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# my LITTLE PONY

Friendship  
is Magic





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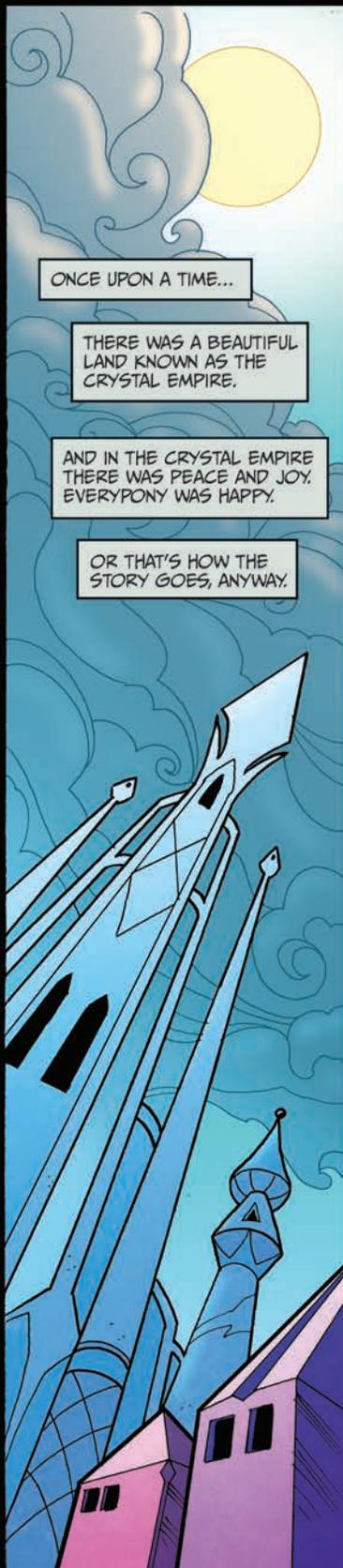
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# STIEGE of the CRYSTAL EMPIRE part II



ONCE UPON A TIME...

THERE WAS A BEAUTIFUL LAND KNOWN AS THE CRYSTAL EMPIRE.

AND IN THE CRYSTAL EMPIRE THERE WAS PEACE AND JOY. EVERYPONY WAS HAPPY.

OR THAT'S HOW THE STORY GOES, ANYWAY.

BUT IN THAT BEAUTIFUL LAND, THERE WAS A YOUNG GIRL WHO HAD LOST MUCH AND FOUND HERSELF IN AN ORPHANAGE. HER NAME WAS RADIANT HOPE.

AND SINCE SHE WAS ALONE, HOPE MADE FRIENDS WITH SHADOWS AND PIXIES AND THINGS NO ONE ELSE COULD SEE.

THE OTHER YOUNG PONIES AT THE ORPHANAGE SAID THAT SHE WAS STRANGE AND THEY REFUSED TO PLAY WITH HER.

AND WHEN SHE WAS THE LAST GIRL WITH NO CUTIE MARK, IT ONLY GOT WORSE.

AND THEN, RADIANT HOPE FINALLY MET SOMEONY WHO WOULD BE HER FRIEND.

IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN BE WEIRD WITH ME AND WE'LL BE WEIRD TOGETHER. WOULD THAT BE OKAY?

SOMBRA WOULD LIKE THAT.

SOON, SOMBRA AND HOPE WERE THE BEST OF FRIENDS AND THEY WERE INSEPARABLE.

GOOD KING... I MEAN PRINCE SOMBRA! I HAVE COME TO RESCUE YOU FROM YOUR TOWER.

LOOK OUT, SIR LADY HOPE, THE DRAGON IS RIGHT BEHIND YOU!

OF COURSE, A GOOD FAIRY TALE NEEDS CERTAIN THINGS. ONE NIGHT HOPE AND SOMBRA DECIDED TO GO OUT TO SEE THE CRYSTAL HEART.

WOW, IT'S AMAZING!

LET'S GET CLOSER!

THE LEGEND OF THE CRYSTAL HEART SAYS THAT IF YOU LOOK INTO ITS SURFACE LONG ENOUGH, YOU CAN SEE YOUR FUTURE.

AND WHAT RADIANT HOPE SAW STRUCK HER WITH WONDER. SHE SAW THAT SHE WOULD BECOME A PRINCESS.

BUT SOMBRA SAW SOMETHING FAR DIFFERENT. HE SAW AN IMAGE THAT WOULD STAY WITH HIM. AN IMAGE THAT WOULD WAKE HIM FROM A SOUND SLEEP. HE SAW SOMETHING HE DID NOT WANT TO BECOME.

SOMBRA HAD HOPED TO PUT THE TERRIBLE VISION OUT OF HIS MIND BY GOING TO THE CRYSTAL FAIRE. HOPE HAD WANTED TO TAKE HIM AND HE COULDN'T WAIT.

BUT THE DAY OF THE FAIRE CAME AND SOMBRA BECAME TERRIBLY ILL. HE WRITHED IN PAIN WHILE EVERYONE ELSE CELEBRATED. EVERYONE EXCEPT HOPE.

SHE NEVER LEFT HIS SIDE.

THE SAME THING HAPPENED EVERY YEAR AND EVERY YEAR IT GOT WORSE. UNTIL ONE DAY...

SOMBRA WAS IN SO MUCH PAIN THAT HOPE KNEW SHE HAD TO HELP. SHE DIDN'T KNOW HOW OR EVEN WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HIM, BUT SHE KNEW SHE HAD TO DO SOMETHING.



AND SO SHE DID.



AND WHEN THE LETTER FROM THE TWO SISTERS CAME, HOPE REALIZED THAT HER VISION WAS COMING TRUE. SHE WAS ON HER WAY TO BECOMING A PRINCESS!



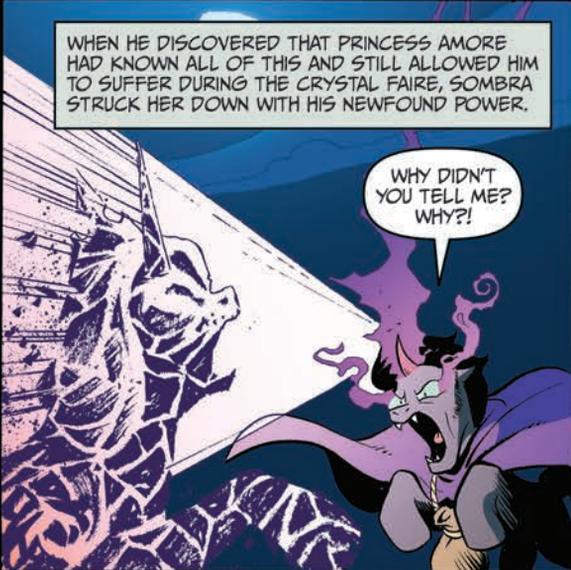
AND SOMBRA, WHO HAD NEVER TOLD HOPE WHAT HE SAW IN THE CRYSTAL HEART, WAS SURE THAT HIS FATE WAS SEALED.

AND SO HE RAN.



AND IN RUNNING, HE FOUND HIS DESTINY.

SOMBRA DISCOVERED THAT HE WAS NOT A UNICORN, BUT AN UMBRUM, ONE OF A RACE OF SHADOW PONIES IMPRISONED IN THE GROUND BELOW THE CRYSTAL EMPIRE AFTER THEIR ATTACK ON THE EMPIRE CENTURIES BEFORE.



WHEN HE DISCOVERED THAT PRINCESS AMORE HAD KNOWN ALL OF THIS AND STILL ALLOWED HIM TO SUFFER DURING THE CRYSTAL FAIRE, SOMBRA STRUCK HER DOWN WITH HIS NEWFOUND POWER.

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME? WHY?!



AND HOPE, SEEING THE MONSTER SOMBRA HAD BECOME, FLED.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?



AS SOMBRA ENSLAVED THE CRYSTAL EMPIRE, HOPE, NOT KNOWING WHAT ELSE TO DO, CALLED ON THE TWO SISTERS TO STOP HER FRIEND AND SAVE HER HOME.



AND THEY DID STOP HIM. THEY EXILED HIM FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.



BUT SOMBRA HAD ONE LAST SPELL. AND WITH THAT SPELL, HE MADE THE CRYSTAL EMPIRE DISAPPEAR FOR AS LONG AS HE WAS EXILED.

AND ALL AT ONCE RADIANT HOPE LOST HER FRIEND AND HER HOME.



RADIANT HOPE RETURNED WITH THE PRINCESSES TO STUDY MAGIC AND FULFILL HER DESTINY.



BUT SHE WAS DISTRACTED. ALL SHE COULD THINK ABOUT WAS THE HOME SHE HAD LOST...

...AND THE FRIEND SHE HAD BETRAYED.



HOPE DECIDED TO LEAVE HER TEACHERS AND FIND HER OWN PATH. A PATH THAT LED HER FAR AWAY.

HOPE FOLLOWED IN SOMBRA'S FOOTSTEPS, GOING DEEP INTO THE WASTES SO THAT SHE MIGHT FIND OUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM.

HOOOOOOOOOOOPE



BUT HOPE WAS NOT READY FOR WHAT SHE WOULD FIND.

HOPE? IS THAT YOU?

WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?

WE ARE SOMBRA'S KIND. HE TOLD US ABOUT YOU... ABOUT HIS ONLY FRIEND AND HOW YOU SAVED HIM FROM THE PRINCESSES' WEAPON.



SOMBRA IS THE CHILD OF A CRYSTAL?

NO, HOPE, WE ARE THE UMBRUM, THE SHADOW PONIES. WE ARE LOCKED DEEP IN THE GROUND. SOMBRA WAS SENT TO RESCUE US.

OH.

TELL ME, HOPE. WHAT HAS BECOME OF OUR SON? WHERE IS SOMBRA?



HE'S GONE. THE PRINCESSES EXILED HIM FOR A THOUSAND YEARS. IT'S ALL MY FAULT. I DIDN'T THINK.... I...

ONE THOUSAND YEARS? THEN THERE IS STILL HOPE FOR US. HOPE... YES, HOPE, WOULD YOU COME TO OUR WORLD AND LEARN MORE OF THE UMBRUM?

BUT I THOUGHT...

WE ARE TRAPPED, BUT YOU CAN COME IN. PERHAPS WE CAN HELP YOU UNDERSTAND SOMBRA. PERHAPS WE CAN HELP YOU SAVE HIM.

OKAY.



AND SO, RADIANT HOPE WENT TO VISIT THE UMBRUM.

