Awakened Star

The remnants of Nightmare Moon following the purification of Princess Luna were scattered for hundreds of miles. The dark mare was gone for good, destroyed in the name of the light...

A chance event strikes one stormy night, literally, and mysteriously gives rise to a new alicorn with an uncanny appearance to Nightmare Moon, yet none of her memories or dark machinations. In fact, Ether has no idea where she is, who she is, or... well, pretty much anything.

- Prologue - The Universal History of Equyn
- Chapter 1 - Spark

Prologue - The Universal History of Equyn

All creatures of Equyn knew the story of how the world came to be. From the harmonious Ponies of Equestria and the aeries of the Griffons, to the ancient war-torn Dragon clans and the ever-hedonistic Clawmara. The story was a reminder of the fragility of life and the blessings they had been given.

Long ago, eons before even the first dragons hatched, Equyn was a still rock in a void of nothing. From the core of the barren world, magic awoke. It weaved all that was to be known and all that was to be.

Yet for all its power, the magical force that had brought life sought to experience its own miracle itself. It was then the first alicorn, whose name was only ever known as “Unadeah”, emerged. She was said to have given form to the first walkers, the ancient ancestors of all beings on modern Equyn. They were dreamers, and could shift their forms as long as they kept the magic of imagination in their hearts.

Unadeah grew lonely, however. Though the first walkers were great company, none could understand her. She was an immortal, and though they too possessed great power, they were finite. She would spend centuries in an endless cycle of loss as her friends decayed and returned to the magic they came from.

Then, everything changed for Unadeah. She had fallen in love with one of her own creations, his name lost to time. She bore the first divine foal, Harmony.

Unadeah had many lovers throughout her presence in the mortal world, and each lifetime a new foal would be born unto the pantheon of the alicorns, and they would find their own lovers.

As time went on, and Unadeah’s magic was dispersed throughout the world, she grew less and less tangible, until she could no longer become with foal. By then, thousands of alicorns had spread throughout Equyn. With her last foal grown beyond her mother’s shadow, Unadeah departed the physical realm. However, upon her departure, alicorns fell into a war that lasted thousands of years. Every alicorn wanted to step up to the plate, and so sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, sons and daughters tore each other apart.

As though the world punished them for their selfishness, the final battle between the remaining alicorns over what would become the Chasm of Tartarus, caused a shockwave. The shockwave was so great it reverberated throughout the world, permanently damaging the leylines formed by the great awakening eons ago, and giving rise to the first dragons. It extended far into the heavens as

well, shattering the second of the two Equynian moons, Terrum. The shards from Terrum's explosion became the stars in the magical shield of ether blanketing Equyn.

Due to the damaging of the world, the magical flow was no longer powerful enough to maintain the fluidity of the first walkers' existences. Most walkers were cursed to walk in permanent, flesh-riddled forms. Many of the world's modern races descended directly from these forms as they stabilized. However, those walkers closest to the calamity were dispersed entirely into mindless beasts, who became the wraiths that guarded the Chasm forevermore. The combative alicorns would not be seen again, presumed dead or dispersed. Following this tragedy, the mortal races learned to live on without them for thousands of years. Unicorn mages being responsible for moving the sun and moon was one such example of how they adapted to life without alicorns to rule.

That was typically where the story would end for most juveniles. As they grew, they'd think of the tale as exaggerated, or as a legend, but it would be told nonetheless. In the modern day, the story was simply told as fiction, or to teach rowdy children lessons. There was certainly truth to the legend, but nobody ever speculated on the fine details, *which admittedly had gotten muddy over the past 20 thousand years.*

It was only 2,500 years before modern Equyn's current troubles that two young sisters, a unicorn and a pegasus, connected to the sun and moon respectively. Following their ascensions to alicornhood, they would claim the throne and dub their nation Equestria, land of harmony. It was a mystery and outrage to many that no other people on Equyn had any of their own ascend to alicorn status. This led many to believe ponies in particular to be special somehow, for better and for worse. Truth be told, it was a mystery how they'd ascended. Only the sisters knew the details, and the sisters never spoke of such things.

Alicorns were powerful. Alicorns could bring the day. Alicorns could bring the night. Alicorns could dispel themselves into any form. Alicorns could do almost anything, as far as commonfolk were concerned. Alicorns were to be worshiped, respected and served because they were so powerful and supposedly descended from Unadeah herself. No pony, or most other races, would really question those simple facts. They didn't question much in regards to anything, simply because it wasn't their place.

Even when things should have brought *everything* into question, most preferred to live in ignorance of the whims of immortals. Only griffons ever dared oppose Equestria directly, and they were still recovering nearly a millennium following their sound defeat.

Perhaps it was not ignorance. Perhaps it was something more primal that that. Something so potent even the very fabric of Equyn would remember from times long past, passing it along to future generations as they called upon the world's magic to exist. The feeling of **fear**.

After all, Alicorns could bring the day. Alicorns could bring the night. Alicorns could do almost anything. *What's to stop them from taking?*

Chapter 1 - Spark

Equestria was a large land, taking up over half of the continent it was named after. Most of it was adorned with rolling hills, fair plains and temperate deciduous forests. It was also well-known for its unnaturally tall mountains that defended it from the Northern frost, known as the Canterhorn Peaks. Notably, its capitol city of Canterlot rested upon the tallest summit of the peaks.

All in all, Equestria was fair and mild. Rain would certainly pour, and snow would fall every winter. However, a scar upon the land had persisted since the fall of Nightmare Moon one-thousand years in the past during the solar eclipse that spelled the supposed end of Princess Luna’s reign. In the Everfree Forest, the animals were untamed, the storms wild, and the winters harsh. It was here that in the modern day, the Sun’s chosen foal and her newfound friends had purified the dark princess, restoring her to the light and eradicating the monster that had corrupted her. It was also here a mighty storm would rumble far above, illuminating the abandoned ruins in the very heart of the Everfree.

Curiously, as lightning flashed and thunder roared, a dark cloud had formed on the very podium within the center of the castle. Nothing more than the ancient whispers of magic long dispersed. Yet, it was spurred on by the storm. It churned and roiled, growing larger and larger with each passing second, until-!

A mighty bolt arced down from the skies, slashing the dark cloud within a microsecond. It dispersed, the magic gone as quickly as it had appeared.

In its place, a dark violet alicorn mare laid upon the cold stone. Her mane was like drifting nebulae; a wide range of pinks, purples and blues that softly illuminated her silky dark coat. Within the nebulous mane and tail she possessed there seemed to be young stars drifting with the invisible current. Strangely, her horn was not the straight spiraling growth that alicorns typically possessed. Rather, her horn was smooth and curved back, a trait more synonymous with Eastern Unicorns and Kirin. Its color was also peculiar, fading into a near-black shade at its tip that was shared with her cloven hooves. Curiously, she also seemed to possess a cutie-mark of an unknown constellation.

Rain began to drip from the clouds above, gradually wetting the old bricks of the ruins. The rain eventually became a torrent, soaking the alicorn’s coat terribly. The mare simply laid there, unconscious, unknowing of the world beyond her dreams.

It seemed like hours, but was in reality only 15 or so minutes before a hooded figure loomed over the unconscious mare. The figure tsk’d from under her hood, and a striped zebra’s hoof slipped out from her shawl to prod the alicorn.

“Awaken, filly. You may find yourself ill if you remain in this torrent,” a deep feminine voice rumbled smoothly, causing the alicorn to stir.

“Mhh..” the alicorn’s eyes slid open, causing the figure some degree of shock. However, the alicorn didn’t seem to notice the zebra’s shock as she sat up slowly. She appeared frightened, unfamiliar, “what... Who are you?”

The zebra said nothing for a good few moments. The alicorn had some resemblances to a particular dark queen, mainly her eyes, which glowed with the same turquoise shade as the late wraith. Though they did not possess the same draconic shape, there was no doubt of the resemblance. Even so, the mare seemed confused. She didn’t radiate the same overpowering evil, nor the conniving will. This was a young, lost mare with no idea who or where she was.

“You may call me Zecora. What am I to call you, young one?” Zecora finally spoke, steeling herself.

“I... I don’t know...” the mare spoke sadly, “I don’t know...“

“Mm. Come with me, then. You will catch your death in this rain,” Zecora offered her hoof to the alicorn, who took it and stood unsteadily to her hooves. Quietly the two departed the lonely ruins.

•:•.•:•.•:•:•:•:•☾ ☼ ☽•:•.•:•.•:•:•:•:•

The mysterious alicorn had been sat at Zecora’s wooden table within her hut, simply told to relax and warm herself from the cold rain. So, she obeyed. With some of her earlier terror evaporating, she examined the hut’s interior curiously.

It was homey, carved from the interior of a large tree. Soft furniture adorned the place, and foreign masks hung as decoration from the walls, painted in all sorts of patterns and colors. Bottles of various substances also hung from twine around a cauldron full of some dubious fluid. Beyond that, the hut was illuminated by strange glowing crystals that emerged from the walls of the hut, as though the tree was infested with some sort of crystalline disease. It was cozy, and the crystals almost reminded the alicorn of the stars in her mane and tail.

Zecora, who had turned away to some sort of kitchenette corner of the hut, hummed an unfamiliar song. After a few minutes, a pleasant floral scent hit the alicorn mare’s nostrils.

“What is that?” she asked, ever-curious.

“Tea. It is tea made of aster, a common flower, among other herbs and spices found in these forests,” Zecora’s odd accent and deep voice made her explanation soothing to the alicorn, and so she inquired no further. A few more minutes passed before Zecora turned and placed a clay teacup before the alicorn, “drink,” she said simply.

The alicorn lit her horn, and a turquoise aura sparkled around the cup. Zecora observed her as she sipped on her own tea, and found herself perplexed. No memories, not even a name, yet this alicorn could call upon her magic as easily as any experienced unicorn.

“A name,” Zecora spoke as she placed her own teacup down on the wooden table, “you will need one.”

“I… figured…” the alicorn meekly spoke. She took a sip, and her eyes lit up, “this is good!”

“Mmm. Perhaps Ether,” Zecora suggested, and the alicorn furrowed her brows.

“Why Ether?” she questioned. Zecora shrugged.

“It is what first came to my mind upon seeing your mane,” Zecora, “to be named after the very essence that wraps around our world would be very fitting for you.”

’Ether’ thought about this for a moment, then smiled softly.

“I like it.”

Zecora nodded and took another sip of her tea, “you will need to remain close by, Ether. Ponies, mortal ponies, exist beyond the reaches of the Everfree. You are lucky it is I who found you, and not one who would fear you.”

“F-Fear me? Why would they be scared?” Ether frowned, “and mortal?”

“You are an alicorn, child. Alicorns are rare, powerful and worshiped by many ponies who call the land of Equestria- where we are now- home. A typical pony possesses only a horn, only wings, or only unusual might. You possess all three. Mortal ponies… they live only a century at most. You do not age. You are, for all they can see, a living Goddess.

“I cannot say why you appeared as you have. It is typical of an alicorn to first be born as a pony, rather than manifest in such a manner,” Zecora shook her head, “no, you are different, and they will fear you.”

“There’s others… like me?” Ether smiled suddenly, “then we can just talk to them, right?!”

“No…” Zecora sighed, “we know little, and the Princesses of Equestria, as benevolent as they are… I would advise you do not approach them, not now. Remain with me for a while longer, Ether. I can teach you the ways of this world, at least.”

Zecora hoped dearly that the alicorn would stay, if only for her own safety… and to keep an eye on her. While Zecora was certain that Ether was not Nightmare Moon herself, if she did recall anything from her destruction or banishment, Zecora would at least quarantine her within the forest until she could be dealt with.

However, she prayed it wouldn’t come to that, and that Ether was someone else entirely. The color of her eyes and magic could have just been residual, and not telling of anything more. But the lightning that struck the ruins… Zecora was not a stupid mare. Even though she was hock-deep in all manner of metaphysical, her head wasn’t so far in the clouds to not see that something, some force, attracted that lightning. *The spark of life*.

“Very well, Zecora,” Ether accepted Zecora’s explanation, though she still had many questions. Zecora had soon finished her tea, and Ether’s cup was empty as well. The evening continued on

with not much conversation between the two mares. Ether was confused, lost. While she could have asked all manner of questions, Zecora seemed… guarded. It scared Ether enough to keep her mouth shut.

“The night grows late. I presume that alicorns need rest, hm?” Zecora spoke with a bit of humor, but Ether just shrugged. Seeing her jest fall flat, Zecora sighed, “you are afraid.”

“I’m… I’m confused. Scared, yes. I have no memory of anything. I didn’t even have a name… Was there any before, or is this it? My future?”

Zecora sighed internally; *‘she is just like Twilight…’*

“Calm. These are not questions to ask before sleep. Your mind races, then you cannot dream,” Zecora shook her head as she grabbed a strange herb from her stores, “in the morning our lessons begin. Until then you must ask yourself a different question, Ether.”

“Huh?” Ether took a step forward to see what Zecora was grinding up in her mortar and pestle. It smelled strange, slightly tangy, like the oils of an orange peel almost? Zecora finally finished and smeared some of the herb on her hooves. Before Ether could move away, she roughly rubbed the ground herbs on Ether’s face.

“It is just a plant. It will relax you,” Zecora smiled a bit, “and I like to think it makes me look a decade younger than I am.”

Ether decided not to ask the zebra’s true age…

•:•.•:•.•:•:•:•:•☾ ☼ ☽•:•.•:•.•:•:•:•:•

As Ether slipped into a peaceful slumber upon the numerous cushions Zecora had provided in the place of a bed, she couldn’t help but wonder one thing above all others, even with the herbal balm cooling her face and calming her mind… Who was she?

Zecora was right, though. This was no time to think of things like that. She needed her strength for the lessons the zebra would teach her in the morning…