the ruby stick to the dress without material. She sighed and dismissed her light, leaving the room in an uncomfortable darkness, only her dim magic light around the ruby could be seen.

A similar sounding rumble to the one that had opened the secret passageway to the ruby, came from the room but she couldn't locate its location precisely. A small light of sunshine poured through an opening behind the pedestal that revealed a stair case. Her relief was huge over it, finally she would be rid of this horrible cavern and castle.

The staircase was small and went up in a very small circle that forced her to move slowly, even though she was slim her length caused some issues with the stairs. She walked upwards for a very long time and even lost her sense of time. The stair walking didn't make her hooves feel any better and the library hadn't been of any use at all. The ruby only emitted a strange presence and if there was any power in it, she hadn't figure out how to access it.

After an eternity of walking she came to where the stairs stopped at a large light source. She hadn't seen anything like it before, it consisted of diamond making up a window looking part and a small ruby tunnel that led upwards, it seemed like the tunnel caught sunlight and transmitted it to the diamond glass which made it spread throughout the entire staircase. But she didn't care about such things, only the small ladder to the side was of interest to her. It led up to the roof, and she imagined that there was a way to get it open. She dropped the ruby and used her magic to easily open a small part of the roof that led to the outside. Before climbing out she picked up the ruby again with her magic.

The ladder led to the outside, and she found herself a fair bit away from the village where she had first entered the castle, she was finally out. In the sky multiple pegasi flew towards Yanhoover.

Earth ponies were running to the same direction at a nearby road, none of them noticed Fleur climbing out with the ruby levitated by her side. *All for nothing*, she thought disappointed. *I could have been of more use in Canterlot*. The city with its castle rose up atop its mountain beneath the moon, it was almost dawn, and she was nowhere near the city.

She trotted down through the ruined village, not even the animals were around anymore. Arrows covered the walls of the houses and a lot of the farmer equipment was broken, it was no secret that an army had passed by.

"And then I jumped in and fought the evil queen," she heard a well too familiar voice say from nearby. "It was a fight for life and death. Twilight was down, and I was all that remained. In one crucial moment I had everything set up and about to win, but then her stupid daughter came in and took me by surprise. The next time she won't be so easy."

"Hi Pinkie" Fleur said when she had caught up with Pinkie. She smiled uncomfortably, she was very unsure of the pink pony's opinions of her. Two earth ponies and three pegasi walked with the curly maned pony, and it looked like they were all having a good time.

"Fleur!" Pinkie called out in a happy tone, but Fleur could see that her companions were slowly retreating. "You're alive. I knew it, I knew it, I knew it." The white unicorn had not time to react but fell to the ground when Pinkie surprised hugged her.

"So we're fine?" Fleur squeezed out while dropping the ruby.

"Twilight's right, you've proven yourself enough. So of course we're fine. You really need to meet my new friends that you saved. They were the only ones that dared to stay, all the others left. And don't you go leaving me again, okay? It really hurt."

"I won't" Fleur said smiling, things had finally started to look bright for her. "Your mane, it changed, again. How do you find the time to fix it?"

"I don't," Pinkie answered bouncing back to her new friends. "I just had a feeling that

you, Twilight and princess Luna are alright. And I got five new friends. You really need to meet them."

"I wouldn't mind some help carrying this ruby, it's weighing me down," Fleur suggested but Pinkie's new friends just retreated away from her even more when she levitated the ruby back up.

"Its cursed!" the dark blue pegasi declared.

"Don't be silly," Pinkie said defending the unicorn. "Its just a ruby, it doesn't even look like those bad magic ones. And Fleur wouldn't carry around a cursed stone, she's so much more than that."

"Not the ruby," the green earth pony said. "The dress, it's the queens dress."

"Yes it is," Fleur admitted having all the attention directed towards her. "It also saved me, and it looks and fits way to good for me to leave it."

"The city" the white pegasi said, ignoring the earlier conversation about Fleur. "It's burning."

When Fleur had looked at the city she didn't see any fire but now she saw the smoke being redirected out by magic. Above the castle a creature was flying and trying to defend itself from incoming attacks coming from Canterlot. She could only think of one pony it could be, princess Luna. *Oh, no. They started and I bring nothing.* The sky flashed and the princess fell from the sky defenceless.

"Come!" Pinkie yelled moving desperately. "Our friends are in there, we can't let them do this on their own. We have to help them."

"How?" the dark blue pegasi asked. "We have nothing."

"The weather," Pinkie suggested. "Lets bring them a welcome party they won't forget in the nearest future."

Fleur agreed, but her thoughts were elsewhere. Her home, devastated, the fate of her friends, unknown. Yet, only one word crossed her mind. *Amber.*

Chapter 9: Redemption (Twilight's Story)

What have I done? Twilight's thoughts were running wild with accusations directed at her. *This is all my fault.* The castle entrance fell right before her eyes and blocking off the path out. Princess Luna was still out there, but it was impossible to get through the falling debris. "Princess Luna? Where are you, are you okay?"

"Come down here!" she heard a voice yell of anger, it sounded to young to be princess Luna's voice, which left only one option. "Are you afraid to face me?"

Twilight had hear enough of it, she couldn't sit by and wait any longer. Her experience from the castle had learned her that there was more than one exit to it, only that the second one where blocked off in the ball room. She remembered seeing a small hole there, it was to small for he to pass through but with the help of her magic she might be capable of doing it.

Amber was still in the ball room when she arrived. The red unicorn sobbed quite intensively. Twilight wasn't surprised over it, Amber's entire world had crumbled down beneath her, and she had been betrayed by the ones she thought to trust. Twilight had no intention of disturbing the red unicorn at such a moment, princess Luna was correct that Amber would pull herself up when she had strength to do it.

There where lots of small holes that one might be capable of slip through. She was too large for them all and a miniature spell crossed her mind, she got rid of it just as fast, not daring to take such a risk at a time like this. Instead she settled for a hole where the debris looked loose. Her magic easily got rid of a lot of parts making the hole just big enough for the to slip through. The remaining debris looked to risky to pull out, one wrong pull and everything could collapse. Getting her front hooves and head was easy, but as she pulled her body got stuck in the debris. The harder she pulled, the harder she was creating wounds on her body. She couldn't pull herself at either direction.

This can't be happening, she thought and used her magic to pull the debris further up. It freed her body but she could hear how it was all starting to fall apart. She pulled herself out as quickly as possible while trying to keep debris from falling on her with the help of her magic. She raised herself up from the hole and took as a sigh of relief, she had managed to get out. In the corner of her eyes she could see a large plank falling towards her head. She had no time to react to it, but she was surprised when she didn't feel anything. When she dared herself to look up she saw the plank being held up by a red glowing

light.

"Go," Amber said from beyond the collapsing debris.

"Thank you," Twilight replied. For a split second she could see the red unicorn standing up and wiping her tears off her face. *She actually changed her mind.* She left the collapsing debris behind and made her way to the small door leading out to the garden. It wasn't a place where she had been much, she preferred her books but princess Celestia had still shown her the garden, it had been magnificent.

The garden was everything but the way she had remembered it. Bushes and trees had been burnt down and some parts of the grass were aflame. Animals were running wildly around in fear, not knowing what to do. The radiant garden was gone. She put out the small fires with her magic to prevent it from ever spreading further. *Princess Celestia, where are you?* Her memories all ruined, yet that didn't seem as important to her as princess Luna was. The garden had always led out to a nearby cliff where one could enter the city from. It was a dangerous route to take, but she had no other. With most of the garden ruined, it was very easy for her to find the road out.

Walking out on the cliff she paid no caution on being careful. From her position above the city she could see its fire and soldiers. Princess Luna was flying over the city fighting against Melanite and all soldiers, but also against a pony that glowed of light, like it was an angel, only without wings. She had never seen such a creature before but it was clear for her that it was by no means princess Celestia. She would have yelled at the princess so that they could retreat, but she was too far away for her voice to be heard and it looked like the princess was losing. Her flying was becoming unsteady, and she was starting to miss projectiles sent at her. Another army stood at the gates to the city, so Twilight figured that her meet up plan with Pinkie and Fleur had already been compromised. Dawn was approaching quickly, and she looked forward to when the tide would turn.

A bolt shot out of the angel being, it lit up the entire sky as it pierced through princess Luna's shield like it didn't even exist. The princess' wings stopped flapping, and she fell lifeless towards

the ground in a high speed. High laughs were coming from the angel like creature.

"Princess!" Twilight yelled in distress. She could only watch how princess Luna crash landed among the houses of they city. Beneath her a mountainside separated her from the city. It wasn't too steep and there was multiple places where she could slow her descent down and even come to a full stop. The road would lead her safety to the very edge of the city, but it would take hours for her to walk that way. *I have to help her; this is my fault.* It was not something she had ever done before, she thought that Rainbow Dash would easily take the chance of going down the mountainside, even if she couldn't fly.

Twilight took a deep breath, her mind was made up. Princess Luna had saved her, now it was her time to save the princess by taking the risky way down. She moved carefully with her front hooves so that she got a secure grip on the ground. She pushed off with her hind legs, but she moved nowhere. A red glowing light had engulfed her entire body and was keeping her from going down.

"Are you insane?" Amber asked as she pulled the purple unicorn back up to the road.

"Princess Luna," Twilight responded. "She needs help. I need to get there fast." She looked back over the city, the angel like creature and half an army had already reached the location where the princess had fallen. She didn't want to think of what would happen now.

"You're no help to her dead," Amber said noticing what Twilight was looking at. "If we're lucky they won't find her, she's quite the fighter after all."

"Why would you want to help her? I remember what you said."

"Which I meant. But I'm not stupid enough to think that I can go against my mother alone. Look at her, I need princess Luna just as much as you do. But we need to take the long and safe route here, otherwise it will be all for naught. Until this is over, lets be allies?"

When the red unicorn pointed at the angel like creature it finally stood clear for Twilight what it was, queen Verdite full with power. "Lets go further than that, lets be friends instead." She stretched out her front hoof ready to come to an agreement. She liked not being alone, and Amber had

saved her so she did trust her to a certain degree.

"For friendship," Amber responded and shook Twilight's hoof in agreement.

Raindrops hit Twilight's body and was soaking down her mane and tail. *Strange, I don't recall seeing any clouds.* She looked up confused and saw that the entire sky was covered in rainclouds. A few pegasi were the ones that had brought the clouds here. The rain fell faster until it poured down like a waterfall and covering the entire city in small pools. It would put out a lot of fires. "They made it, they're here." She smiled down towards the village where she thought Pinkie and Fleur would be coming from.

"My mother's slaves," Amber said, still with her thoughts and values from Bolivianite.

"How ironic, but it won't be enough. They're too few, they always were cowards."

Twilight noticed it as well, if there would have been a large amount coming she would have seen it by now, only few seemed to have come. But it did give her an idea. "The rain is going to make it slippery and dangerous for us to be here." Amber agreed on it and they started moving the beginning of their hour long walk.

"We could always free the prisoners," Amber suggested. "That would cause a situation my mother cannot ignore."

"And lots of ponies would be injured in the process," Twilight filled in. "No, I can't have that."

"What did you think freeing the slaves from my castle would do?"

The question did stumble Twilight a little, she never had thought of the consequences there. "I didn't expect to have armies walking around the city, destroying it."

"You're not alone on that," Amber responded sarcastically. "This was supposed to be my city. The armies were only there to contain prisoners and defeat Celestia. My sister is quiet the manipulator, she even fooled me. Nevertheless, we need a distraction and this rain isn't enough."

"Getting to princess Luna first would be enough," Twilight suggested, she had increased

her speed a bit, but she still remained careful not to slip, the ground was very slipper when wet.

"You're already too late with that," Amber said with a determined voice. "Look out there, I don't know what my mother will do but whatever she will do will come soon, unless something else catches her attention. Freeing all the prisoners will be just such a thing, we can lead them to safety if you so wish, but we need something and that fast."

"Fine," Twilight sighed convinced. She had noticed how the movements in the city had changed and that most ponies were now gathering at the marketplace. Even the army that had been at the entrance of Canterlot had started moving. She had seen the angel like creature carry a pony she thought resembled princess Luna but from the distance she couldn't be sure. "The soldiers still trust you, don't they?"

"They should," Amber answered. "But with my mother here now, I can't truly be sure."

"It will have to do," Twilight said. She had figured out a plan that worked in a few books she had read, it would require both of them, but she was confident it would work. "You release the prisoners and lead them to safety. I'll locate the princess."

"Daring, bring her back in one piece. And whatever you do leave my sister, Melanite, alone, I demand the final retribution against her?"

"Why?" Twilight asked wondering how one could hate ones sibling so much. It was like the the red unicorn didn't care at all of her family anymore, although in the end she figured it was for the best. *Thankfully Shining Armor is with princess Cadance on their honeymoon.* "What did she ever do to you?"

"Somepony like you could never understand," Amber responded and avoided eye contact with Twilight. "You all have your love and friendship, but what do I have? Hate, that's what I have. My world spins around it, and only it. So don't you say anything."

"Now you're just being rude," Twilight teased but directed her attention elsewhere. They

were approaching the intersection of the mountain road that led down to the city.

"Make your move when the guards gone," Amber said and trotted down towards the city.

Twilight remained at the intersection out of sight from the city's inhabitants, but she could see a lot of things going on in the city. A third road led up to the top of the mountain where she had never been, it had never bothered her before but now she thought of what might be hidden up there. She had read that the mountain roads had been built at the same time as the Canterlot castle, it served as an escape route for the princess, but it had never been used for that purpose. The road was too unfriendly to have transports, so it was almost never used.

As she stood there thinking of the mountain, she remembered that she hadn't come to an agreement with Amber about which signal to use when the coast was clear. She couldn't see any ponies standing at the entrance, but her position was not the best for such a thing. She had been waiting for a little while and thought that going down now was better than waiting for too long. She had to be careful on her descent down, as the road was quite steep and the rain didn't make it any easier to get down.

After a short descent down where she had been forced to teleport herself to the city entrance in order to avoid slipping, she found herself in the city and the streets looked quite empty from what she could tell. The entrance to the city from the mountain road, lacked any gates to keep ponies out, instead it was a small hole in the wall that served as it's entrance. It led one in to the front gates of the city. The gates had been rammed down and now lied broken, on the ground in front of Twilight. On the outside there was no sign of Pinkie or any of the pegasi that had brought the rain clouds.

She hadn't passed many streets before she started running into other ponies, most of them were armoured soldiers, but she did recognise a few of them as Canterlot citizens. They were all headed in one direction, towards the market place. She didn't know their intent or if they would be able to know who she was, so she kept herself hidden by hiding behind barrels, debris and anything that lied scattered on the streets.

Soon she found herself among a lot of other unicorns, on the market place. She was hiding behind the remains of what had once been merchant stand for vegetables. In the middle of the market place a wooden platform had been raised, and it was around that platform all the ponies had gathered around. The red unicorn filly, that she recognised as Melanite, sat on her open sedan chair. Twilight actually hadn't seen the filly outside of the chair and questions of whether Melanite could or could not move on her own, started appearing in her head.

"The moment we have all waited for, has arrived," Melanite proudly announced and the light glowing pony that Twilight though looked like an angel but knew it was Verdite, walked up on the platform. On the queen's back a dark sapphire blue pony, was being carried.

Princess Luna! Twilight was about to call out but managed to keep in her head. She had found the princess, but she looked unconscious. If she wasn't surrounded from all corners, she would have used her magic to allow herself to see better in the rain during such as an important moment as this one, but she didn't dare to use any magic and all she could do was to wait for Amber to fulfil her end.

"We have gathered here this very hour for a crucial even," Verdite started saying with uttermost confidence in her voice, she dropped down princess Luna on the platform during her speech. "The city of Canterlot lies in our control, the very seat of power in Equestria, where both so called princesses rule together. Celestia is still beyond our reach as of this moment, but mark my words, she will come soon. That's when we need to ready. So, in order to get all of our spirits in a good mode, I have brought with me the younger sister, Luna. Within seconds you all will witness how she dies, and the same fate is awaits Celestia."

Come on Amber, please hurry, Twilight thought in distress as she witnessed how the princess was levitated into the air. If things continued the way they were doing, she wasn't sure if she could keep her cover any longer. She hadn't seen any rubies similar to the ones in the castle, she was a bit worried that one could be hidden somewhere in the audience. If Amber had betrayed her, or the plan had

failed, then it was pretty much over, too much relied on one single thing.

"Now witness our victory," Verdite screamed out to the response of loud cheers from the audience. Among the crowd a fully armoured unicorn came running through, pushing all ponies that was in her way, aside.

Twilight hoped that it was, what she thought it was. She couldn't tell if the unicorn was a regular soldier or a higher rank one, but the unicorn did make her way up to the platform and interrupted Verdite. She could see them talking but the splatter of the rain made it impossible for her to hear. She could however see the light glowing unicorn, get a concerned look on her face, and Twilight sighed in relief, it had worked. Princess Luna was being lowered back down to the platform.

"Important matters draw me away from here," Verdite screamed out towards the audience. "But fear not, the show must go on. I leave it in the hooves of my very capable daughter. Have fun and make sure she suffers."

"Thank you mother," Melanite said and levitated princess Luna back into the air.

No, no, Twilight couldn't believe it. Her plan had only worked halfway, she couldn't waste anymore time, she had to do it now. Verdite moved quickly away from the market square, and Twilight saw what would be her only opportunity. As Melanite drew a dagger with her magic towards the princess, Twilight moved out from her hiding spot and casted a spell that caught the filly off guard. It threw the red filly off her sedan chair and onto the wet ground beneath the wooden platform. Twilight managed to catch princess Luna from falling, but she had blown her cover. All the ponies around her were watching her with angry looks, they knew it was her.

"Stop her!" Melanite cried out.

Twilight only levitated princess Luna closer to her so that they would be side by side, she had no chance of running through the crowd, but she could teleport. The nearby streets had been empty, but she wanted to go to a safer place, outside. She focused her mind and cast her spell, a ball of light

surrounded her and the princess, she had to close her eyes to avoid being blinded. When she opened them up again she didn't see the green fields, she saw angry unicorns approaching here.

What happened? she asked herself, but she wouldn't get anymore time to think of it. The unicorns started attacking her with their hooves, which she easily could block off with her magic. She had to get through, but she didn't want to hurt all of them, some were citizens of Canterlot that Melanite had taken control over. She counterattacked with her magic in the direction where most soldiers attacked from, it sent them flying down to the ground. A red glowing light engulfed parts of the market square and knocking ponies down to the ground. *Amber*. She couldn't figure out what the red unicorn was doing here instead of keeping to the plan.

"Go Twilight!" Amber yelled down to her as she jumped down from a broken rooftop and joined the field of battle. "This is my fight, go and bring the Luna to safety."

"Where's the ones you saved?" Twilight asked back, screaming through the splatter of the rain.

"In the outskirts," Amber responded. "I created a new entrance through the wall where they could go through. You should be safe with them, now go!"

"You're not going anywhere," Melanite screamed out and red glowing magical shields surrounded Twilight and Amber. The filly had gotten back to her sedan chair, but she had locked out her soldiers. "Did you really think you can teleport away with me here? And sister, I am disappointed, how can you join this filth? Of course, you always were one of them, even mother saw that."

"Quiet you," Amber responded with anger in her voice. "You and mother betrayed me. I were never good enough for her, always complaining about my cutie mark. I share the same feelings as you do, the same hatred, the same will for revenge. It wasn't enough for you, was it?"

"Did you ever care about me?" Melanite asked, using her magic to levitate her sedan chair to only a meter away from Amber. "You broke my legs and even now it is painful for me to walk.

That is the sisterly love you gave me, of course mother didn't like you. She saw what you were becoming, who you were becoming. You killed slaves just for fun. You never cared about our plans, just killing. That's all you wanted, and that's why you wanted to rule Canterlot by yourself. We aren't stupid, sister."

"Liar!" Amber screamed back in a fit of rage and attacked with her magic. Melanite blocked her sister's attack and countered with her own magic attacks. Blinded by her rage, Amber didn't care about defending herself, and that caused her to be hit and fall to the ground.

"Mother very rarely gave you power, because she didn't want you to kill everypony," Melanite said victorious and mocking. "You are a blank flank, not my sister. Hand me over the princess now." The filly spat on Amber and then turned her attention towards Twilight.

"Twilight?" princess Luna asked in a very weak voice that gave hope to the purple unicorn.

"No!" she declared, feeling empowered that she stood up to somepony more powerful than her. "She saved me and now its my turn to the same. I won't let you get her."

"Your will is not your own," Melanite said and started humming. The humming turned into a quiet song.

The song felt familiar to Twilight, the sweetness of it was creeping into her mind. It was telling her to let go of her hate, to stop fighting and give in to the love. She couldn't remember being this affected by any song before. The princess fell to the ground with a moan as Twilight felt how her control of her magic disappeared, all she wanted was to follow the filly and lay her life for her new princess.

Melanite was forced to throw herself off her sedan chair to avoid Amber's stab. When the filly threw herself she stopped her song, that caused Twilight to snap back to reality and see how Amber was carrying the dagger that almost had killed princess Luna, in her mouth. "I don't need any magic." Even with the dagger in her mouth, Amber could speak quite clearly. "Thank you Twilight, for trusting me. There's still hope for you." The red unicorn's horn started glowing in her family signature red, like she

was charging a spell. Twilight had no chance to reply before Amber charged towards her sister. Water flew off the dagger as the two sisters collapsed in a magical explosion.

A feeling of warmth reached Twilight as the magical glow spread all over the city. Where Amber and Melanite had been nothing remained, not a single trace that they had ever existed. The shield that kept her stuck in the market square, had collapsed shortly after the explosion, from what she could see, nothing else had been damaged. Ponies all around her were moaning out of pain, everypony but her had fallen down to the ground, and they were now getting up. But she could see that something was missing in them, they looked more confused over where they were than they looked ready to fight.

For safety reasons she levitated princess Luna up to her again, although she hoped that the ponies around here wouldn't attack, she was from certain over what would happen. Verdite still remained and she worried over what the mother's power would be. The princess was in no good condition, she had regain her conciseness, and she had tried speaking a few words, but she was still too weak to truly move. Twilight had one bottle of the strange fluid remaining, she had wanted to analyse it and maybe even create a copy of it, its power was too important to let go, but she couldn't let the princess remain in the state she was in. All she needed now was an opportunity to give the princess the fluid, she didn't want to take the risk of letting her guard down when she was surrounded by ponies whose intent was unknown to her.

"Princess?" a unicorn from the crowd asked, she wasn't the only one who had noticed Twilight standing with a weak princess Luna. All around her unicorns raised themselves up in concern. "What have you done to her?" the same unicorn asked louder than all the others.

"I remember now!" another unicorn screamed out. "We have been invaded, the soldiers are among us, take them!"

Chaos ensued around Twilight with the citizens and the soldiers fighting a brief fight. She helped out a little bit with keeping a few soldiers immobilised with her magic and soon all the soldiers in

the market square had been brought to one single corner of the area. No pony had dared to approach her yet, she wondered if it had something to do with them fearing the princess, but she was relieved that they didn't she was the one responsible for it, even she was. The opportunity she had been waiting for seemed to have arrived, and she pulled off the bag with the bottle off her back. There she poured out all its contents on the ground and only caught the bottle with her magic. The unicorns around her, looked curiously on her when she fed the princess the fluid of the bottle. She didn't care of it, all that mattered to her right now was to get the princess back.

Princess Luna coughed at the contact with the fluid, but Twilight made sure the princess wouldn't spit anything out. She knew how bad the fluid tasted but in the end it was better to resist the bad taste to receive its benefits.

"Twilight?" the princess asked again, looking up at the purple unicorn with sad eyes. "I failed them."

"No princess," Twilight responded happily and gave the princess a long hug. "You haven't failed anypony." She was so glad that it had worked, she felt that everything would be fine now. Nothing could stand in their way any longer.

"What is truly going on?" one of the unicorns from the crowd asked. "Why did we lose control of ourselves? And who are these soldiers?"

Twilight was the one who took the command to explain it all, she wanted to let princess Luna rest a little bit from all she had been through. Twilight took her time with the explaining and did it loudly so that they all would hear, every now and then she looked at the princess for approval, and Luna always gave it to her. The rain didn't bother her at all, even if she did feel that it had been used longer than necessary, but some of the ponies in the crowd didn't agree with her on that, and they tried to hide from the water drops.

She sighed out of relief when she had finished explaining it all, she had been honest with

everything but the parts about Amber. She thought it was too early to talk to them about what the red unicorn had done for them, it wasn't very long ago that the very same unicorn had not long ago been a part of conquering them. Most of the crowds wanted to ask question to her, but she didn't want to accept any. They still had to deal with queen Verdite and every second was valuable now.

"Thank you Twilight," Princess Luna said to her, and she smiled in happiness that the princess was fine. "I'll take it from here."

"But you need to rest," Twilight insisted.

"Let the princess speak!" the crowd shouted out, eager to hear their princess speak to them. Twilight thought she had already gone through that but then realised that they want to hear about the princess, they wanted the princess to make a speech.

"You need not worry about me, Twilight," Princess Luna said to her. She knew that she worried to much about the princess, but that was only because she cared.. As Princess Luna started her speech of what had to be done, Twilight focused her attention elsewhere, but she couldn't resist half listening to the speech.

Amber, she thought and looked over the place where the two sisters had clashed. *What did you do?* Her biggest worry however, was what Verdite's reaction would be when she found out.

Chapter 10: All That is Precious, Shall Fall (Fleur's Story)

"Did it have to be rain?" Fleur de Lis complained to Pinkie Pie. "It's ruining my dress and my hooficure has already been ruined. Just look at my poor hooves." They were standing on the fields a bit away from Canterlot, they had good sight of the city from their position but no way of getting inside. The front gates, which had been teared down had soldiers around it constantly, although the size of the soldiers guarding had lowered for each minute, they were still many for them to break through. Along with Pinkie, the green earth pony with a brown mane and a face that looked like she never slept or took care of her coat. The red earth pony was also there, with her blue mane, that Fleur thought didn't matched at all, at least the red earth pony looked to be in a much better physical shape than the green pony. Fleur vaguely remembered their names as Granite and Quartz, both of the earth ponies cutie marks had to with stones which gave an indication that they had never done anything else in their lives.

Three pegasi had been with them as well, Cloudstone, Thundergem, and Rainruby. They also had stone related cutie marks, and it made it easy for Fleur to mix up their names, more than once had she called a pony by the wrong name. It had been Pinkie's idea to change the weather over Canterlot but originally, they were going to do more than just rain. But the three pegasi had said that there were no clouds capable of emitting lighting or hail. So they had to settle for simple rain, at least it would put out some of the fires in the city, but Fleur had not been happy when the pegasi made it rain over a much larger area than they had agreed upon. It did however amaze her that they even knew what a cloud was, so she had her suspicions over whether their excuses were true or not.

"It's not so bad," Pinkie replied to Fleur complain. "We can pretend we are having a water

party and the rain is a water sprinkler that make it all so much more fun."

"Only the water is dirty," Fleur denied the request of pretending its a party to the pink pony's disappointment. She really didn't see how Pinkie could keep her mood so happy in a time like this, it made her even more confused as the pink pony had not long ago been the one that was all grumpy.

"And we have no food and no drinks. We also have the sound of battle not far from us, not what I would call a successful party. And shouldn't our weather control be back by now?" Weather control was the word she had come up with to describe the three pegasi without insulting them, she did her best with avoiding such comments that was quite common within the fashion industry she worked for.

"I hope they're okay," Pinkie said. "They wouldn't try anything stupid or fly away. Nope, not them."

Fleur didn't put my weight on her friend's words, they had known the three pegasi for a few hours, and she doubted that the first thing they wanted was to be thrown into a war directly after being freed as a slave. They might have wanted revenge on the ones imprisoning them but after seeing why it had been so, she doubted that they would have much faith in their fight. She didn't think it made things better that she was an unicorn, something the slaves had grown to hate during their time in the caverns. She felt stupid for not thinking about it earlier, but even if she had known the outcome, she still thought she would have done so again. At the very least she had done something good and freed ponies who would otherwise never have been freed.

She had payed close attention to the front gates and it now looked like they were being unguarded, she doubted that it would be true and imagined that there were soldiers guarding it from the inside of the city, where she couldn't see them due to the walls. The ruby she had been carrying around lied on her back, because she had grown tired of levitating it, and they were only standing still waiting for something to happen. She wished she had learnt how to summon forth an energy barrier so that she could prevent the rain from reaching her, already both her mane and tail had been robbed off their former glory.

With a sudden turn of the wind, she could see how a part of the city wall flew to pieces and created a large hole. It was soundless from where they stood, but she imagined it had made a lot more noise within the city. The hole did however not worry her much, she had already figured out that the city was being destroyed and as long as the soldiers didn't notice them, nothing bad could happen to them. If they were discovered, they could make a quick escape as they were quite far away. To her surprise, it wasn't soldiers that came out from the hole to check on the damage they had done, but pegasi and earth ponies that fled out from it. She was too far away to recognise any of them, but she did know that only unicorns had been used in Verdite's army.

Twilight, she thought and smiled. Looks like they weren't going to have to wait for dawn for their reunion, if it wasn't already dawn, she couldn't tell. She levitated up the ruby again, Pinkie, Granite, and Quartz, had already started running towards the stream of ponies escaping the city, she did her best on keeping up in the wet grass.

"Twilight!" Pinkie yelled out towards the ponies coming the hole, they looked at her but neither one gave an answer. "Have you seen Twilight? She's my bestest friend."

Fleur was the last one to arrive at the hole in the wall. Pinkie's arrival the ponies had halted their advantage and were now talking with the earth ponies. She recognised the face on some of the ponies, but she couldn't set a name to any of them. On Pinkie's facial expression Fleur realised that Twilight was not with them. She didn't see how earth ponies and pegasi could have destroyed one of the city's walls without the help of equipment, but she didn't see any equipment on the other side and there were no unicorns.

"What are you all stopping for?" a voice asked from the inside, she sounded very stressed. "They are going to find you very soon, so get a move on. When the queen comes, you don't want to be in her way." A red unicorn, slightly taller than Fleur and a lot taller than all the other ponies. Her body screamed of youth, and her coat was smooth. The red unicorn seemed to have noticed the new

arrivals, as she had focused her crystal red eyes towards Fleur. "What are you here for?"

"What are you doing here?" Pinkie was the one who replied, and she was showing her teeth. At first Fleur wondered why her friend acted so aggressive towards the red unicorn, it was out of her nature. Then she remembered the little red unicorn filly that had captured a large audience with her song, almost including herself. The red unicorn in front of her was either the queen or the queen's daughter. "Everypony, this is the pony that is attacking you. She's trying to trick you now, lead you to where you'll be helpless. I saw what she did to Princess Luna, it was not pretty." The crowd started mumbling among each other after the pink pony's words.

"Quit talking of what you don't know," the red unicorn said, still stressed. "I'm not my mother, and I have given up the title of princess, I'm just Amber now. Twilight sent me here, she's out trying to save Luna while I take of my mother. I am trying to help you, fool."

"Twilight would never trust you," Pinkie replied instantly, Amber's words seemed to have no effect on convincing her. "I heard her say so, and I believe her. She would never go back on her word."

"Actually, I think what she's telling us is true," Fleur interrupted the battle of words to her friend's surprise. She still remembered what the filly she thought was Queen Ametrine had said, to give the ruby to her granddaughter Amber. The red unicorn looked too young to be a granddaughter to a thousand years old queen, but she figured it was just a way of saying to avoid all the grand. And she wanted to get rid of the ruby quickly, it was pretty but too heavy for such a moment. "I was meant to give you this." She handed over the ruby to Amber who hesitated a moment but then took it with her magic.

"Who gave you this?" Amber asked while studying the ruby. "And why are you wearing Queen Ametrine's dress? It doesn't belong to you."

"It does now," Fleur answered, refusing to give away the dress. She liked it too much to let it go, and she wanted to impress her friends with it. "I don't think you would believe me if I told you, but you tell me why it was you who I was to give the ruby to."

At the touch of the ruby, Amber started smiling like she had found something precious she had forgotten. The ruby shattered into a million pieces to the gasps of the nearby crowd and Fleur's disappointment, she would have like to have the ruby in her house. "Thank you," Amber said, still smiling and looking at the top of the mountain. "I'm surprised somepony like you were the one to find it."

"Why did you destroy it?" Pinkie asked. "It was pretty."

"I didn't," Amber responded. "It destroyed itself, but not before giving the answer I needed. My mother will be here soon, either go away now or stay and fight. My sister is going down and when she does, my mother will us and give you time you need to win this, if you decide to stay that is. Take care of them." With those words, Amber ran back into the city ignoring everypony, soon she was gone from their sight.

"What should we do?" one of the ponies from the crowd asked. "She did save us from our imprisonment, maybe we should help her."

"I still don't trust that meanie," Pinkie said, she had calmed herself down a bit, and she wasn't showing off her teeth anymore. "We did come here to give them all a party, and I am ready to party. How about you guys?" Even through the sound of the rain, Fleur thought one could hear the cheers of the crowd from far away.

"Lets take back our city!" a pegasi screamed from above the crowd. "For Princess Celestia!"

"For Princess Celestia!" the crowd screamed in response.

"And Princess Luna," Fleur whispered but no pony heard her. She didn't know the princess of the night much, but she felt guilty and that she had to repay a debt for what the princess had done to her. Things were taking a turn for the good and as long as these ponies weren't like the three pegasi they had sent out to change the weather, they would most likely be fine.

"All pegasi," Pinkie started her way of a tactician. Fleur wasn't all too sure of how good

her friend was at organising an attack, she looked good with parties but this was far from a party. And Fleur didn't have anything better to come with herself, she and fights had never been a good combination. "Do a recon over the area to find where we need to party. Fleur, you should take with you some ponies and go through the entrance, I'll take the rest through here. That way we can give them two parties at the cost of one."

"Um, Pinkie," Fleur said, hesitating. She had the looks of half the crowd on her, but she didn't feel experienced enough to do what had been requested of her. "I think somepony else should lead the attack on the front, I like sitting far back where there's no dirt."

"Don't be silly," Pinkie replied. "You're my friend. I know no pony else to trust this with. But I'm watching your every move."

Fleur sighed, nothing she said would be capable of convincing Pinkie, so she gave up on trying and just let things happen the way they were. Luckily it was many ponies that was assigned to her, all the others would be going with Pinkie. The Canterlot population of earth ponies and pegasi had never been large, for some reason it was mostly unicorns that were attracted by the city's fashion and royalties. Unfortunately for her, some of the pegasi that was assigned to her were guards in the royal army and had a few suggestions to make before they started moving.

"Have fun," Pinkie said to her and went through the hole into the city. Fleur was now all alone with a bunch of strangers. Without saying a word or any signal at all, she walked towards the front gates. She didn't take the fast route there but the long way across the fields. At first none of the ponies noticed that she had left, which she was relieved off. But her joy didn't last long, one of the pegasi that had returned from a recon flight, had noticed her walking off and soon all the ponies assigned to her were at her. With them lots of complains followed, they complained of the lack of communication, that they were taking a slower than necessary way to the gates.

"Clear a way through the clouds," she said as a reply to the complaints. If she had to keep

a group strangers together, there was no reason for why she couldn't get some benefits of it. They looked at her weirdly over her request, but she didn't care about it anymore, all the weird looks throughout the journey had made her used to it. "You don't expect me to fight in this rain, do you? Just look at my dress, it's so wet I barely can't walk in it."

"We didn't get imprisoned and then released to give special treatment to a model," one of the pegasi guards replied. "Our city is being hold hostage by an invading force. And you're not Princess Celestia, we will only follow her orders, so you want to get rid of the rain, do it yourself."

"Then leave," Fleur said harshly, she was not liking their attitude. "As you said, we're here to take back the city. Princess Celestia isn't here and Princess Luna has fallen, so if we're going to do this, then we must stick together and follow Pinkie's plan."

"Don't expect too much," the guard replied sighing. She had won the fight and felt really glad to be rid of the rain as the clouds above her made room for the sky. She probably wouldn't be liked all too much by them after this, but as long as she got to settle down in her house again, she didn't mind being hated by some

Unlike what Fleur had thought, there were no soldiers guarding the front gates. The pegasi conducting recon, along with stopping the cloud service for her, had said that most ponies had been gathered at the market square where a fight was ensuing. The report also said that Pinkie's group already had pushed through and the invading soldiers were hiding in the castle. There were no reports of where the queen was, she had never met the queen, but she still feared her after seeing what had happen to Princess Luna in the castle.

A red magical aura that had its origin deep within the city, spread itself all over. What it could be worried Fleur, and she was about to call for a retreat as she didn't want to take any stupid risks. But before she could do so, the aura had already engulfed her and her party. It gave her a feeling of warmth, like she wasn't the wet and dirty pony anymore.

"What was that?" one of the pegasi guard asked when the aura had passed by and couldn't be seen anymore.

"It did no harm so we should be fine," another pony from the party answered. "We should also be moving, we never know when an attack might come. Or what do you say leader?"

Fleur agreed that they should get moving again, and she sent one pegasi to find out more about the magical aura. It had looked awfully similar to Amber's magical aura, but from what she had heard, she guessed that it could also belong to the filly or the queen. She didn't know much of invasion tactics, but she wanted to bring the soldiers that were alone down first and then focus on the big groups. She did however wonder why most of the city had been abandoned. Most of the houses were burnt down and debris lied everywhere on the streets, they still managed to get through without issues and without running into any soldiers. Her party was very much talking about the aura that had engulfed them, but she started to wonder if the invasion never were meant to take control of the city, but destroy it.

It didn't take long for the pegasi she had sent out to return with news. "I have received confirmation that the aura originated from the Market Square," the pegasi started her recon report with. "Princess Luna is safe and holding a speech there right now, all unicorns that were previously under the enemies control has been released. Most soldiers close and nearby to the Market Square has been captured, some still remain fleeing. All the other soldiers are hiding within the castle, the other groups surprise attack worked. Queen Verdite has however joined the battle and is now fighting off the other group. I recommend us immediately go there and reinforce the other group."

"Thank you," Fleur said graciously. She had considered herself lucky to not have run into any fighting, but it all seemed to come to a change. However she still wanted to keep with her original plan so she sent out the pegasi guards to deal with the soldiers that tried to flee. It was all coming to an end now, she could feel it. The thought was relieving but also scary, after all she had been through, she still didn't know how it would end. Amber had looked up towards the mountain before she ran away,

Fleur now did the same hoping that maybe she could spot what the red unicorn had. But all she saw was a mountain top with nothing special, lightning struck down there even after the three pegasi promises that there were no clouds capable of emitting lightning. *Never should have trusted them.* She blamed herself for it but not harshly. "We should hurry then, all might be depending on this one battle. I'll take a detour to the Market Square, we're going to need Princess Luna with us on this."

The rained annoyed Fleur heavily as she ran through the streets. The other ponies didn't seem to mind it at all. She had liked it when she had special cloud cleaning service but it was gone, the one good thing it did was that she could direct her mind on something else than her aching hooves.

"May Celestia guide you," one of the earth ponies from the party said when Fleur separated from them. They were going up to the castle to assist Pinkie's group while she ran to the Market Square and got help from Twilight and Princess Luna. She knew the way to the Market Square by heart, she went there every now and then since the prizes there were better than what most shops had.

Upon arrival on the square she heard and saw a whole group of unicorns cheering at Princess Luna who stood on a wooden platform with Twilight at her side. The group of unicorns were around the same size as the group Amber had tried to lead out of the city, and behind them soldiers were being held captives. Many of them she recognised, especially one stallion that had helped her a lot in the fashion industry, Fancy Pants. She turned her direction away from there, letting her agent see her in this messed up state was one of the last things she wanted. Most ponies within the fashion industry are quite mean and they love to make others feel bad. There existed just as many ponies that were fake all the time around her, just so that they might get a chance of reaching further in the business. Fancy Pants was nothing like that, he was nice and dared to accept new things, for that he held a special place in her heart.

"Princess Luna, Twilight," Fleur said, panting slightly and moving up to them on the wooden platform. First now did she noticed how destroyed the square was, all markets stands had been destroyed and the houses surrounding it had been burnt down, like most of the city. Even the ground had

marks of somepony trying to ignite it. "We need you at the castle, right now." She took no time to explain the situation but jumped right to the point.

"Fleur are you okay?" Twilight asked concerned. "What are you doing here? I thought we were to meet at the gates. Where's Pinkie? Why do you need us at the castle? No pony is there."

"Pinkie is fighting against the queen at the castle," Fleur replied, ignoring some of Twilight's questions. "Most soldiers have retreated back there, I don't know how long they will be able to resist."

"I must go then," Princess Luna said. "I have a responsibility I can't abandon, this has to end."

"Princess, you're not well enough to do this," Twilight replied worried. "We need to approach this with a plan."

"It's sweet of you to think of me so much. But this has gone on long enough, gather what you can and meet me there. I am the cause of this, and I shall be the end of it." Luna took off into the air leaving everypony else behind and flew off towards the castle.

"You heard her," Twilight said to the unicorns stressfully. It was clear that she was trying to protect the princess at any cost. "This is not going to be easy for any of us, especially for you all. We've all gone through a lot these past days and today is the day we end it. Lets come through for the princess one last time, we owe to it her after all she's done."

As Twilight ran off with a whole horde of unicorns, it dawned for Fleur what she really was doing, she wasn't fighting a war like all the others, she was gathering the troops for the war. It didn't bother her so much that she wasn't playing a role that would go down into the history books, she liked not having to get her hooves too dirty, but the feeling of not being enough stuck to her. That's why no pony truly cared if she was on the battlefield or not. Not even Fancy Pants had noticed, she sighed and then followed after the horde. If it were going to be the end, she wanted to at least have participated a little bit,

to ultimately prove that she could be trusted.

She moved slower than she usually did to preserve her hooves, and when she arrived she saw how the clouds shattered under the pressure Princess Luna and a red unicorn glowing with light similar looking as Amber, was putting on them. Magic flew out of all directions and on the ground, what looked like armies were fighting each other. Pinkie's group has pushed in to the castle but the doorway was broken and the debris made it really hard for them to hold their advantage in there. The red unicorn hold her ground on the outside, but her focus was completely on Princess Luna, who used her flight as an advantage. Twilight was still in the rear of the group and her group of unicorns were still trying to find their place on the field, a shield had been raised against the red unicorn to block her off. The others tried to reach the entrance to assist their friends and making the advance easier.

Why am I doing this? Fleur asked herself as she carefully tried to push through the group. It was all a big clump of mess covered in sweat and dirt. Most ponies were eager to get further up, but she did see some running off in fear. Both mares and stallions were being very rough in their behaviour and seemed to not care about the pony next to them, she had to take multiple pushes, some so hard that it made her body ache of pain. One push in particular caused a rift in her dress, but before she could recover herself and get back on the pony who did it to her, he or she was already gone from her sight. She sighed and casted a spell that made a small pink light appear in front of her.

"Dangerous magic here," she said to all the ponies around her and continued to repeat it as she walked up for the hill. It was just a regular light spell that could cause no harm, but it did make a few ponies who didn't notice what it really was, to move out of her way. It only made her ascent slightly easier and soon she found herself on top of the mountain, right before the bridge and next to the magic shield keeping the glowing red unicorn away from the group. As much as the castle entrance was a huge battle, she hoped that it would give her more room to move so that she could avoid getting hit. The commander of the castle was her goal, if she managed to take her down the defence would fall, and she

would be the hero which could repair all the bridges she had burnt compared to freeing the slaves that brought nothing but dirty rain.

"Is this who you are?" the red unicorn screamed at Princess Luna. "One who attacks those who are weak, you turned my own daughter against me and then killed both of my daughters! You're a monster!"

"Look who is doing what Verdite," Princess Luna responded while blocking off some attacks. "This could all have had a peaceful solution, but you were blinded with your hatred against us. You have brought this upon yourself, perhaps because you never felt the joy of friendship. Knowing that we have somepony out there that will always be at our side, to guide us to the right destination." The princess looked down towards where Twilight was for a second, before directing her focus at Verdite again.

"Friendship?" Verdite yelled out and casted magic towards the magic shield separating her from all the other ponies. The impact made the shield fall down, and Fleur could see how unicorns that previously had seemed fine now collapsed on the ground. A second attack from Verdite made the ground shake. Fleur alongside with other ponies, lost their balance, and she fell face first into the wet and dirty ground. "It's murder! You murdered my family in the past and now, you do it again! I would kill you now, but a mother must grieve!" Red light covered not only the queen, but Fleur as well. She was terrified of what was going on and tried casting some kind of magic to get free, but it was in vain.

What's happening? For a second everything went black before her eyes, then she saw clouds near her head and mountainsides all around her, she was lying on a mountain top. It didn't rain but the ground was wet, but luckily not slippery. Amber lied on the edge and the red filly lied on the opposite side of Amber. They were both still alive and seemed to be waking up. In the middle of them both, Queen Verdite stood glowing like never before. Far beneath where Fleur was, she could see Canterlot. A small road went alongside the mountain all the way back down to the city. She had been teleported alongside

with Verdite to the mountain for some reason.

"I'll show her," Verdite cried out. "No pony will walk safe for what they have done to me."

Fleur slowly moved her way back up to her hooves, she had gotten what she has wanted but maybe too extreme. She couldn't see any other pony being near her, it was her against the queen, and she barely knew how to fight. Only one option remained for her, to get down without being noticed. Her legs shook out of fear as she moved, it made it hard for her to move fast, and it caused a lot of noise, but she didn't think she needed it. The queen was more occupied with mending her daughters to care about the hoofsteps, something Fleur was relieved for. She reached the start of the road, she regretted even having tried to become the hero, she clearly wasn't the kind of pony that is out fighting. She moved down the road but got stopped by a red barrier just a few centimetres down, the thought struck her instantly, she had been discovered.

"We wouldn't want you to escape, now would we?" Verdite laughed out. "My daughters are dying, your life can save them. Then I can reset the mind of my treacherous daughter. Of course, you'll die."

"Haven't you thought that Amber did what she did for a reason?" Fleur asked hastily trying to overcome her fear, she didn't think her words through, she didn't want to make the queen angry, but she didn't have any other way of buying herself time. "I think you are the reason for it." A red lightning bolt shot out of Verdite's horn and struck her down, if it wouldn't have been for the magical shield, she would have fallen down the mountain. Her body ached and it was much worse than what she had felt back in the city, she was normally not used to pain and now she couldn't bear herself to pull herself up.

"Pathetic of you," Verdite said. "You're barely worthy of giving your life for my daughters, a weakling like you is worth nothing."

"Don't do it mother," Amber coughed weakly out. "Just face it, you lost the second you betrayed me."

"That is not the way a daughter should talk to her mother. No matter what, you're my daughter, and I'll make sure you'll obey."

"Then you fight in vain, Canterlot is lost. This was meant to be my city, but you made sure to destroy instead."

"All for you, my daughter. It is a pity you couldn't see that it was for the best. You've always been a disappointment for me, no cutie mark, no nothing. I have to be the one to help you through."

Fleur watched how they fought their battles of words, she couldn't have hoped for a better way occupy the queen. Small stones were piercing through her body, but it was the least of her thoughts. *Forgive me.* Her way of exit was cut off, and she saw no other way. All her friends had been strong and pulled through, she had yet to do it. She had just been following and taking the easy way out, the way that hurt others. She couldn't have it that way anymore, if she truly was to redeem herself, then she had to be the one to pull through. The pain intensified as she pulled herself out on her legs. She was biting her teeth so hard that she wondered if they would crack soon, all in order to prevent herself from screaming. Under the pain, she slowly moved herself back up on the mountain top. Her scattered dress was touching the ground, it was just as broken as she felt. *Just one last step, please forgive me, Twilight, Pinkie, Princess Luna, for what I have done.*

Chapter 11: Gemstones are the Precious That Never Bends

(Twilight's Story)

The shield keeping Queen Verdite a prisoner in Princess Luna's grasp, shattered right in front of Twilight. Her personal shield protected her from the shockwave but ponies all around her wasn't as lucky, they fell down to the ground, some in pain and others unharmed. It did however give her a chance of moving up quickly. If the shield had fallen, it meant that the queen could go through and attack the already attacking group. She couldn't let that happen, this was the best opportunity they had on ending all the fighting, and she couldn't let it pass by. Princess Luna was still keeping her flight, and the princess seemed to have made it out of the shockwave well enough.

With the help of the unicorns, most of the debris blocking the castle entrance had been cleared but both the attack and the defence had come to an halt on both sides after the shield fell. She had

a hard time believing that it was the shield itself that made it, rather it was Verdite who had played a trick. She looked up to the princess who seemed to focus on the queen to pay her any attention at the moment, but it would keep Verdite occupied and unexpected of a second attack.

"It's murder! You murdered my family in the past and now, you do it again! I would kill you right now, but a mother must grief!" Verdite yelled out to Princess Luna. Red light covered the queen and a nearby unicorn. Twilight couldn't make out who the unicorn was, but within seconds they were both gone. She could see a small red light lightning up the top of the mountain, but she didn't pay much attention to it, they had failed.

This isn't happening, Twilight thought. They had failed to grab the perfect opportunity and now, she couldn't tell what would happen. She had heard what the queen said, and it meant that Amber was dead. The thought saddened her a bit, something she never thought it would ever do. But the red unicorn had come through for her towards the end, but she had failed her. It hurt her even more to know that she had all the necessary things to win, but still had failed and with doing that, disappointed someone that gave her all for the cause.

Most of the ponies had gotten back up on their hooves and the attack had regained its strength. From within the castle, Pinkie Pie screamed a few things, the high pitched voice was unmistakable, but she couldn't make out the words, there were too much noise going on close to her.

"Twilight," Princess Luna who landed next to her, said. The disappointment in the princess' face was clear, but she got help to wonder if it was because the queen had refused her words or because she got away. "I thought that maybe, just maybe I could break through to her."

"Victory!" The screams and cheers from the nearby ponies overtook all other sounds. Tired and dirty soldiers were being led out by Pinkie and some other earth ponies. It seemed like Verdite's plan had backfired and instead of defeating the princess, she defeated her own forces. Twilight was relieved over it, Canterlot had been freed and now they were only one step away from peace.

"It isn't your fault princess," Twilight said, she had to keep close to the princess in order for her words to be heard. "Verdite is very simple minded, I don't think anything can make her change, not after what happened to Amber and Melanite. If only I could have made it end another way."

"It is beyond our control now. Lets make sure the city is safe, if there's any time they need me, it's now." The princess was smiling slightly, like she also was relieved that things finally had worked out. Twilight shared the feeling but the light on the mountain had bugged her out, if Verdite still was obsessed with her revenge, things would quickly escalate.

"I think Verdite is on the top of the mountain," Twilight revealed. No pony but the princess seemed to have heard her words, if they had, she thought they wouldn't be cheering any longer but be worried, just like the princess now looked. "I don't know what she's planning but we can't wait, if we do, then all our progress might have been in vain."

'Lets not dwell any longer," Princess Luna replied. "I'll fly us up there and then we can help with the city."

"We can't beat her on our own, she has your power. Even with the help of this city we aren't strong enough, but I think I might have something that can help us."

"If we can't do it, then who can? It is my responsibility to this, I caused it."

"Hi guys!" Pinkie happily said while jumping to her friend and the princess. "What you up to? There's a party to be held, and I'll be organising it. You both just must be there."

"Pinkie, not now," Twilight responded to the pink pony and directed her attention back to the princess. "Not who, but what. Verdite used anti magic rubies whose intention was to prevent magic from being used. But as we both saw, it didn't work that way. They only made it more difficult to use magic, I believe I might be able to do the same spell but with a better effect, if Verdite doesn't have her power, then we can defeat her."

"The spell is so ancient that not even I know it," Princess Luna answered. "Canterlot even

lacks rubies that would be capable of holding such power."

"I have a book with me from the castle," Twilight said. "It describes the spell in detail. The rubies won't be an issue, Fleur has a dress decorated with them. I think Verdite didn't use the full power of it on purpose, I believe I can do the spell."

"No Twilight!" Pinkie declared. "This isn't the time to study. You did it before Rarity's party and now we missed it. You don't even know where Fleur is. So how can you go and study at a time like this?"

"I'm sorry about missing Rarity's party," Twilight replied. "But we did it for something much more important. And so do we now, just because the city is freed, which isn't true as long as Verdite is close by. And Fleur is over at the market place."

"I didn't see anypony over there," Princess Luna said. "They've moved the prisoners closer to the castle to reunite with the other prisoners, a horrible idea."

"Then," Twilight hesitated with the words. She recalled seeing a unicorn being covered in the same light as Verdite, it would only make sense that the unicorn got teleported together with the queen. She hadn't thought of the unicorn being taller than most other ponies, something Fleur is. It did occur to her that the white unicorn simply could just be somewhere else in the city, but she didn't think it would be realistic. Fleur was somepony that had high standards and wouldn't seek out destroyed areas on purpose, most likely she would be in a place where it didn't rain, there had been a few areas outside of the city where it didn't rain but it had been covered now, and she wouldn't have gone far enough to get away from the rain. The only place that remained was the mountaintop, where the light had come from. "Then she's all the way up there with Verdite."

"We have to move fast then," Princess Luna replied. "There has to be a reason for why Queen Verdite took Fleur with her. Regardless of what it is, she won't live for long. We have to move now."

"But I haven't fully read the book yet," Twilight complained in vain.

"This time you have to be to trust me," Luna said and turned her attention to Pinkie.

"Pinkie Pie, I trust you can take care of the city for a little while. You have done an excellent job so far."

"Yes madame," Pinkie answered in a high pitch voice and started screaming a few commands to nearby ponies, they looked confused over it but hesitantly did as ordered.

"Jump up Twilight," Luna said and spread her wings ready for flight. "You can read while we fly."

Twilight pulled out her book from her saddlebag with her magic before jumping up on the princess' back. She had done the flight before so it didn't worry her. She quickly found the page detailing the rubies in the purple glowing book as Luna took flight. It was a more clumsy start than the one she had previously encountered, but she had no issues keeping her balance. *She's still weak*, she thought while reading. The pages were filled with text and even some pictures, it was more than what she could hopefully manage to read in the short journey to the mountain, yet she didn't skip a single paragraph, every single word had a hidden meaning and was important to her.

As they reached higher up, Twilight was getting shivers, she blamed it on the cold as she wasn't used to high altitudes, but it did interrupt her reading slightly. Their ascent was also getting slower the further they got, another evidence for her that the princess was still weak. Even in the cold sweat was running down the princess' sapphire blue body. She wished she could do something to help, but she didn't have anymore of the strange fluid, and she had to be focused on the book. It gave her a quite good view of what was needed for the spell but there were lots of warnings that worried her, among other things was that it had a strange habit of backfiring and only affect the caster, something that ponies trying to learn the spell was likely to encounter lots of times.

There were no rain at all when they reached the mountain top. Luna didn't land instantly on the wet ground but chose to remain her flight. As Twilight had guessed, Fleur was there together with

the light glowing Queen Verdite. Princess Melanite and Princess Amber were also there, but both of them looked very weak as they were lying on the ground. Fleur was having a hard time standing on her legs and the queen's attacks didn't make things any better, Fleur didn't seem to be capable of conjuring a magical shield, so she was dodging the attacks, more often than not it hit her, the queen was playing games with her. The dress was still on the white unicorn, and Twilight realised that they had to act now in order to prevent Fleur from dying.

"Stop this madness!" Luna yelled out, also realising that they had act. Verdite didn't look to surprised that they had arrived, rather she looked quite happy over it. A large grin covered the her face.

"The murderer returns," Verdite said mockingly to Luna. "Look at my daughters, this is all your fault! I was foolish to try and make a scene out of you, this time I will simply kill you for what you've done. I don't think my soldiers fared much better than my daughters did they? Luckily, I don't need them."

Luna flew close enough to the top to enable Twilight to jump down, she hadn't finished the pages yet, but she was close, all she needed was a few more minutes. At first touch with the wet ground she ran to Fleur who collapsed on top of her, it surprised her that the ground wasn't wet like the mountain parts further below had been. "Twilight, you came," Fleur managed to say while lying on the purple unicorn's back. At closer inspection, Twilight noticed that the dress was badly wounded and all but one ruby that was still attached to it wasn't broken, the rest of the dress was just a few cloth revealing much of Fleur's coat.

"We wouldn't let you do this on your own," Twilight replied, trying to get some hope into the weak unicorn's head. "We have a plan to defeat Verdite, but I need to use the ruby on your dress."

"Take it," Fleur replied and coughed heavily. Twilight feared that any second it would be blood that Fleur would cough up. "It's just a mess anyway."

"What do you intent to do, my princess?" Verdite said, continuing her mocking of Luna.

"A puny little unicorn to stop me? I remember her, a pity she didn't end where she should have. But neither did you, sometimes I wonder how many it was that actually betrayed me."

"You speak nonsense," Luna answered to the mocking while trying to keep her calm, but something in her voice was giving away that she was getting impatient. "I saw how you treated those who relied on you. Why would they love you? I was never like that, yet they didn't." The last part was in a whisper but loud enough for everypony to hear, it sounded like it really hurt her.

"What would the ruiner of love care for love?" Verdite screamed out. "You ruined the love I had, you destroyed a little filly's love for her mother!" The queen seemed to have gotten what she had wanted and started attacking Luna with magic, it didn't look like powerful magic, and Luna could block them off. But princess still chose to land on the ground, why Twilight couldn't figure out.

This has to work, Twilight thought as she separated the ruby from the red dress. Magic was flying over her, from both Luna and Verdite. While Verdite looked powerful, Luna looked like her power was diminishing. It was what Twilight had feared when she flew up, their hopes relying on this one spell. She looked through the pages with the corner of her eyes making sure that she remembered everything that was important with the spell. Right in front of her nose she levitated the ruby up to. She calmed herself and preferably she wanted to have Fleur off her back for maximum concentration, but she knew that it wasn't fair to force the white unicorn off. She could feel her magic power flowing through her entire body and being channeled towards the ruby. A small stray of purple light left her horn and went straight into the ruby.

For a few seconds nothing happened, she could feel her power being drained, but the princess and the queen was still fighting with their magic. After a few more seconds the ruby lit up with a red light that covered most of the mountain. The light only lasted a second, but it was long enough for Verdite to realise what was happening. *Is it working?* Twilight asked herself and casted a small light spell. Not even a spark left her horn, the light spell didn't work. Her plan had succeeded and for a second she

felt relieved over it. It shattered when she noticed that Luna was still having her magic shield active. The spell had backfired, and Twilight did the only thing she knew in order to prevent the spell from affecting her, she crushed the ruby with her front hoof.

A spell hit her side before she could raise her shield, it destroyed one of her saddlebags and pushed her back to the wet ground. With the hit, she dropped Fleur to the ground. "This isn't a game for you!" Verdite yelled, and it was obvious for Twilight that the spell had come from the queen. From her lying position, she could see a few rubies that lied scattered all over the mountaintop. Most likely they were once a part of Fleur's dress but had fallen off. Most of them were broken, but a few still remained intact. Verdite seemed to sense her plan as she destroyed one of the still intact rubies with her magic, before she had direct all of her attention towards Luna again.

Twilight rose back up on her hooves and made her way to one of the intact rubies. She was blocking attacks from Verdite, and she could feel her power draining heavily under the pressure their shield was resisting. With the ruby she proceeded to just as she had done with the first one, her power coursed through her entire body and a small stray of purple light went into the ruby, before it was destroyed by a red glowing projectile. It scattered into hundreds of pieces, but she was lucky enough not to have any of the shards hit her eyes, a few did cut up small wound on her body but nothing that hurt. When she had channeled her power to the ruby, her shield had fallen and made her an easy target for Verdite. As she looked around, she saw only shattered rubies, the ones that had been intact before were now destroyed, she and Luna hadn't done a great job in keeping them intact. Close to a lot of shattered rubies, Fleur lied, she did a few movements, but they were small and hard to notice.

Luna fell to the ground with a low moan. It was like Twilight had feared, she took no time to think but raised her shield to protect the princess. Their plan had failed, but it didn't mean that she couldn't keep fighting. She knew she practically had no chance, Luna had been weak before the fight but she thought that even weak, the princess was more powerful than she was. With each attack her body

weakened, she found no time to counterattack, and she hoped she wouldn't have to hold the shield for much longer. Luna was starting to get up, but her body was weak and her clumsy movements testified it. The princess had her hooves slip a few times, before she managed to get back on her hooves, but she was unable to bear her weight up completely, so Twilight thought it looked like she was ready to tip over any second.

"Mother," Amber said in a weak tone. Twilight had forgotten about the two sisters in the heat of the fight. Amber sat next to Melanite who still was incapable of getting up. Levitated in the air, Amber had a dagger pointed down towards Melanite, ready to strike at any second. "You always wanted me dead. I heard you, when you thought I was sleeping. What did you plan to do with me here, kill me and give my power to her? My sister, you gave her the same hatred towards me. Look where it has brought us, Ametrine never wanted this. She wanted herself."

"Let go off it!" Verdite answered her daughter with a tone of anger. "You are supposed to be my daughter, but how am I to see that in you when you go around and kill every slave in our castle? We're a proud family, but we never kill for joy, only when necessary. You have betrayed all we stood for, for as long as I can remember. Yet I kept, I gave you chance after chance. This is how you repay me, you couldn't even kill the one pony who mattered. Let your sister go!" The queen casted projectiles towards her daughter, but Amber hold them off, but she didn't look like she could out for long.

"You're right," Amber admitted. "I am a murderer. It's in my blood." Within a single second so much happened that Twilight had a hard time keeping track of it all. Luna attacked Verdite who attacked Amber, the oldest daughter's shield went crashing down, but not before the dagger slid into Melanite who screamed of pain so high that all of Canterlot could hear it. With the shield down, Amber got hit by her mothers projectiles and sent flying off the edge of the mountain. She didn't scream, not a sound could be heard from her. Verdite could easily deflect Luna's attack, and it ended with Luna falling down to the ground again.

"Twilight," Fleur whispered weakly. "Here." The white unicorns pushed a small red ruby to Twilight, it was the last one from what she could see, and the white unicorn had lied on top of it all the time.

Verdite screamed high in anger and sadness while standing over Melanite's body. Twilight could see small teardrops forming on the glowing red unicorn's face, she couldn't help but feel a bit sorry for the queen. The pain of losing somepony you care about is high, she felt it when she thought Luna had died, only she showed in a different way. The moment was however too precious to miss out on, while Verdite was occupied with her daughter, it would be the perfect time to cast the spell on the ruby, she couldn't rely on Luna or Fleur to be capable of protecting her, not even she could. The book still lied where she had dropped it after she had been hit, it was a bit away from her, and she didn't dare to risk going for it. She had to do it from her memory. She started doing the spell the exact same way as she had the tow first times, the feeling was the same as her power coursed through her body. A small stray of light went into the ruby from her horn but this time it didn't break. In order to make sure she wouldn't fail with it again, she channeled much more power than she had previously. Usually it would only barely affect her but now she was starting to feel tired and weak, she had already used a lot of power to defend Luna and that was starting to show its consequences.

A cobalt blue and a pink ray of light joined with her purple and went into the ruby, it didn't come from her horn but from beside her. Luna was fighting to stand up on her left side, and Fleur lied exhausted on her right. Yet they both gave their all to help her. The ruby lit up but this time not with a red light, but a violet blue light with shades of pink..

"Try as you might, you will all fail nonetheless." Verdite screamed at them as she noticed what they were trying to do. "Not even I could channel its power." The queen attacked with some kind of magic spell, but Twilight couldn't see it truly well as the light from the ruby blinded her.

What's happening? Princess Luna? Fleur? Twilight's head was spinning around, she

couldn't see anything, only felt how she grew weaker for every breath. She could hear panting around her and moans, someone screamed but ringing in her ears made sure she couldn't make out who it was doing what.

Slowly her ringing faded and she could regain her sight. First now did she notice that she was lying on the ground, she didn't even feel the ground. Right in front of her nose, the ruby lied, only it wasn't red anymore but violet blue with shades of pink, just like the light had been. Verdite didn't lie down, she was standing over Twilight's body with her front hoof nailed into the purple unicorn's back, the glowing light was gone. Twilight didn't feel the pain, but she imagined that it most likely would hurt. Her attempt to cast a spell to get rid of Verdite failed without as much as a spark leaving, the spell seemed to have worked, this time fully, why else would Verdite use her hooves? The question didn't remain long in her head as the queen pushed her aside. She rolled right into Princess Luna who didn't look to be keen on moving. The queen's movements led to one thing, the ruby. Twilight refused to let everything she had fought for be over so easily. With great pain, she pushed herself up to her hooves again. The power being drained from her by the ruby was now starting to do more than just leave her feeling weak, it was causing her pain.

Despite her best efforts, she stood no chance of saving the ruby in time, instead it was Fleur who managed to do it. The white unicorn had lied closer to the ruby and managed to push the ruby away from Verdite, but only slightly. Twilight saw her opening when Verdite kicked Fleur away for what she had done. With no doubts, Twilight rammed into the red unicorn which sent them both falling to the ground. Even without magic Verdite was much stronger than the weak Twilight, so she easily got herself rid of the purple unicorn. A quick kick sent Twilight flying away, in her landing she accidentally touched the ruby that rolled to the edge of the mountaintop, where it balanced between destruction. Twilight only slightly noticed it, but she didn't care much of it as long as it was out of the queen's reach. Princess Luna had joined the fight where Twilight had left, and an unexpected use of her wings managed to knock

Verdite down. Luna took no time to waste but tried to keep the queen down on the ground, in doing so, the red unicorn could easily counter and fell Luna. In her fall, the princess made a kick that hit the queen. Verdite lost her balance and fell down over the edge.

As the events unfolded themselves on one side of the mountaintop, on the other side the ruby also fell over the edge. Twilight saw it in the corner of her eye, but she wasn't in any condition to try and prevent it. With the queen gone, she joined her two friends on the ground. Her power still left her, and she started pondering on how to stop the ruby without being anywhere near it. Yet one thing made her relieved, it was over, it was finally over.

From deep below she could hear a loud crash as if glass broke, only it was so high that it probably could have reached half of Equestria. With it, she could feel how her power wasn't being drained anymore. *The fall must have destroyed it*, she thought and sighed out of relief. A very powerful relic had been destroyed, but not before it had served its purpose. The pain came suddenly to her, on her back she could feel where Verdite had pushed her hooves down on her, the rest of her body hurt from kicks and fall, and the small wounds that had been caused by the shattered ruby had become a bit bigger, and they hurt. It seemed like the ruby had prevented her from feeling anything else when it drained power from her, but she was relieved that the pain the ruby caused finally was gone. Now she just had to get down from the mountain, flying on Princess Luna's back was most likely not an option, and the small pathway down looked so long and dangerous. She did not look forward to it, for now she just wanted to rest a little longer.

Chapter 12: Epilogue (Luna's Story)

It's over, Princess Luna thought. She lied on the wet and dirty ground on the mountaintop. She was panting heavily and sweat ran down her entire body. A few scratches stood out on her body, but they didn't hurt so much. Mostly she was just exhausted, the fight had taken a heavy toll on her, and she was now having a hard time moving. The pain and the exhaustion was however nothing she regretted, it was finally over. Her long past actions as Nightmare Moon, had finally come to an end. It wasn't exactly the way she wanted it to have ended, she wanted Queen Verdite to reach her senses and go back on what she had done. It never happened and Canterlot stood now destroyed as a result. She was gonna have to rebuild it before her sister returned. She still didn't feel that she had fully amended for what she had done to Queen Ametrine, it had all been proof that she wasn't much for negotiating peace like her sister.

Pegasi from the city was working on clearing the clouds and hidden behind them, the sun reached out with all its light. It seemed that Princess Celestia had lowered the moon and raised the sun, even though it was Luna's duty of doing it. She had asked her sister to do it for one day so that she could visit her old castle, but it had now been more than one day, and she still hadn't done her royal duty. Most likely her sister would bug her about it until she noticed the state of the city, then the subject would quickly change. *Thank you, Celestia*. She had her differences with her sister but in the end, her sister had come through and showed her the way, something she could never repay Celestia for.

Twilight Sparkle and Fleur de Lis lied as well on the mountaintop. Out of all three, she thought that Fleur looked to be in the worst condition. As much as the fighting was over, they still had one

last thing to do, get down from the mountain. Most likely the ponies would want to speak with her for plans about the future, and there was talk of party, something she didn't think was the best opportunity to have right now. Reparations and making sure the prisoners didn't start a riot was of a much higher importance. "Come, we have to go," she said, her voice telling how weak she was. Regardless, she pushed herself up to all four legs but had to stand still for half a minute to make sure she wouldn't fall.

"Five more minutes," Fleur mumbled. "This bed is so comfortable." Luna couldn't help but smile a little bit over it, Fleur was the last pony she expected would say a wet and dirty ground was a comfortable bed.

"We can't just leave her here, princess," Twilight said. The purple unicorn had also managed to get up to her hooves, but her entire body was shaking in intervals. It was hard to see if it was because of pain or something else, but her wounds looked ugly.

"There's not anything we can do for the poor soul right now," Luna replied. Melanite's body was a hideous sight, Amber had been precise of where she wanted the dagger to hit so the young filly had never had any chance of surviving. She removed her eyes from the sight, it was making her sick that the action that caused them to win, was the action that was the most evil. Amber's fate was also sealed alongside with Verdite's, so there was not much of punishing to do against the red unicorn who lacked a cutie mark. "We'll give her a proper burial later. It's not much, but it's what I never gave Ametrine, maybe it will give me some peace."

"Sounds like a good plan," Twilight said. "She never deserved it, but it shows how kind you are, princess."

"Help me with Fleur," Luna said ignoring the compliment, she didn't feel very kind. Because of her, three powerful unicorns had been killed, if the past looked different, they could have been a great help in Canterlot instead of what they became. "This one we can still save." She levitated the white unicorn up on her back, although Twilight was a bit too short, she still helped with the carrying. Luna

figured it made for a comical sight. "Shouldn't you take your book with you?" The book lied next to a shattered ruby with its pages wide open. Anything to make her forget about the weight was good. Fleur was much lighter than most ponies, but she still caused a strain on Luna's back who only barely could manage to keep herself standing.

"There's no need," Twilight responded, the look on her face showed great desire to grab the book. "There are great and powerful spells in it, maybe even forgotten spells. It did no great to them, so why would it to me? Besides, I couldn't miss the opportunity to help you, princess. Or I might grab it in secret." The last part was a really low whisper, but Luna could still hear it. It was the Twilight she knew and loved.

Maybe it's for the best of all of us, she thought as they slowly walked down the road. "I don't know anypony more capable of taking care of something like that than you." She smiled at the unicorn and in her heart she thanked Twilight for standing by her side the entire time and never giving up on her, even when she herself had done it.

The walk down went slow and was full of short breaks. Neither one of them minded it though, Fleur did some complaining about her dress, but that was as far as it got. The road had been built so that Princess Celestia and the royalties could flee the city if such a thing was deemed necessary. It had never been used for that, and she didn't think her sister would be one to flee. It did however puzzle her why the road either went up the mountain or back into the city, close to the city gates, but hard enough to escape. Not it didn't matter for her, she was grateful for its existence. Her wings was sore and every time she tried to stretch them out she had to bite down her teeth to not scream, it was slow as well, like the bones didn't want to move. The injury had come during the fight with Queen Verdite, she hadn't said anything about it, but she figured that Twilight already knew, the unicorn couldn't have missed that it was unusual for her to stretch her wings so much. It was a little embarrassing that somepony knew that she was weak, but said pony hadn't care when she was so earlier and had still stood by her. It made her

grateful that the road existed.

When they finally reached the city they were met by a full group of ponies. Pinkie Pie stood at the front like she was ready to lead a charge. Behind the group, music was sounding. "Princess, we found her on the ground," a white pegasi dressed in the royal armour, said and led forth a wounded red unicorn. "We thought it was best for you to leave judgement." The guard bowed down in grace and a most of the group followed his example. The red unicorn was being carried by two other guards who didn't bow down due to the weight. It didn't mind her, it was all so knew to her. Although she had been a princess for a long time, she never got to experience what it was to be truly liked, at this moment they all seemed to truly like her. She had done something to gain the love of Canterlot's inhabitants. If she wouldn't have been so wounded she would have shed a tear of joy.

"Come to finish it?" the red unicorn coughed up crackling. "I'm going to finish you," There was no doubt of who the unicorn was, the blank flank, the red coat, the blood red mane, the attitude, it was Amber. Somehow she had survived her fall.

"It's already over," Luna answered with caution. Amber had great potential and if careful she could be used to do good. "You helped us a great deal, but we can't ignore what you've done and what you want. A murderer has no place here, less when she still wish to kill."

"You should have been faster with your spell," Amber said mockingly, she looked even weaker than what she had been on the mountain. "I could use magic to stop my fall, my mother wasn't so lucky."

Luna looked over to the pegasi guard that had first spoken, at the start of the conversation with Amber the group had stopped bowing. The guard confirmed the unicorn's story with a nod. "Then you're free from her. With time, you could be a valuable asset to Canterlot. But first you must get rid of some of your old ways and learn how to forgive." The look on Amber's face revealed that she was thinking through Luna's proposal.

"Can I have Bolivianite?" Amber finally answered after a long time of silence.

"You've proven yourself incapable of ruling a city," Luna said, shooting down the red unicorn's hopes. "My sister will take care of that issue when she returns. A change of heart does not give you the privilege of getting what you want, regardless of how much assistance you were."

"Fine!" Amber answered clearly hurt. "One day I'll get it back, it is my birthright. But I won't try and hurt you or anypony else in the future. I have seen what it does."

Luna was pleased with the answer so she sent the red unicorn away to get some rest. Her legs trembled as she stood waiting, getting to rest seemed like a beautiful dream to her.

"Sleep with dress," Fleur complained as two guards picked her up from Luna and Twilight's backs. With the extra weight gone, Luna could bear herself up much better, but still it hurt.

"Party time!" Pinkie yelled when Fleur had gotten out of sight, the pink pony threw confetti and balloons all over Luna and Twilight. Luna couldn't help but smile a little at the gesture, it had been so long since she had done something fun and after all that has happened, fun was something she needed.

"I don't know Pinkie," Twilight said reluctantly. "I'm quite beat up, so is the princess. Rest will do us much better."

"Twilight, you deserve to have some fun," Luna said. "If it weren't for you, then none of this would have been possible."

"A little while then," Twilight replied with a smile.

"Lets party!" Pinkie screamed and went for cake that didn't exist.

Just this once, Luna thought. The city had to be repaired, the castle as well. She had forsaken her duties, and she could barely stand up. But everypony seemed to enjoy, even after all that had happened, they seemed to enjoy having a little bit of fun that took their mind off what awaited them the next day. Rest would have to wait a little longer, so did everything else. For now, it was just her and the

city. A way to show that it wasn't wrong, that some light would come after the dark. She looked up at the sun one last time before slowly joining in with Pinkie and Twilight. It shined brightly, brighter than it used to do. Her sister had done a great job, and soon she would hopefully get to be a bigger part of it.