



Mystic Acoustics

A story by Vylet Pony & Sylver Stripe

I. Regarding Princess Celestia, and How Equestria Came to Be

Hullo. I am called Yorick Thana, and I am just a girl who tends the library. Though I hail from the Locus, my identity and visage should bear no importance to you, for I am only the librarian. A storyteller. Well, we both understand that your mortal curiosity constitutes I—or some such other poet, perhaps musical, perhaps lecturing—regale of stories, both fantastical and ordinary. But I suspect... Is it possible you have heard this story once before? Dear reader, should this tale knell familiar, may my account of its events prevail over any previous, erroneous chronicle. Aria bid that I impart to thee, then, a chapter from Featherdance's world.



“Have ye no courage, Ponies? We lead our children unto the Age of the Stars, which beckons thee to a destined revival of Equestrian tradition. We, Alicorns, Unicorns, Pegasi, and Earth Ponies—the brave many—stand as pillars of the lands we preside over. For no civilization endures virtuously as ours. Wise heralds of magic and science, place your faith in your Princesses and your pride in our bastions, for we shelter thee from a degenerate world, one which knows no might in Friendship or amity. Smile, Friendless few, for the way we trot shall grant you a purpose. O’ pathfinders, look to your skies. Thy brilliant day and beautiful night are

promised eternal, as sure as the cornerstones we have built together. Lay down your differences. Reach out and cradle the heritage that you are fated to have."

So crescendoed a vain requiem, a pale blanket gloom which concealed the broad valleys and hidden creeks, baptizing the land in curses unseen. Threaded into seams of an earth which bled vile secrets and strange promises, wefts of her legacy—indeed, the legacy of the Princess of Light; of Daybreak; of the Sun: Princess Celestia—were dying underground. Had the world opened its wounds to mere glimpses of her seedling distortions, it would have laboured anguished, surrogate to a sapphire famine. In antiquity, ages of Creation and Chaos begot an epoch of Ponykind, harboured by her, that fair Alicorn. Then, after thousands and thousands of years, the dynasty she had conceived eroded into her Age of the Stars.

It is through Celestia that Ponies came to conduct the world around them by heralding “the Magic of Friendship,” a doctrine that Equestrians believed to be a grace intrinsic to their kind. This has always been Celestia’s way, and for generations, this ideology has penetrated even the farthest reaches of the realm. One may conjecture, as many have, that this commonplace trait—which has seemingly always belonged to all of the gods’ creatures, as it were—could in no way be the masterwork of an only species. Indeed, not as intuition—rather a sort of commodity—“Friendship” has been replicated, packaged, and divulged by the docile, common Equestrian for ages. If the Princess so much as sneezed, many would take care in observing how she covered her mouth; or how she didn’t. And all would bow deeply as she, and at once borrow her stride, and then make prose in her stead. It was so that they smiled just as widely when they professed of Friendship, seeking indefatigably, as the fair Alicorn, to new Friends they had hoped to assimilate to their flock, their herd.

It would seem, though, such sentimentality would ultimately, and much later, sway naught but a dwindling congregation of starry-eyed Ponyfolk. Ponies. Well, there are Alicorns, Unicorns, Pegasi, and Earth Ponies, to be precise. All breathing, thinking, hoping, plotting, and scrounging. Earth Ponies are as you are likely already familiar with; while described by Celestia as being magical in their own way, they are but mere mortals. She has spoken, too, this way about Pegasi, and while they are not truly magical either, they have sprouted wings to fly with and oft toil in the skies, where the Earth Ponies may not. Unicorns, though, are adorned with horns ‘pon their heads; and these creatures, comparatively, harness the magicks of the ley lines, which thread spacetime in all directions, levitating, transforming, transmuting, transcending all manner of things and peoples.

But Alicorns are all of these things, and far more vigorously. Indeed, they are not merely both winged and horned, but persist for eons at a time, wielding magicks far mightier than that of an ordinary Unicorn. Yet inexplicably, fewer Alicorns would emerge with every passing millennium; tapestries of their family trees fractured at their unraveling seams, ink sputtering into faint inconclusions. It has been surmised by scholars that, perhaps, the species is overloaded socially, economically, and evolutionarily. While there is no consensus, nonetheless, the Equestrian matriarchy has always made itself the house of Alicorns (which Celestia, indeed, is).

To describe all such equines as merely “Ponies” or “Ponyfolk” is the proper, wonted Equestrian lexicon; this is unless one wishes to specify one of the “races” for any particular reason.

Well, what follows is a consensus of Equestrian historians in Canterlot regarding Celestia’s assumption of power (or “The Equestrian Genesis”):

“Ten thousand years ago, Celestia was born to a noble family during the period of Discord. The almighty scion of chaos, who had unsewn evermore the order of all things, expunged and purged reality into a stew of perturbed motion. None but acolytes of his archaic monarchy could flourish in a world such as this. It was thus that the young Celestia’s covenant was forged, a solitary oath to usurp Discord.

She grew a century older chasing phantasms of seizing the profane draconequus’ power, till the seasons bestowed her a younger sister, Luna. It was then that their noble parents’ moribund rite, a hope contrived through fifty thousand years of Alicorn reign, proclaimed they rise to the occasion as princesses of the future Kingdom of Equestria. The imminent cessation of the old ascendancy heralded anew Celestia’s ambition, which became later entwined with the adolescent Luna.”

At last, the two eminent Princesses. Yet, fore the dawn of Equestria, when Discord reigned, the lands wrought fogs and mists that churned upon the frayed twines of barley and wheat, casting perverse spindles o’er the pale sods which stretched seemingly forever in all directions. Each tree spat sick oozes of strange sap, adhering as gauze to the spouts in their trunks, which stood not upright, but jagged and warped, evoking incongruent geometries like obstructed curves of a neglected cello. And the air smelled of both sugar and ash. What grazed these lurid meadows were beasts strange equally as they were indescribable; the tufts and twills of matted hairs and the slurries and slouches of amorphous goos—wide, unblinking eyes attached without sense or depth to each and every animal—nibbling at bodies (acting like some manner of vulture). They were undeniably different. Checkered patterns of pink, black, and gold rested merely as patchwork arras upon flat surfaces, and sickly pale yellows had incandescenced, at all times of day and night, in, around, through, above, and below every crevice and mountain.

The excerpt continues:

Together, the sisters prevailed in the Divergence of Chaos, banishing Discord to his prison of stone. Then, they ruled as equals, nourishing their sovereign nation of Equestria. The legends wove of Celestia’s dominion over the Sun and Luna’s command over the Moon. Yet, as the Kingdom prospered greatly, horrible beasts, foreign beasts—monsters, demons, apparitions—descended from the vast empyrean, envious of Equestria’s abundance. And still, the Princesses prevailed, expelling the darkness whenever it came.”

And so they say the Age of Ponykind flourished, though a remarkable superstition persisted in the minds of the cosmos-fearing Equestrians. Not a mere fear, but a total rejection of interfering with the world that lay beyond the skies gripped every generation. After all, even in times not yet observed, surely those beasts would continue to prey upon the common folk.

At the age of eight thousand, Celestia harbingered the arrival of an unprecedented paradigm. She professed to have foreseen an even brighter dawn awaiting the Kingdom of Equestria and declared that time itself would begin again. Thus, the Sun rose once more, but upon the first year of the modern paradigm: “January 1, 0 e.c.a.” (or Equestrian Contemporary Aeon).

Such grand intuition is folly in times of great wickedness. And wicked indeed were the times rhapsodized by this royal procession. At the turn of the first millennium, Celestia fell suddenly to a malady no one could explain. As her magic began to diminish into that of a Unicorn’s, she stepped further and further away from the public eye; though, it could be that she had already been sick, perhaps for thousands of years already. Longer and longer she spent condemning herself to her chambers in between addresses to the Kingdom, appearing more fragile and vulnerable with each sermon. Then, on some eve of the year 1010 e.c.a., it was revealed that Princess Luna had been banished to the Moon. Celestia sought to justify her decision by denouncing her sister for conspiring as the dreaded “Nightmare Moon” in order to seize the monarchy for herself. Luna was to remain there for a millennium until the seal that imprisoned her there inevitably wore away. It is notable that Celestia was rarely ever seen using magic again, beyond this incident, and whatever spells she did perform were themselves pedestrian, and oft behind closed doors.

A thousand winters had swiftly passed by the time Celestia found herself a loyal apprentice. The Unicorn Twilight Sparkle—who excelled profoundly in her highly advanced, applied magic practices—proved herself through her studies to be of exceptional value to the Princess. On the thousandth year of the Summer Sun Celebration, Nightmare Moon returned. Twilight, joined by her new friends Applejack, Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash, Fluttershy, and Rarity, prevailed over the Princess of the Night by exercising the power of Friendship against her, turning her back into Princess Luna.

With the Princesses reunited, Twilight’s studies resumed. She was evaluated through trials of Friendship, which served to substantiate her loyalty to Celestia. Time and time again, the frail Princess of Light called upon Twilight and her friends—a group many knew as “The Elements of Harmony,” to face the cosmic threats that plagued her Kingdom. And time and time again, The Elements of Harmony prevailed in the Princess’ stead. So and so, such and such.

Eventually, Twilight was grafted wings, gifted a crown, and promised the Princess of Light’s own Kingdom of Equestria. Alas, an unnatural Alicorn, betrothed now by the ordinary and the studied, she ambled a newborn fawn into an inheritance of seedling distortions. Indeed, Twilight had been disciplined from childhood to grow inevitably into the Sun’s heir, cursed to an unkind destiny of kings and judgements. Perhaps this was because she shared the Princess’ heretical fascination with the stars.

II. Forewarning

We understand, then, Equestria—through first the cutting leadership of Celestia and Luna, then, after they had retired, the brief and perceptibly more benevolent guidance of Twilight—had metamorphosed over ten thousand years into the trivial visage of a fairytale land you may know now, regarded, perhaps by the callow pups spurned by the Fall of Innocence, as a civilized, crown jewel of the world.

Broad, verdant dunes, salted with blanched, pine grasses, marigold straws, and sapphire thistles, undulated roundly this way and that, bowing there yonder to the Celestial Seas of the east, and skewing—as a juvenile moss creeping ‘pon stony facades—up to the western crags, perturbing the otherwise occasional vegetation at its base. Those mighty mountains stood as mauve sentinels over pastoral expanses and meadows, probing with their slate spires up into the empyrean that was, as you know, so feared by the common folk. At the earthly edge of that empyrean, which was oft concealed in the thick of clouds spun into cotton powders by the skilled Pegasi of Cloudsdale, nursed its seabirds, which would plunge down through the heavens’ fabric veils, lacerating vapor fibers as they dove bravely into the sea. That sea, which lapped dutifully at the Kingdom’s edges, billowed calmly and expectantly; no violent crest nor vile crash disturbed the land, nipping only at the breast of mineral and ore. Those waters constituted a defensive moat which encompassed the Kingdom, safeguarding it from far-off, different lands, known only to the Princesses and their scholars.

‘Twixt these hills, mountains, plains, meadows, and fields lie the vast metropolitan settlements of the Equestrian folk. Railroads sprawled, now scarcely used, subordinate beside the industrial traffics and modern vessels made possible by the engineering of circuits and magicks. They adjourned hither budding villages and thither enormous cityscape domains protruding from the arboreal canopies, clumped rigidly and endeavouring upright as the southern mesa ranges.

Massive cities such as Manehattan and Las Pegasus (though always paling to the capital, Canterlot) boasted skyscraping castles and towers, augmented with screens and neon bulbs that affronted daylight, apostates of Equestria’s arcadian pasts. Outstretched roadways formed sacred geometries, intricately connecting high rises which stood in command over the skies and the earth. Mostly Unicorns and Pegasi would step eagerly into crowded marble halls, ascend spiraling quartz staircases, and be entertained by moving pictures and arcane holograms long into the night.

Conversely in the villages, humble stone and brick dwellings—stacked and cobbled together, entwined steel siphons and incremented by phosphorescent crystalline apparatuses—warmed under the day’s radiance and glow of the arcane. One would fear their thatched, golden hay roofs would be lost to a mere gust, but no; for Ponies have always prospered in their ingenuity.

Within these meeker places, the gentle masonry bubbled ‘round corners, revealing unassuming furnitures and tapestries. A working Earth Pony, perhaps a mason, or a painter, or a

baker, would totter open a cedar gate (whose wood croaked of three generations before, rusting clasps clattering harmoniously). Her hooves thudded as hollow percussion, the boards arching and bowing, but not splitting, under her. She propped herself up against the doorframe as she entered the kitchen, tossing her leathery rucksack onto a candlelit table, clinks and clamours of various tools, buckles, and bottles shuffling about when the bag landed. On her own, she is of no concern to you. Yet, as if wholly unaware of the rare sight of a full rainbow cascading through the raised, hobnail windows across from her, she beheld instead a peculiar machine which she had plucked from her twitching ear. Resting in her hoof was something that seemed plainly antithetical to the folk things that surrounded her. 'Twas a trifling little thing, in fact, consisting of acute angles and precision insets which glowed eerily.

This thing was what Equestrians called an “Adaptive Magic Channeling Device,” or an AMCD. And unlike the sorcery-powered machines that decorated the grander provinces of the Kingdom, these devices came to be relied upon by every one of every ilk at the start of the 2030s. At some point in Twilight's fledgling administration, a corporation known as PegaSystems emerged as the sole proprietor of magic technologies. It introduced the first and only AMCDs to the market, allowing non-unicorns to use magic spells. These advancements were, at first, bulky, unwieldy, and often fit only for industrial use and implementation in public facilities and scientific instruments. So at first they innovated on such things as minimizing the use of fossil fuels, powering homes even in the most remote lands, and paving the way for highly efficient agriculture. Alas, not only were these advancements hindered (and on occasion altogether squandered) by red tape and tall tales, but despairing premonitions of uprisings—grimly hastened by the awesome, lawless power that AMCDs could supply the commoners—also rattled the aristocracy, the magic barons, and those genuflectors in Canterlot.

And indeed, as the jade arcane was unceremoniously imprisoned and herded into every home in the Kingdom, everyone—the fisherman, the whore, and even the painter—lay as seedbeds to a yet unknowable strife; had the monarchy itself rejected these things, as many of Twilight's allies and peers did, perhaps these queer magicks would have abated for a time. Again, and alas, the Ponyfolk had seen that Twilight welcomed these machines. And as perplexing as it was, few Earth Ponies or Pegasi who were offered these powers rejected them utterly.

Now, whenever nightfall came, no settlement touched by moonlight would ever know deep slumber as in antiquity; for even the quaint hamlets and backwater coves cast shadows upon themselves by the fluorescence of the AMCD machines and arcane augmentations. And then came the pursuit of resources, the overpopulation crisis, and whispers. Those whispers, first, were utterances of the Equestrian monarchy's ineptitude in solving the evident crises. While magic technologies promised to enlighten their cultivating ways, PegaSystems' miserly control over the industrial machines, which were all contracted and lent out to farms, labs, and many such other facilities, severely limited their clients, plunging many of them into harrowing debts. Whispers that, all the while, the Equestrian population had been exploding since the earlier tech revolution of the previous mid-century; this compounded even more, as countless new families

had hoped to enjoy the novel conveniences which AMCDs had audaciously assured. Whispers here... Whispers there... and there.

A decade passed, and these crises were only exacerbated by what many considered to be Twilight's timid approach to her own authority. Indeed, she did not possess the decisive ruthlessness that her retired predecessors had; rather, she ruled quietly, fairly, and thoughtfully. And whispers... those whispers among Ponyfolk examined her competence, questioned her authority, and hypothesized a world where the old Princesses had returned. But then those whispers transposed to rumours, rumours which began to conjecture at the cornerstones of what Equestria was becoming. Steadily, everyone—Unicorns, Pegasi, and Earth Ponies all, then yonder in the other lands, even the Yaks, even the Hippogriffs, even the Dragons, even the Griffons—speculated as to where Celestia and Luna retired to? Ten thousand years of their prosperous reign had faded like a constellation's gleam becoming obscured by an infant nebula; their final words harbingered a radio silence of more than twenty years which, overnight and all at once, constituted rumours, and rumours still.

Then came the Civil War.