

## **DEEP DARK**

### **Chapter 4: Deceit**

[<<<Chapter 3](#) [Chapter 5>>>](#)

Written by Dragryphon

(Please read the Author's Note when you have the chance.)

The disorientation of teleportation passed swiftly, leaving Luna, Twilight, and the rest of the gang recovering within the center of Princess Celestia's bedchambers. Looking around, the Moon Princess could see nothing of note in plain view. The bed was made, and Philomena sat on her perch in the corner, curiously watching the group. The bookcase was in order, and the fire in the fireplace was kept perpetually going, giving the room a toasty feel.

"My sister will probably have words with me over this later, and probably all of you, too, but we need to find something that can help us against Erebus!" Luna spoke loudly to the group of ponies she had teleported with her. "My guess is that while the Elements have great power, they may not be enough to stop him. Twilight, check the bookcase, you know that like the back of your hoof... Rarity, check the bathing chambers... Erm..."

The Princess thought for a moment, *I don't really know the others well enough to tell them where to search...* "The rest of you, spread out, but please do not mess up my sister's bedchambers!" Looking around as the ponies scattered throughout the room and started to turn everything upside down, Luna groaned quietly to herself and slapped a hoof against her face. *Celly's going to kill me... This is for the greater good of Equestria, though, and to save my sister...*

Taking another glance around the room, an idea struck the alicorn. *Alright, whatever would be out of place or hidden would have to be immensely powerful, or at least magical in nature. What if I...* Lowering her horn, Luna ignored the various commotions around her and instead focused upon a simple spell. The spell would display magical sources nearby and allow them to be easily found. The alicorn's horn shimmered subtly before the spell was released, numerous objects around the chamber lighting up to her eyes.

*I can ignore most of these objects, and... Oh dear... Is that...?* Luna crept closer to her sister's dresser and peered closely at its surface. Sitting there was something she had not seen in over a millennium. Resting on the dresser was a tiny figurine, obviously well worn and ancient. Luna hadn't known her sister still had it. *That tiny figurine of me she made when we were fillies...* Her eyes teared up as she daintily picked it up in her hooves. It was glowing bright to her eyes, surrounded by numerous spells. Studying the spells, Luna could see it was magic to prevent the toy from degrading over the years.

A flush of happiness surged through the Princess, one of the few memories she still had of that time resurfacing...

*“Do you like it, Luna?” Celestia asked, holding up the product of her efforts; a tiny toy alicorn, formed with wood, fabric, and actual hair from Luna’s mane. The two fillies were currently enjoying a day off from their training and schooling, using it to instead savor each other’s company as well as have a bit of fun with arts and crafts.*

*Luna, who had been working on a painting the entire time, glanced around her canvas and gasped in astonishment at the unfinished toy Celestia was holding up. Looking over the wooden doll, she noticed something peculiar, “Is... Is that me, Celly?”*

*Celestia nodded her head enthusiastically, then replied, “Of course it is, silly! I wanted to make something of my bestest sister! ...You’re my only sister, but still, I love you just as much!”*

*The midnight blue alicorn blushed somewhat and looked out shyly from behind her mane, “Th-Thank you, Celly, this means a lot! ...May I paint it for you? I would love to see it finished.”*

*Celestia looked thoughtful for a moment, then a large smile split her face, “Okay, but only if I get to see what you’ve been working so diligently on for the past few hours, Luna!”*

*“Well, ummm...” Luna looked away, then smiled and grasped her canvas and easel, turning them in place to reveal to her elder sister the art she’d been working on. “It’s not done, yet, but it soon will be, okay!” There, shown to both alicorn sisters was an idyllic portrait of their family. Celestia and Luna were hugging in the foreground, while Altair and Sol framed them lovingly to either side in the back. The portrait spoke volumes of their love for each other...*

*“Luna...” Celestia started, but paused, tears springing to her eyes. “It’s wonderful... I’m so proud of my little sister. Luna...”*

*“Princess Luna...”*

*“Princess Luna?” a voice interrupted, breaking the Moon Goddess out of her reverie. Luna swiftly slipped the toy into her mane and turned to the voice, noticing Twilight Sparkle at the bookcase, nearly all the books now scattered around herself in various organized piles. Around the rest of the room, however, everything was not so neatly torn apart. Ignoring that for now, the Princess rushed over to the bookcase and stared where Twilight was looking.*

*“I believe I’ve found something, Princess! It may be exactly what we’re looking for. I studied the compartment without opening it and discovered that it must go into the wall behind the bookshelf, specifically placed here to hide something of importance!” Twilight announced to the Princess, proud of her findings.*

Indeed, to Luna's eyes, the entire compartment glowed profusely with magic, as well as several inner glows, indicating several items hidden within. *I would not doubt it, my sister probably has numerous items which we can use to stop Erebus, or for any number of other situations. She's taken to thinking ahead and planning in advance for many things.*

Using her magic, Luna easily disabled the magical lock keeping the compartment secure, then set the compartment cover aside, holding her breath in anticipation at what she may find within. *They could be anything, really! Maybe something powerful like the Elements of Harmony, or a special weapon that shoots a spray of magical pellets that will pepper Erebus with hot lead! Or, or, maybe it could even be...* She hovered a couple of the items out and looked over them. The shapes were familiar, however, and it took her a moment to realize what they were. Her face blushed fantastically, she glanced over at Twilight, who looked just as red in the face.

"Ummm, Princess?" Twilight said as she flushed a dark red. "I don't think Princess Celestia would like us... messing with her..." Twilight coughed nervously... "...personal effects, especially those of, erm, that nature..."

"...I agree..." Luna replied quickly, shoving the items unceremoniously back into the compartment and ignoring the PlayColt magazines, and other assorted... reading materials, hidden beside them. "Let us never speak of this again, Twilight."

"Agreed, Prin-" Twilight started, and then both ponies nearly had heart attacks as Pinkie Pie popped up behind them, glancing over at the open compartment. "Ooooh, did the Princess leave us a surprise? I love surprises! Can I see? Can I Can I Can I?" Pinkie Pie tossed her head to either side with each "Can I", her bright eyes very nearly catching what lay within.

"NO!" Luna and Twilight yelled in unison, drawing the attention of the other Elements of Harmony before Twilight could hastily recover with, "It's, erm, a surprise the Princess left that isn't for us, and we weren't supposed to see it! And as *we* weren't supposed to see it, you're not permitted to, either!" Immediately afterward, Twilight slammed the compartment closed and began levitating books over, stuffing them back into the bookcase, definitely not in the same order they were removed.

"Okie dokie lokie!" Pinkie replied with a grin, bouncing away, leaving Twilight to walk off, still blushing, to look elsewhere. Luna herself continued using her magesight to study the objects she could see, but they all looked like everyday objects, if enhanced with a bit of magic to be easier to use.

*...There's nothing here, at all... Everything here are things I already know of, everyday things, nothing spectacular! My dear sister, were we really caught so off guard that you had nothing planned?* Luna wondered to herself, lowering her head while the room around her continued in its chaos. Determination sprung upon her face and, raising her head high, Luna

announced into the room, “Enough of this madness, my little ponies, we must hurry to the throne room. I can feel my sister there right now.”

Ignoring Pinkie Pie’s “Madness? This is Sparta!” comment (Luna really had trouble keeping track of all these new provinces sometimes...), she marched herself out of her elder sister’s bedchambers, vowing to clean them up later once she had taken care of certain events. No matter how scared she may be of said events. *I am glad I do not need to empty my bladder right now... Celly was always the brave one...*

---

“What do we do now?” Rainbow Dash asked to nopony in particular. The poorly prepared pack of particularly persistent ponies had found to their dismay that both sets of doors leading into the throne room and audience chambers were bolted shut and locked. Of course, this inconvenience would not stop them, as there were still the main palace doors as well as the stained glass windows and skylights of the throne room.

They were currently standing in front of the grand doors of the throne room, after having passed through hallways eerily quiet and empty. Not even the usual guards or maids were seen, which was peculiar in and of itself. *My guess is the guards were killed or fled before Erebus, I would not blame them, and the maids have a fortunate habit of being able to hide until things blow over.* Luna thought as she listened to the conversation behind her as well as tried to figure a way into the throne room. Something, or *things*, in there were radiating an immense amount of magic, and one of them was definitely her sister.

“Panic?” Fluttershy asked in reply, glancing up at the large double doors in trepidation from beneath her pink mane.

“That’s your answer for-” Rainbow stopped, then slapped her forehead with a hoof, realizing that they’d had that conversation before. “Ugh, Princess, is there any way we can get inside?”

“Patience, Rainbow. The Princess knows what she is doing... I hope.” Twilight ventured, batting the marble path with her hoof. “You do know what you’re doing, right?”

Luna was peering at Twilight when she suddenly heard the double doors swing open. Whipping her head around so fast she swore she got whiplash, Luna blinked and her mouth dropped open as a particular pink party pony passed out through the doors. “H-How... How...” Luna stammered.

Bouncing on past the Moon Princess to join her friends, Pinkie Pie’s bubbly reply came, “It was just a hop, skip, and a jump! Anypony could do it, Princess!”

The group of ponies progressed past the Princess, mostly ignoring her flabbergasted

look. One in particular, Applejack, Luna recalled, placed a hoof upon her shoulder and shook her head, “Best not ta try to understand ‘er, Princess. She’s Pinkie Pie.” She left the hoof there for a moment before herself proceeding into the open doorway.

The gasp of Twilight and her friends, as well as the collective “Princess Celestia!” broke Luna from her astonishment, breaking into a gallop to enter the audience chambers. Just as she entered, however, the doors slammed shut behind her and, startling her, she let out a loud ‘Eeep!’, a magical barrier sprung into place to prevent escape.

The doors were not what had the mixed group of ponies frozen in place. Oh, no, it was the sight of Princess Celestia which stopped them dead in their tracks. Luna’s heart wrenched as she stopped to take in the details of the sight before her. Celestia was suspended in midair above the raised throne, held by countless obsidian strands reminiscent of a spider’s web. The stygian, tar-like substance nearly covered her entire body in a tenebrous carapace, leaving only her head exposed. Her exposed visage radiated brilliant sunlight as the immense magical energies of the sun coursed through her, and her horn shone several magnitudes brighter than Luna had ever seen it before, an effulgent beacon of light in the oppressive darkness. The celestial alicorn’s eyes were open wide, unseeing and coated by a film of the magics flowing through her body.

*No... sister...* “Celly!” Luna cried out, as she sprinted down the length of the red carpet while the others followed her. She stopped halfway when she noticed Celestia’s head move ever so slightly.

“Luna...? Sister? What are you doing here? I am unable to see you... I am doing all I can to hold Erebus back!” Celestia announced weakly into the room, her eyes roaming uselessly behind the film of magic, attempting to see through her blindness.

The chambers immediately grew cold, and Luna swore the light coming through the windows and skylights dimmed, yet somehow Celestia’s horn kept the area near her brightly lit. **“It is good that you have returned, Luna of Trelaria. And I notice you have brought guests.”** One moment, the throne was empty, the next, Erebus was sitting upon it.

The midnight blue alicorn was about to answer when a rainbow blur streaked by her, then suddenly stopped in midair, her tail comically stretched out like cotton candy. “Hey! You! Get off our Princess’ throne and let her free!” Rainbow Dash shouted at the monstrosity.

Behind her, Applejack had the tip of Rainbow’s tail in her teeth with a long suffering look upon her face, mumbling, “ ‘o ‘h ha’e pu mu ‘his ere’y ‘ime, ‘ain’ow?” This sounded suspiciously like, “Do I have to do this every time, Rainbow?”

**“I see. I would recognize their power anywhere. You brought the Elements with you.”** Raising a rancid hoof, Erebus pointed it at the group of ponies. Upon their necks, their Element necklaces sprung into being, while Twilight’s crown settled upon her head. **“They**

**would never work against their creator. They were created to bring balance, and I am balance incarnate."**

"N-No! They followed me, worried for their monarch!" Luna endeavored to bluff. "I still have no clue what I am making a decision for! I have never seen Trelaria in all my life, nor what I am allegedly meant to hold a throne over!" *I certainly hope this works. I can't keep putting things off, I have to find some way to stop Erebus before I run out of time!*

Twilight and the rest of the girls were now staring at her in confusion, but Luna waved them off with a hoof despite this. **"Indeed. Then I shall give you a device that will allow you to see what you rule over. I warn you, it is not meant for the living outside of your race, I do not advise bringing your... friends."** The abomination's horn darkened, as a dark aura emanated from it. At Luna's hooves, a pitch black sphere appeared, then floated up into the air and slipped into her mane for safe keeping.

"I... shall remember that," the alicorn stammered, looking aside so as to avoid Erebus' gaze.

Lowering its hoof, Erebus' head moved slightly to scan its gaze across the gathered ponies. **"I digress. It seems your beloved ruler has been keeping things from her subjects. Including her own dear sister, I should say."**

"No..." Celestia managed to get out, "I will not reveal State Secrets to anypony who is not sanctioned to know of them!" Her head began thrashing to and fro, showing she was trying to escape her bindings.

**"Have you never wondered why your technology is a conglomerate? Why it seems to have holes where things should be? What about the fact that few non-pony species live in Equestria? Maybe a gryphon here or there, visiting, a dragon sleeping within its borders, but never any actual settlements? Or, that your dear Princess has a..."**

Celestia's movements became frantic, as well as her cries for Erebus to cease, yet it was not to be, as he continued to speak. **"...a daughter?"**

"*What!?*" Luna cried as the girls around her gasped and mumbled to each other, Twilight herself only looking confused and hurt.

Celestia ceased her struggles, hanging her head and shutting her eyes, muttering, "Please, I do what I must, Equestria comes first, and even what I did for my daughter was for the best... Please do not tell them who it is..."

**"You have hidden secrets away for far too long, Celestia of Equestria. Your daughter will know who she is, either by my mouth, or yours. Is that not right, Twilight, Daughter of Celestia? She who was Celestia of Equestria's heir, and yet is no longer such? A mother will go to extreme lengths to ensure her daughter's survival, will she not?"** Erebus pointedly asked, his head swiveling up to stare at Celestia

with empty sockets. The humor in his voice was unmistakable. He was now ignoring Luna and the others' reactions, focusing entirely upon Celestia. The Princess of the Sun had her head bowed as low as it could go while tears streamed down her face.

Luna, meanwhile, was stunned, her mouth hanging open at the implications of Erebus' accusations. *I... I have a niece...? When...? How...? Why... is she a unicorn? This cannot be possible...* The Princess forgot about her fear, instead lost entirely in thought about how Twilight could be her sister's daughter. *It would explain the immense magical prowess, though... but she is nowhere near the strength of an alicorn... I can figure this out, I can do this, I may be the artist, but I also like science, too! Come on, Luna...*

Behind Luna, all of Twilight's friends were staring at the stunned unicorn with open mouths. Twilight's pupils were tiny and had a faraway look to them while she could be heard babbling to herself, "I... I'm ...daughter? Princess Celestia... mother? I'm a unicorn! This... can't be... I have parents... I'm her faithful student, yes, yes, this is all a dream, or nightmare... Ohhh... I don't know what to think! I'd love to be Celestia's daughter, but... Everything changes!"

Her friends, however, were thrilled and worried in equal shares.

"Oh! I know! We need a party for the new Princess!"

"Sugarcube, are you alright? Ah mean, you're our friend an' all, but ah didn't know you were royalty, Twi-, er... Princess."

"Oh, Darling! This changes everything! A Princess, our friend and in our own town! Oh dear, I'll have to make all sorts of preparations! So many ideas to create! Oh, we'll even have to modify dresses for when you get wings, of course!"

"Wings? You mean she'll get wings!? **Yes!** I'll teach you how to fly, Twilight! And then you can help me get into the Wonderbolts! This is *so awesome!*"

"Twi-Twilight? A P-Princess? Oh dear, oh dear... I-I'm sorry, Twilight, for not being the best friend I could be... Oh, Fluttershy, you're such a bad friend..."

A soft, yet stern voice broke through everypony's conversation, drawing all eyes to the throne, and the alicorn suspended above it. "...Twilight is not a Princess. I was forced to take that title, and the title of Heir from her many years ago. She may be my daughter, but that is it. I had to make the hardest of decisions a mother and a ruler could ever make..." Celestia's head was still hung low, her eyes tightly shut, and yet, despite seeming helpless in such a position, she still held a commanding presence, enough to keep even her own sister silent while she listened.

"I kept this from everypony for centuries, because I could not face the decisions I had to make, but, I will tell you what happened, now that a certain monstrosity has given you the

truth...” Celestia sighed, then continued. “A few centuries ago, I wanted a foal of my own to care for. There were no stallions that I wished to spend my life with, but there was one unicorn, my Captain of the Guard, who I felt would not only give me a pleasurable night, but would allow me to bear a strong foal. I propositioned him, explaining my thoughts and desires, as well as the fact that he would have no responsibility to the foal, nor to me, other than being my Captain. He accepted. With magic as powerful as mine, I easily made sure I would bear...”

\*\*\*\*\*

“Please, let me see my foal.” Princess Celestia pleaded to the nurses tending to her after the lengthy and intense labor the alicorn had just gone through. The Princess’ normally billowing and voluptuous mane currently lay disheveled and still over the sides of the hospital bed while her coat shone with a thick sheen of sweat. Celestia’s breathing was hard, for, after all, she had just gone through a few days of labor, and before that, several years of pregnancy. It wasn’t the first time that she cursed an alicorn’s tendency to stretch everything out like a rubber band.

The length of the pregnancy was necessary, however, to allow time for the magical energies an alicorn sustained to accumulate within her unborn foal. While alicorns were also supposed to be resistant to pain, the days-long labor did little to reinforce this notion for the Sun Goddess.

Regardless, Celestia glanced pleadingly over at the nurses, who had immediately taken her foal away to get it cleaned. *I never even got to see my foal, I was in the wrong position to do so. I don’t even know if it is a colt or filly... Please, Sol and Altair, let my foal be healthy...* Celestia currently lay upon her stomach as a nurse dismantled the device that kept Celestia’s tail raised out of the way, while also spreading her rear legs. It was incredibly uncomfortable to be in the birthing position, however, she had done it at the doctors’ behest.

Hissing in still remembered pain as Celestia’s legs were permitted to go back beneath her and a second nurse cleaned her up, the doctor she had asked peered back in the direction they had taken her foal and shook his head. “I am sorry, your Majesty, but your daughter is currently being cleaned and checked for any issues. I am sure they will return her shortly.”

In fact, just as he finished speaking, a pair of nurses came back into the room, one levitating her daughter while the other held a clipboard. *A daughter, I have a daughter! Oh, Sol and Altair, you’re grandparents! If only you could be here right now... And Luna...* Turning onto her side and suppressing a wince of pain, as there was only so much that magic, immortality, and drugs could do for foalbirth, Celestia reached out with her forelegs as the nurses gently placed her foal within them.

With a wide smile, the nurse nodded to her Princess and giggled, “We congratulate you on your perfectly healthy foal, Princess! Usually, we require the mother to recuperate for a time



before we take details down, but I guess you're not a normal pony, so we can do them now while you're with your daughter, if you wish."

Pulling her infant to her chest, Celestia tentatively made use of her magic to pull aside the blanket covering her daughter. Magic had been touch and go for most of the several years of her pregnancy, especially near the time of her labor, and she'd needed varying numbers of attendants to get anything done at times.

The second nurse drew near and began to fill out a form upon the clipboard, then raised her head to stare at the alicorn. "Daughter's name, please, your Majesty?"

*My daughter's name...* Celestia thought, beaming down at her foal with nothing but love. The filly's lavender coat shone brightly in the austere white confines of the infirmary room, and a patch of pink and violet mane peeked out from under the cowl near the filly's tiny nub of a horn. *More night than day. The sun has set on my previous life, and now, I have a foal, who brings the dawn to a new day. I shall name her...*

"Twilight. Her name is Twilight." *Twilight, my beloved daughter...*

---

A few more days had gone by before the nurses and doctors had given their Princess a clean bill of health and had released her from the infirmary with strict orders to take it easy. For now, Celestia had plenty of time to bond with Twilight while her ministers and Council took care of everything. At the moment, the Sun Princess lay in her plush bed, looking over Twilight's birth certificate and thinking back to the questions that were asked. Some of course had been necessary, while others were more... personal.

*I nearly burst out laughing when I told them there was no father. I told Iron Horn he would not be responsible for any of this, and I will uphold my promise. I swear, by now most of the city thinks I gave immaculate birth. As if! I'm anything but! Even I have my needs.* Celestia chuckled inwardly at that thought, then set the certificate aside to instead smile down at the foal curled up against her side. *Why they needed to know if I was going to breast or formula feed her, only a doctor could know. I guess they need to know every detail of how I will care for my foal. I swear half the palace staff has been on hand for me the past day, or trying to give me advice on how to care for her.*

Celestia shook her head, leaning her head down to nuzzle along Twilight's back, the filly shifting in her sleep and making what Celestia thought sounded like a content sound. *I've heard foals were noisy, messy creatures, and yet, not once has my daughter cried, or really been messy. Maybe alicorn foals are different, because I haven't needed to put Twilight in a nappy since we returned. She lets me know when she needs to go...*

Peering curiously down at her daughter, Celestia's gaze exuded nothing but love. She had

been gifted with a new life, and all the trouble of the past few years, and the past several days, with the pregnancy and labor melted away as she watched over her slumbering infant.

*She will be my Heir, the light of my day, my Sol. She won't fully grow until after I pass the crown to her, of course, like my parents did with us, but she will have plenty of time to enjoy life, to grow to love everypony as I do. I will get to see her grow, to learn and cherish. I will teach her everything I know of magic, of how to fly and the experience of flying.*

*She will be my everything...*

And yet, many things are not meant to be. Life is never fair. Even for the benevolent ruler of a land.

---

The days, then months passed, and Twilight grew. No longer a newborn, she was still just as much of a hoofful as she had been at birth. However, just like any mother, especially a ruler, Celestia's life had to continue moving on. While she had competent ministers, they were unable to govern in her stead for lengthy periods of time, forcing Celestia to leave her filly in the care of the castle nursery, a place castle workers could bring their colts and fillies to have designated nannies watch over them.

Celestia did not wish to return to her duties, instead wanting to spend her time with her daughter, but also did not wish to have her in the day care. While Twilight was not a filly prone to crying, except the time or two she managed to get a scrape, she would definitely make her demands known, as any foal does. This left Celestia with little time to sleep, and very tired most days.

In some ways, the return to duty was relaxing, but also stressful in others. The amount of paperwork she needed to go through, the decisions she had to put off as they were not important enough to disturb the new mother, and of course changes that needed to be made, proclamations, meetings with diplomats and various appointments were almost overwhelming. At times, the Princess felt like she would rather deal with several newborns than the day-to-day events of the country.

It was during one of these appointments that she was meeting with her main Advisor regarding the course of the next several events, as well as various things she had asked for. One of which being an examination of Twilight by the leading professors and minds of her School for Gifted Unicorns.

"...quite healthy and normal for a filly of her age. We cannot say as yet what her special talent will be, of course, unless she takes over for you when you step down," he explained while seated upon a large cushion in front of her desk. They were currently ensconced within the Princess' personal study, bookcases lining both of the side walls, while her desk lay in the back

near the floor-to-ceiling windows, a nice late-Spring breeze blew in from one of the open windows. The desk in front of her, while ornate and built with care, certainly could not be seen as such, not with the tall stacks of parchment spread to either side of her to be looked over. It was going to be a long week.

“Continuing on, her Magical Aptitude Grade, from the tests that we performed to determine how much power she can be expected to have, is quite astonishing. I believe she may surpass even you, Princess. We can expect many good things out of her when she matures,” the advisor droned, reading straight from the paper he was hovering in front of himself. As boring as Celestia found his report, listening to him drone on about current events, things that needed to be done, and his *stern* disapproval of taking time off to raise her foal, the Sun Princess had to at least act like she was paying attention, until she actually did so upon hearing the news of Twilight.

“That’s quite good news amongst all the bad and mediocre, Quill Pen, thank you for your *terse* explanations. You may leave now.” Celestia said, taking several glances over the work she had yet to do and giving a heartfelt sigh. She missed her daughter. The past several days of her return to being the ruler of Equestria were dull without her around. *Maybe I should bring her with me, as long as she isn’t too much trouble. A foal is quite endearing to many ponies and often brightens the mood, as well as relaxes them. Could be worth a try when I meet some of my next appointments.* In fact, at that moment the Princess imagined the dragon diplomat going ‘Whooshe a kewt widdle pony? You are! YOU are!’

The hours passed and Celestia managed to make a noticeable dent in the piles of paperwork upon her desk. She did not have to worry about daily court, at least not for another week, while a diplomat had canceled his appointment later in the day due to extenuating circumstances involving a pie. *I should at least make an appearance later. To show all my little ponies that I still exist and am quite well,* Celestia thought as she stamped her seal upon a document that had required her reading and approval.

Turning her head, something in the distance caught her eye. The Bringer of Day could see a group of Pegasus Guards drilling in the sky near one of the towers. Daydreaming somewhat, Celestia imagined tutoring Twilight in the ways of flight, at first building up her endurance, then lengthy training flights, and finally, during their free time, entire adventures, showing her daughter the beauty of the world and skies, just like Sol had done with her and Luna.

The desperate pounding and quick opening of her study’s doors drew the Princess out of her daydreaming. Gracefully turning her head, she noticed one of the nannies from the nursery gasping for breath and in an obvious state of panic.

Her eyes widened in shock, as it could only mean one thing; Celestia opened her mouth to ask what was wrong when the nanny gasped out, “Princess, your Majesty, I’m terribly sorry to

bother you, but your daughter has collapsed in the nursery! She's been taken to the infirmary and I was sent to g-

By that point, Celestia had jumped up and galloped out of her study, the nanny yeeeping in fright and jumping back lest she be bowled over. What she was saying forgotten, the nanny followed the sprinting alicorn as best as she could, but eventually lost too much ground.

*Nonononononononono...* was the only thought Celestia could hold in her mind, fear for her daughter overriding her other senses as she weaved through shocked ponies walking the castle's halls. Even at her full speed, it took her several minutes to get to the infirmary, bursting into the chambers and immediately heading for the room in which she could sense her daughter's presence.

Various doctors and nurses were moving in and out of the room steadily, some shaking their heads, while others looked confused about the situation. Celestia pushed past a doctor currently exiting, eliciting a glare from him until he realized at whom it was directed; the worried mother dashed straight to her daughter's bedside. Within the bed, Twilight looked like such a tiny speck of color in the sea of white cloth. The poor alicorn foal was shivering beneath the blanket, yet when Celestia laid a hoof upon Twilight's forehead, she could feel the filly's body heat burning her up. That wasn't the most worrying thing, though. Twilight's nub of a horn was also sparking. Not glowing, but *crackling* with unreleased power. *What's wrong with her...* Celestia wondered worriedly.

"What's wrong with her? *What's wrong with my filly!?*" the mother asked, and then demanded, looking frantically around the room as the several doctors and nurses turned their heads away from her gaze, or stared sheepishly at other portions of the most interesting white infirmary room. Celestia was about to raise her voice, something she rarely ever did when a meek cough came from behind her. Turning, with tears streaming down her eyes, she noticed one of the nurses standing behind her with a sheaf of papers under her wing.

"P-Princess, I... We don't know what's wrong with Princess Twilight." The pegasus nurse was visibly shivering in the presence of the distressed alicorn, terrified of what Celestia might do when she heard the news. "W-We have ponies looking through the infirmary archives right now for anything that might match the symptoms. I'm s-sorry, we just don't know much about alicorns, Highness!"

With a sigh and a forlorn glance at Twilight, the Princess began to speak. Celestia's reply was so soft that the nurse had to lean in to hear what was being said, "Send a message to the Ministers and Council. I declare I am having an emergency and must temporarily defer power to them for the time being while this is sorted out..."

"Yes, Princess."

---

It was a few days before any sort of answer came to Celestia. The entire time had been spent at Twilight's bedside, with no improvement in her condition. It was also the only time she had seen her daughter cry for an extended period of time, even going so far as to scream from the pain. Everypony in the infirmary was on edge, and doctors from around Equestria had been brought in to see what could be done for her. Sadly, nothing worked, and even pain blocking magics could barely suppress the filly's agony, sleep seeming to be her only refuge from it, and even then, just barely.

The Sun Goddess, not so much so anymore, (she felt more like a powerless pony than the ruler of an entire land and an immortal no less), refused to allow anypony else care for her filly. The Princess herself, no matter how much anypony argued or seemed shocked at her doing such things, fed Twilight, changed her bed-linens, and bathed her. She only allowed the doctors near her daughter when they needed to try a treatment or study her symptoms.

After a few days, however, Celestia's hope was waning, and she was half-draped over Twilight's bed, deep in thought. *This is my punishment for fighting and banishing my own sister... My punishment for the things I've done in my life for Equestria... A ruler must either keep their morals and ruin their country, or encourage their country to prosper while throwing their morals out the window. I try the best I can to be the best pony I can, but even so, I must make decisions for the greater good of Equestria... The life of an immortal, to feel nothing but loss, even with the ones closest to me... My friends... My sister... My daughter... Luna will return to me soon, but... Will I lose my daughter to gain Luna?*

The door creaked open behind the Princess, though she ignored it, being too immersed in her thoughts and depression to notice. A doctor came into the room, then gently shut the door behind him, hovering several sheets of preserved parchment before him. Noticing the alicorn's position before him, he offered a polite cough, startling Celestia from her thoughts and causing her to turn her head to stare at him.

He bowed low before holding the parchments up into the air in front of her, "We may have found something, Princess, pertaining to the current situation." Celestia took the parchments with her own magic, her tear-stained eyes skimming down the records. "We believe this may be what's called Sorceptobia, an illness that strikes only alicorns."

Celestia stayed silent, keeping her ears open as she read through the medical records, which seemed to involve several dates. "The records indicate that the last recorded case was when your lost sister was a young filly. Sorceptobia is a buildup of the immense magical energies within an alicorn's body. It can be cured within a week simply by constant magical use through the horn. However, from the records, it seems to strike young alicorns only, and it seems that with your Twilight is the youngest that has been struck. Symptoms include an intense fever, chills, overwhelming fatigue, and intense agony. To say the least, the magic's burning her up from the inside out."

The doctor looked saddened, then stepped over to the filly's bed, peering down at her with concern. "She is too young to have use of her still-growing horn, and while I would suggest numerous alternatives to that treatment, such as siphoning off the energies, I am afraid to say that they would either irrevocably damage her still-growing mind and body, or outright kill her... I am sorry, your Majesty, there is nothing we can do for her... We are going to lose her..."

---

*I must be strong, I **have** to be strong! For Equestria, for me...for Twilight...* Celestia demanded of herself as she closed the chamber and settled the decorative tapestry over the entrance. To anypony else, that is all it would be, a tapestry and white wall. To her, it would be her daughter's prison, or even her tomb with a special spell set into the wall that would only let the Sun Goddess pass through. Within the chamber, Twilight, her daughter and Heir, floated in midair in a time-stopping stasis field, numerous spells having become the filly's only friends.

Staring defiantly at the chamber wall and tapestry, thought still roiled within the Princess' head. *I **will** find a way to cure you, my beloved, my only daughter. No matter how long it takes, be it days, months, or even years, I **will** do it, even if it means I have to sacrifice a part of myself to do so.*

And so Celestia set out to find a cure for her ailing and time-locked filly, devoting all her personal time and many sleepless nights to finding a cure for Twilight. In between ruling her lands and spending time talking and reading to Twilight within the chamber, even though she knew the filly couldn't hear her, the alicorn used everything at her disposal.

First, it was days; then weeks passed; months flew by; and finally the time turned into years, decades... centuries. At first, Celestia's hopes were high. She had numerous spells she could potentially use to cure her daughter, but the doctor had been right. Anything she used on such a young foal could or would ultimately disable or even kill her.

After the first decade, Celestia did something she had only done a couple other times. She went to the Core of Canterlot Castle. Not to save her filly, but to make others forget. The constant reminders society gave her were not helping her mental state, and she felt it best, as a grieving mother, to allow everypony to forget. She may not have been in the right state of mind at the time, but what mother would be at the prospect of losing her foal and being reminded everyday of her failures? Using the Core, Celestia concocted the spell. The spell to force Equestria and all lands on this side of the Deep Dark to forget. Ponies and other creatures' minds were wiped of the existence of Twilight, and documentation became illegible, changed, or vanished altogether. A grieving mother's unreasonable decision...

---

The thousandth Summer Sun Celebration was quickly approaching, as was Luna and her Nightmare's return. Not but a hoofful of years remained, and still Twilight's affliction had not

been cured. In fact, Celestia's failure to help her filly was forcing her to consider drastic spells. One in particular seemed the most promising in theory, but was irreversible and would rob the Princess of her heir, of her daughter. Yet, Twilight would live, free and unsickened.

For months after considering the spell, Celestia could only think about two things. Luna's return, and that single spell. All other spells had failed, either failures in and of themselves, or because they would have severely damaged, or even killed her filly. This was unacceptable, and yet, the only spell that could theoretically work would force her to give up her filly.

Several months later, Celestia finally made her decision. With a heavy heart, the alicorn stepped through the tapestry and wall to stare up at her daughter, floating peacefully in eternal slumber until she could be released from her affliction. *Be strong, my heart, one of us has to be strong...* Dropping the spells that had imprisoned her filly for centuries, Celestia choked back a sob. While the chamber was hidden, a curious pony may still come to investigate, and she did not wish that to happen. Grasping Twilight gently with her magic, the Princess deposited her into a pile of linens, and wrapped them around the sickly and sleeping foal.

Then, pushing ahead lest she never be able to let her foal go, Celestia carefully laid the framework of the spell, checking her work several times over. The slightest mistake could instead kill her filly, and she had never performed the spell before. Satisfied with the work, Celestia laid the spell over Twilight, flinching as the alicorn filly stirred in her sleep and made a grimace of pain. *Don't worry, my beloved, you will be well soon...* Once the spell was ready, the Sun Goddess poured her magic into it, silent tears sliding down her cheeks as she felt the filly before her physically changing within the linens. Twilight's wings vanished, along with her Earth Pony and Pegasus characteristics, then followed her magic. The Princess, with a heavy heart, drained the magic from her daughter, allowing her to keep enough to be an exceptional unicorn, as that was all her daughter now was.

A unicorn.

---

One night. One last night. That is how long Celestia gave herself to be with her filly before she would have to give Twilight up. *Any longer and I risk never letting her go... I wish the same happy, graceful facade I show the world could be applied right now... Twilight will of course need a new set of parents who will love her just as much as I do.* The alicorn stared lovingly, and yet heartbreakingly, down at the sleeping foal curled up against her alabaster coat, sleeping off the worst effects of not only her illness, but also the spell.

*I can't just leave her with anypony, she needs a family I can trust, who won't neglect her. I'd raise her myself if it weren't for the political repercussions. There are plenty of things that can and will go wrong if I raise a unicorn filly... Sometimes I despise politics.* The Princess sighed and stretched, then curled up tightly around her foal. The night was quiet, even more so within the Princess' bedchambers. Celestia stared into the corner of her room, where a perch sat

with a sleeping phoenix upon it. Philomena was a bird she had met a couple centuries ago, helping her keep her grief in check.

*No, I know who can adopt you, my dawn, my Twilight. A couple old friends of mine...*

The next day, before the noon Court, a unicorn couple was ushered into a private audience chamber to meet their Princess, unsure of what would be taking place. The summons had come out of the blue in the early morning, leaving them little time to get themselves ready for a personal audience. No, whatever it had to be was quite serious for it to be this sudden.

The Princess had her well-practiced facade upon her face, showing a brave and happy demeanor to the two unicorns as they entered the chamber. Smiling to the two unicorns, one of which was Star Sparkle, a mare who had gone to her school and had become, while not a close friend of the Princess, still at least a very well acquainted friend. She was also sterile, or so her records seemed to indicate.

After some general chatting and greetings, while Star Sparkle's husband looked on in confusion, the question and reason for the audience finally came to light. "Now, I am to understand that you have been looking to adopt, my little ponies?"

The shocked expressions upon the unicorns' faces not only told Celestia everything, but also managed to amuse her in her grim mood, followed by their slow nodding in confirmation. "I have been looking for a home for a certain filly for a while now. However, I wanted the parents to be ponies I could trust." Turning her head, Celestia raised a basket from behind her and brought it to the front, showing a bundled and sleeping lavender unicorn infant within.

"Her name is Twilight, and she won't remember me when she wakes. I care greatly for her, and I want to see her go to a good home," the Princess explained, barely managing to keep her eyes from tearing up as she spoke.

Star Sparkle looked down at the sleeping filly with astonishment, then confusion. "Is... Is this your daughter, your majesty?" she bewilderingly asked.

Celestia chuckled, even though her heart had stopped, "No, Star Sparkle, alicorns have alicorn foals. Twilight is a unicorn, her parents have her out for adoption, as they are unable to care for her." *Not a complete lie...*

Lowering her head to their level, Celestia continued her explanation, "I am offering her to the both of you first of all. If you wish to raise her, I will take care of the paperwork and get you a birth certificate. Just one thing, my little ponies. Do not let her know that her parents had to give her up. You conceived and birthed her. You raised her. You are her parents. That is all she needs to know, Mister and Missus Sparkle."

Star Sparkle stared thoughtfully down at the foal, then turned to her husband,



whispering to him in hushed conversation. For several minutes they faintly discussed before turning back to the Princess. Star took the basket in her magic and raised it to her chest, then bent her head down to kiss Twilight upon the forehead. "She will be our Twilight Sparkle."

---

Years later, late in a summer afternoon, Celestia was going over her School for Gifted Unicorns' newest report. Graduations, supply requisitions, the usual accident and damage reports. Those were always amusing to read. Most 'accidents' were more pranks than anything. Turning your teacher into a flowerpot, trying a 'love' spell to get the colt or filly your eyes are on. Sometimes even the normal pranks a student will get up to, something she enjoyed hearing about. Anything meant to be vindictive or painful, however, was quickly punished. Another thing she enjoyed reading was the report on all up and coming Entrance Exams, as well as the results of previous exams. The list was short this time, but there were still several names upon it, as well as their written entrance exam results and family history.

*Let's see. Noble pony shoving his colt into the school. Horrendous written test scores, plus his attitude seems to show he does not wish to be there. That one will get denied pretty quickly on the final decision. Two more Noble families putting their fillies into the school, promising results. Oh... Oh my... Twi-*

"Twilight Sparkle...?" Celestia repeated incredulously. The name on the list was of course one she had expected to eventually see, but which surprised her nonetheless. At first, Star Sparkle had sent her reports of her progress, but those had eventually tapered off and died. Checking the Filly's background, it was in front of her eyes in black and white. Daughter of Star Sparkle. Her written test results were extraordinary, far higher than most fillies and colts her age. *Her personality is one of an avid reader with a studious nature, anti-social, spending all her time in a book. Shows a great aptitude for magic. It's her... It's really her... My daughter has grown up to be a scholar... I think it is time I sat in on another potential student's test. Let's see, the time for Twilight's scheduled test is...In ten minutes!? Alright, I have time, I can get there in time.*

Ten minutes later, however, Princess Celestia wasn't even halfway there, not only had a couple of her ministers stopped her, but she couldn't exactly rush to the School. A Princess must be serene and take her time in the eyes of her ponies. She was already late when she came within sight of the school up ahead. Suddenly, a rainbow arc spread across the sky, accompanied by a sonic boom, startling Celestia. At that moment, a large burst of magical energies shot out of one of the School's tower chambers, and the head of a dragon burst through the roof. *Oh dear... I think it may just be time I did rush!*

Several thoughts coursed through her head as she ran into the school, past numerous startled ponies who gaped at their Princess in such a rush. Ignoring them, she ran up the stairs, wondering if it was another practical joke, a spell gone wrong, or a very angry pony. The moment she entered the room, however, she saw several things. One, the teachers were running

one of their magical aptitude tests. Two, the dragon was still a hatchling, albeit a massive one. Three, there were two curious potted plants. And four, amidst it all hovered a lavender unicorn releasing uncontrolled bursts of raw magic.

Celestia's breath caught in her throat and her heart nearly stopped. Twilight looked the same as she had as a foal, though grown into a small filly. Daintily walking over to the floating and distressed unicorn filly, Celestia gently placed a hoof upon her shoulder.

Twilight turned and noticed who was looking down at her, then realized what she was doing. The magic faded from her body and released the filly from its grasp, lowering her back to the floor. Around Celestia, the four previously hovering teachers were set back down upon the floor, the hatchling returned to his normal, and adorable size. And the two potted plants changed back into unicorns the Princess knew so well.

"Twilight Sparkle..." Celestia started.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean..." Twilight interrupted, yet Celestia plowed on ahead with her words.

"You have a very special gift, I don't think I've ever come across a unicorn with your raw abilities," Celestia announced, amazed at how much of her magic Twilight had retained from being an alicorn.

"Huh?" the filly replied, bewildered.

"But you need to learn to tame these abilities through focused study."

"Huh!?"

"Twilight Sparkle, I'd like to make you my own personal protégé here at the school," the Princess offered. *I can have my daughter back, maybe not as such, but I can still teach her magic... I can have my Twilight back...*

"*Huh!?*"

"Well?" Celestia asked the confused filly, wanting to laugh at the expression upon Twilight's face.

Twilight turned to look at her parents, who nodded until Celestia swore their necks would break.

"**Yeeees!**"

\*\*\*\*\*

The entire throne room was silent except for the breathing of the astonished group of ponies on the receiving end of the story. Luna was at a loss for words. *Even my own sister never told me any of this, that she had a daughter, of what happened to that daughter, of... her daughter saving me, not once, but twice...*

At times throughout the story, one or another of the group of ponies had tried to interrupt Celestia, but had been ignored as she continued her explanation. Somehow, once again, Pinkie Pie had managed to produce a tub of popcorn from somewhere, leading Luna to believe that she must secretly be a unicorn to do all the things the Moon Goddess had seen so far. Random teleporting? Conjunction of items? And from Twilight's letters to Celestia, numerous other things.

"I'm so sorry, my daughter... I did what I had to do..." came the voice of the figure suspended above the throne.

There were so many questions Luna wished to ask of her sister, and she bet Twilight and her friends had just as many. However Erebus seemed to have a different idea. **"I do believe it is time for you to leave, Luna of Trelaria. You and your... friends."** He stepped down from Celestia's throne, slowly making his way toward the group of ponies. **"You have so much to pack for, to prepare for. You are, after all, going to Trelaria to see that which you rule over. You will be leaving now."**

"W-What!?" Luna gasped, snapping out of her thoughts. "No! There is still so much I have to discuss with my sister!"

Around her, other protests came from Twilight's friends, but the lavender unicorn herself remained silent. "What in tarnation? Heck no, we came here ta save th' Princess!"

"Oh yeah? I'd like to see you try and send us away!"

"Pffft! You can't do anything to us, big meany mean pants!"

"Twilight...? Darling? Are you alright? I know it's a lot to take in, but we need you right now..."

**"...Now means now. I will see you again when you have your answer, Luna of Trelaria."** Erebus' horn began to emit a dark aura, and the same aura surrounded the group of ponies, collecting around them before vanishing, taking them along with it.

---

Even with her head hung as low as it could go, Celestia could just barely see her younger sister, her daughter, and the rest of the Elements of Harmony wink out. Just as she was about to

demand to know where they had gone, Erebus spoke to her. **“Luna of Trelaria is bluffing for time, Celestia of Equestria. She will soon understand that time ran out ages ago.”**

Celestia ground her teeth and raised her head, glaring unseeing daggers at the abomination standing within her throne room. “She *will* find a way to defeat you, Erebus! The Champions will come, as they always do. When I am freed from this prison, you will feel the full force of the power of the Sun!”

**“Or so you think. Time has run out for you, Celestia. I have enjoyed our little power struggle, but now, I shall make you mine, in place of your sister. You have proven to be a more valuable asset alive than dead.”** For a moment, Celestia could have sworn she saw Erebus’ bony face turn upward in a twisted sort of smile. *That couldn’t have happened, his face is only a skull!*

What happened next shocked the alabaster alicorn into a state of paralyzing fear. All at once, the darkness rushed in against her power, overwhelming her and revealing that Erebus had only been toying with her. The miniature sun upon her horn snuffed out, allowing the shadow to envelop the chamber. The carapace holding her in place flowed over her body, covering her neck, and then her entire head. Celestia managed to take one last breath before she was fully encased by the tar-like substance.

All at once, her body erupted in pain as the ooze began to force itself into every orifice. Nothing was spared, not her ears or eyes, not even her rump or her pores. The pain was excruciating, and Celestia could feel the substance seeping deep into her being. It clawed viciously at the back of her mind, trying to get in. The alicorn fought against it as best as she could, the darkness moving in to surround her last sanctuary, which became ever smaller by the second. Finally, even her mind was consumed.

**“Rise, Solar Flare. You will replace Nightmare Moon.”**

**END CHAPTER 4**

[<<<Chapter 3](#) [Chapter 5>>>](#)

**(A/N)** Phew, okay, that was a long one to write, but I didn’t want to split it, either. It completely killed my schedule, too, to say the least! Now, like I promised here are some explanations. Back when I was writing Solar Flare, I had numerous ideas of what I wanted to do, one being that I wanted to make Twilight Celestia’s daughter, have an entire story behind why she’s a unicorn and not an alicorn, and tell why she had different parents. This came of it, right here, that entire origin of Twilight story.

What made my jaw drop, however, was that just a day before I began writing Twilight’s sickness, a new Midnight story released, one with my exact idea. Magic overload, using magic to

release some of the load. What I was glad about was that it wasn't about Twilight, and that the story took a different direction.

The third thing I wanted to do was turn Celestia into a Nightmare Moon-like character. The entire name of my [Solar Flare](#) story was for that. Yes, it was a story name, but what else was it? It did not seem to pertain much to the story itself, and I always had a habit of dropping little hints and such into my stories. Chekov's Guns, plot points, whatever you may have, I love them. I love it even more when people figure things out. So, no, I did not take any of this from [Empty Room](#), nor from the Midnight stories. I had everything I wanted to do figured out long ago, and if I weren't so freaking lazy at times, I'd have it all written by now. XD

The fourth thing? Nightmare Moon will be returning, oh yes. I absolutely love writing her. Can't give any spoilers other than that, though!

To say the least, the coincidences are exactly that. I'm not the first to write these things, neither will I be the last.

Ah, well, either way, shit happens, I'm just happy to write all this and continue my story. Yes, this Author's note is poorly written. Give me a break, I just wrote twenty something pages in several days, sometimes going at it for hours at a time.

**~Dragryphon**

E/N Hiya everypony! Fifth Alicorn at your service. So you remember how we promised you that this story would contain shorter chapters so you don't have to ignore your loved ones anymore? Yeah, well [this](#). Basically, I've been a big fan of "Solar Flare" since the first chapter, and I was extremely excited when Dragryphon made that advertisement for a new editor. I'm grateful to be part of this writing crew, and I look forward to improving the story any way I can. I'm the stallion that's responsible for making sure Dragryphon doesn't lose her sanity with my snarky comments (one or two of such may or have not been implemented in the chapter), plus I'm the fellow that implemented the chapter quick-jumps at the beginning and end of each chapter. You know what they say, it takes a village.

In all honesty, I just want to give a round of hoof-plause for Dragryphon again. She's been working quite tirelessly on this new chapter, and I can promise you that the following chapters will be worth the read as well. I'm pretty sure I lost my train of thought several sentences ago, so I'll just start signing off. I'm still new at this. Thanks again for reading everypony, and make sure to stay tuned!

Best,

~Fifth Alicorn

P.S. Ask for more Applejack in the comments. Dragryphon *looves* writing Applejack dialogue...

P.P.S. Fluttershy is best pony <= Myths and Defamations! <= No she really is! <= Myths and Defamations of the highest caliber, Nightmare Moon is best pony! <= Conniving scoundrels.

They thought I wouldn't revisit the story before it was submitted <= More myths, I was awaiting your return!

E/N - Um... Hi... my name is rhiazami... Well, this has been quite a chapter, hasn't it? So much sh... stuff hitting such a large fan... I hope you've enjoyed reading it as much as I have enjoyed editing it. As far as edity stuff goes, this is probably the most organized editing project I've been

involved with yet, and I am very much impressed by the quality of the work of everypony involved, they're dedicated ponies. Solar Flare was the first grimdark fic I read, and remains a favourite. Parfois, quand mes yeux sont ouvert, je vois quelque chose. I'm sorry I'm rambling, I'll stop now... if... if that's alright with you...

~rhiiazami

P.S. Fluttershy is best pony, but Twilight Sparkle is good too.