

Tweaking the Elements

by Legible Audio

Prologue: NightMirror Moon

Princess Luna of Equestria woke up to find herself in the middle of a grassy field. She had no idea why she was there, but she didn't care; the grass felt soft and cool and smelled wonderful. She decided to go back to sleep, and let the natural cushion melt her stresses away.

However, the instant she closed her eyes, they snapped back open as she heard the unmistakable roar of a terrestrial dragon.

She looked toward the sound's origin and saw it: red, fifty feet long, and with an insatiable appetite. She then looked at where it was going. At that moment, it was headed right for a little village of ponies! She had to save her loyal subjects, and quickly. The fastest way was to fly, but for some reason, her wings were stiff and couldn't even lift her off the ground. Confused, she tried to run, yet her legs felt just like her wings and she moved in a slow walk. It felt as though something were pulling her backwards with each step.

The dragon was getting too close, and she'd never make it at this pace. She looked toward the town with watering eyes as she began to despair in her incompetence.

Suddenly, a flash of white swooped over her with speed unrivaled. It was her sister, Princess Celestia, the one who raised the beloved Sun every morning.

"Stand back, you evil creature, lest you feel the true might of the Sun!" Celestia demanded.

The dragon, distracted by her bravery, proceeded to stare her down with a look of unmatched ferocity. It then opened its mouth and unleashed a stream of flames right at her.

Luna could only watch in awe as her sister deftly spiraled around and dodged the inferno that intended to end her.

After she made sure that the dragon lost track of her in the confusion, the white Alicorn rose skyward and readied her attack. Channelling the power of the Sun through her horn, she blasted the beast with a powerful Solar Ray, driving it back, and giving it a rather unpleasant sunburn.

Luna could hear the ponies of the village cheer for their savior as they left the shelter of their homes. Celestia made her way to be showered by praise, while completely ignoring her sister. Luna tried to call out for her, but all that came out was nothing more than a hoarse whisper, and the louder she tried to yell the more inaudible she became.

It was all just too much, being weak and helpless when she was supposed to be a princess, and being outshined by her sister again. She cried.

She hadn't cried for very long, but when she looked down she saw that she made a pool of tears. Her reflection stared back at her, but she couldn't stand to look at herself, so she squeezed out another tear that rippled the puddle. However, when the water settled, she found herself not looking into her own face, but the the of her evil form: Nightmare Moon.

"No!" she cried in a full, loud scream.

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Luna woke up in her bed, eyes wide and slowly catching her breath. Judging from the angle the light shone from the windows, she guessed it was around two in the afternoon, several hours before she had to raise the moon. She tried to fall back asleep, but every time she shut her eyes, that face filled the darkness.

She sighed. She actually felt tired, but she couldn't sleep. So the Princess of the Night stretched for a minute and got up with squinted eyes, the light still a little too bright. She walked over to her vanity and set her head on the top with a light thud while staring at her reflection.

"Oh, Luna," she said, "I thought you'd be over it by now."

It had been over a thousand years since her jealousy towards her sister transformed her into Nightmare Moon, and fittingly banished into the very heavenly body that she used to control. It had also been a few years since she returned to Equestria in her evil alter ego and was defeated by the six ponies from Ponyville who wielded the Elements of Harmony.

"Even if you're the weaker sister, your subjects still love you," she told her reflection, unconvinced. Her eyebrows began to knit. "But they could still show a little more appreciation."

These renewed feelings caused her to remember the last moments of her dream, and when that face appeared, she stood up wide-eyed, shocked at the words she just spoke. She put a hoof in front of her mouth. "Goodness, me! I should surely be more grateful than that! I guess I should do some more humility exercises in the evening, after I-"

"Tsk-tsk-tsk. You were on the right track there for a second, but then you had to ruin it with...modesty" said a second voice in the room, coming from the vanity's mirror. Luna looked and froze when she saw Nightmare Moon's face where hers should be. Moving only her front hoof, she raised it and proceeded to slap herself across the face.

The reflection was unaltered.

"Augh!" she exclaimed, jumping back a few feet, wings extended. "H- How is this

possible?”

“Oh, silly Luna, let’s not get off subject, now,” the reflection replied.

“Are you some sort of Illusion Spell? Or maybe it’s an elaborate prank.”

“Oh, no,” the other chuckled. “I am merely your true reflection, just on the inside.”

“Right, as that’s totally believable,” Luna responded with a hint of sarcasm as she readied a Disenchanted Spell. “But if you don’t mind...” She shot the mirror with a dark purple beam from her horn, banishing any alterations anypony (her sister) may have made to it.

She gave a sigh of relief, knowing that this odd nightmare of a day was over before it could get to her.

“Are you quite finished?” spoke the Nightmare Moon in the mirror. “I mean, thanks for proving me right, but I don’t have all day.”

“Ohmygoodnessohmygoodnessohmygoodnessohmygoodness!” Luna kept stammering as she quickly backed up until she met her bed. “But how?”

“The question is not how I’m here, but why. Luna, as me you were a force of true power. I know you still feel jealous of Celestia; I’ve seen your dreams. If you become me again, I can assure you that your strength will be greater than ever.”

“Never! You and I can never be the same again. The Elements of Harmony showed me my mistakes, and I swore never to be selfish nor ingrateful ever again.” She turned her chin to the air in an indignant manner, as though to say she had won.

“Luna, I was there on the Moon, too. I know the price we paid for our jealousy. I learned that lesson just as well as you did. I don’t want us to overthrow Celestia, but simply rule by her as the more powerful princess.”

“You’re serious?” Luna asked as she took a few steps toward her looking-glass self.

“Completely,” it replied with only honesty in its voice.

“Then you promise that we become more powerful and loved, and no pony will get hurt or be frightened of our new visage?”

“Precisely. I get to return to Equestria, and in exchange you receive all the power you could possibly desire. However you must hurry, as our time together draws short, and I cannot guarantee that I may ever return. The only thing that you have to do to say ‘yes’ is jump into the mirror. So choose, Luna. And make haste!”

Luna’s eyes darted around the floor as she weighed her options. She was tired, and did not want to make such a heavy decision this quickly, especially without being fully rested. “Umm...”

“Luna, the connection is waning, I need your answer now!”

“...Oh, blast it all,” she muttered under her breath. She faced her counterpart head on and charged, jumping hoof-first into her desires.

The room went silent as soon as she literally went through the glass into whatever lay beyond. A few second later the silence was broken by the laughter of a perfectly camouflaged draconequus in the ceiling.