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THE PREQUEL TO



my LITTLE PONY
The MOVIE



THE STORMY ROAD
TO CANTERLOT

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PONY
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THE STORMY ROAD TO CANTERLOT



by Sadie Chesterfield



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PROLOGUE

Tempest Shadow stood on the deck of the airship, looking down at Canterlot. The royal castle stood in the middle of the capital. She was hidden in the clouds high above. No pony could see her. No pony even knew she was there.

“It’s an impressive city,” she said, turning to Grubber. “But we have our chance. The Friendship Festival is happening soon.”





“You think that would be a good time to steal the magic from the princesses?” Grubber asked. He sat next to her on the deck of the ship, talking in between bites of his muffin.

“The perfect time. We can descend from the airship to be safe,” Tempest said. “There will be so many ponies in Canterlot during the festival, and everypony will be busy and having fun. We’ll take them all by surprise.”

“Genius plan,” Grubber said.

“Now let’s take one last look around. We should find out exactly where the entrance to the castle is, and what each of the princesses looks like. The more we know about Canterlot before the Friendship Festival, the better.”

“But don’t I need a disguise?” Grubber asked.

It felt like years since Tempest Shadow had met Grubber. The short, round creature was





less than half her size, with a tuft of white hair and piercing blue eyes. She hadn't seen a creature like him before, in Equestria or anywhere else.

She grabbed two cloaks from the airship cabin and draped one over herself and one over Grubber. Then she ordered the ship down toward Canterlot. They'd dock on the outskirts of the city and make their way to the center. Who knew what they would find there . . . ?







CHAPTER ONE

The young Unicorn walked through the forest, her two best friends right beside her. Glitter Drops and Spring Rain were Unicorns, too, and together the three of them liked to practice their magic. Every morning they'd venture out into the forest or explore the mountains by their small town, taking a break now and then to play ball.





“There it is,” the young Unicorn said as they stepped into the clearing. She stared into the sky.

Canterlot was high above them. The capital of Equestria was perched in the mountains and could be seen for miles around. The three friends had never actually been there, but they’d heard hundreds of stories. The city was filled with ivory towers and waterfalls, shimmering spires and majestic views. Most important, it was the home of two of the three princesses, and a common spot for them to meet.

The three princesses were Alicorns, or Unicorns with powerful wings. Princess Celestia and Princess Luna controlled the sun and the moon, and Princess Cadance was the ruler of the Crystal Empire. She had been Princess Celestia’s apprentice when she was younger.





“Do you think we’ll ever get there?” Spring Rain asked.

“Of course we will,” the young Unicorn said. “And who knows . . .”

Glitter Drops smiled. “Maybe one of us will become a princess one day, too.”

“But first, Princess Celestia’s School for Gifted Unicorns,” the young Unicorn said. “Where all the most talented Unicorns learn to focus their powerful magic. We’ll get there someday; I know we will.”

The young Unicorn couldn’t admit it to even her closest friends, but she thought about Princess Celestia’s school every single day. She dreamed about studying in Canterlot, of learning to make magic that glowed and sparked with power. She’d work as hard as she could to make Princess Celestia proud. Sometimes she





even imagined becoming an Alicorn herself. Would she ever be given wings? Could she ever be that powerful?

There were entrance exams every spring. The young Unicorn hoped she'd be ready when they came around one moon. She wanted to attend the school as soon as she could. It was hard waiting for something you wanted so much.

“Let’s practice,” she said, turning to Glitter Drops and Spring Rain. “Let’s levitate the ball.”

Glitter Drops’s horn sparked and glowed. She took the ball from her satchel and sent it flying off into the woods. The young Unicorn darted after it, weaving in and out of the trees. She could just see the ball up ahead, glowing in the air. It was like the bouncy balls other ponies





tossed back and forth, only this one was special. If she focused her magic, she could make it float and glow with a beautiful white light. It looked like the moon.

“I can’t keep up!” Glitter Drops called out. She was running as fast as she could through the forest, but the ball was always a little ahead of her. She laughed as she ran, clearly loving the way the wind felt in her mane.

Spring Rain darted out in front of the young Unicorn. She raced across the ground to the ball, but she stumbled and fell. She hadn’t been concentrating hard enough, but that wasn’t her fault. It was tough to concentrate on her magic, run really fast, *and* keep her eyes on the ball.

The young Unicorn galloped out in front of both of her friends. The ball was up ahead.





She was so close. She just had to run a little faster. . . .

“Where’d it go?” Spring Rain’s voice called out. “It disappeared!”

The young Unicorn stopped at the mouth of a cave. The ball had floated inside. She could still see the glowing light, but it was dimmer now. The ball was somewhere in there, deep in the mountain.

“Oh no. . . .” Glitter Drops stopped right behind her. She peered inside. The cave was so dark they couldn’t see past the opening. “Who’s going to go get it?”

Glitter Drops and Spring Rain turned to their brave friend. The purple Unicorn might’ve been the youngest, but she was always the bravest of the three. She’d talked to the hydra when they went to Froggy Bottom Bogg, and she had





found her way through the Everfree Forest on her own. Whenever something scary happened, her friends always looked to her first.

“I’ll be right back,” the young Unicorn said. Then she ventured into the cave, trying to follow the dim light from the ball.

Inside, she could hardly see anything. The ball was somewhere up ahead, around a sharp corner, but she couldn’t make out the floor of the cave. She stumbled over a rock and fell, landing hard. When she finally got up, her shoulder hurt.

“This isn’t as easy as I thought it would be...” she said to herself, rubbing the sore spot on her side. She went slower now, being careful with each step. “Just a little farther...”

She was getting closer. As she turned the corner, she saw the ball floating in the air. That





whole part of the cave was lit up now. She could see everything perfectly.

It looked like some creature had been living there. There were scraps of food and a warm, cozy bed. She reached up, grabbed the ball, and tucked it behind her front leg. When she turned back around, there was an ursa minor standing right in front of her.

She didn't have time to react. The bear roared in her face. She ducked underneath its foreleg, trying to get away, but it chased after her. She didn't move more than a few feet before it struck her with its giant paw. She went flying across the cave, her head knocking into the wall.

She got up as fast as she could, knowing the bear would be right behind her. As she got closer to the entrance of the cave, she could see Glitter Drops and Spring Rain waiting for her.





They were both staring inside the cave, trying to see what was happening.

“Run!” she yelled. “There’s an ursa minor!”

Spring Rain and Glitter Drops turned around and darted off through the forest. The young Unicorn followed them, relieved when she was finally out of the cave. She’d dropped the ball at some point along the way, but it didn’t matter. She had to get as far away from the ursa minor as she could.

She didn’t stop running until she was out of the forest and saw Spring Rain and Glitter Drops standing in the field up ahead. She turned back, looking into the trees to make sure they were safe. After all that, they were finally alone. The bear hadn’t followed them.

“I went all the way to the back of the cave,” the young Unicorn said. “I found the ball, but





then, when I turned around, the ursa minor was right behind me. It chased me, and then I fell, and then . . .”

Glitter Drops and Spring Rain just stared at her. Their eyes were wide, and their expressions were serious. They looked like something was horribly wrong. The young Unicorn glanced down at her hooves, making sure she wasn’t hurt. She looked over her shoulder at her tail and mane. Everything seemed fine.

“I don’t think I’m hurt,” she said. “Just a few scratches . . .”

“I don’t know how to tell you this. . . .” Glitter Drops said, her eyes watering. “It’s your horn.”

The young Unicorn reached up and touched the front of her head. Her horn was just a small, jagged stump—the top half had broken off. Her eyes immediately filled with tears.





“No,” she said, shaking her head. “No—it can’t be. What’s a Unicorn without her horn?”

“I’m so sorry.” Glitter Drops hugged her friend.

“It’ll be okay,” Spring Rain added, wrapping her front leg around the young Unicorn’s other side.

The tears streamed down the young Unicorn’s cheeks. She’d lost her horn. All her magic was contained within it. How would anything ever be okay again?







CHAPTER TWO

The young Unicorn and her two friends set off through town, Spring Rain walking on one side of her and Glitter Drops walking on the other. She'd waited weeks, then months, for her horn to grow back, but nothing had happened. This was the first time she'd left her house since the day at the cave, but Spring Rain and Glitter Drops had told her it would be okay. She still couldn't help but feel nervous,





though. Every time she looked at her broken horn she started crying.

She'd pulled a hat down over her head, and nopony seemed to notice anything was different. She waved at everypony inside the market, and everypony waved back. They passed their friend Moonglow, who was planting tulips outside the art gallery.

“What a lovely hat!” Moonglow said. “The flowers on it are beautiful.”

“Thank you, Moonglow,” the young Unicorn called as she trotted past.

“See?” Glitter Drops asked. “Is it really that bad?”

The young Unicorn shook her head. “You were right. It feels good to be out and about.”

As they got to the clearing, Spring Rain looked around and took a ball out of her satchel.





There weren't many ponies near them. "Want to try it?" she asked. "It couldn't hurt..."

At first the young Unicorn wasn't sure what she was talking about. But then Spring Rain lifted the ball a few inches off the ground, levitating it in front of her.

"Oh, no...I shouldn't," the young Unicorn said. "I haven't used my horn for magic since the accident. I don't even know if it'll work."

"You're the bravest Unicorn we know," Glitter Drops said. "I always tell stories about my friend who isn't afraid of anypony or anything. You can do whatever you put your mind to."

The young Unicorn glanced back toward town. There wasn't anypony around. Maybe it wouldn't be the worst thing to just try. She hadn't had the courage to since her horn broke.





“Ready?” Spring Rain said, dropping the ball back to the ground.

The young Unicorn nodded and took off her hat. Glitter Drops and Spring Rain both trotted out in front of her, farther into the clearing. She focused her magic on her horn, trying to lift the ball off the ground. Her horn sparked. She stood there, waiting for it to work as a few more sparks shot out toward the trees.

Her power was building—she could feel it—and suddenly her broken horn shot off an incredible show of light. It was burning hot, and turned everything it touched to ash and dust. A whole row of trees burned underneath it.

“Watch out!” Glitter Drops cried as the young Unicorn stepped forward, trying to control it. She stumbled, and as her head turned, she scorched a patch of grass.





When her horn finally stopped shooting sparks, she stood there, trying to catch her breath. Spring Rain was lying in the grass. She'd bumped her head. Glitter Drops was hiding behind a tree. The young Unicorn reached out her hoof to help Spring Rain stand, but her friend flinched. When she stared up at her, her eyes were full of fear.

"I didn't mean it." the young Unicorn tried to explain. "I don't know what happened..."

Spring Rain stood on her own. She brushed herself off and offered her friend a small smile. "It's okay. It was an accident."

Glitter Drops came up next to them, but the young Unicorn noticed both her friends didn't get too close. They kept glancing at her horn. They seemed afraid of her now. "Are you okay?" Glitter Drops asked Spring Rain. "That was a serious fall."





“I think I’m all right. . . . It was just scary,” Spring Rain said.

“I’m so sorry,” the young Unicorn said. “It’s something about my horn. . . . It doesn’t work right anymore.”

“It’s okay,” Spring Rain said again, but she seemed sad. “Let’s just go back home.”

Glitter Drops and Spring Rain turned back toward town, and all the young Unicorn could do was follow. She knew Spring Rain was just frightened, but she couldn’t help feeling like everything was her fault. Her horn was broken, her magic was gone, and things would never be the same between them. Everything had gone so wrong after that day at the cave.

She walked beside her friends, her hat snug on her head again. Glitter Drops and Spring





Rain didn't say anything else. The young Unicorn's mind was racing: Would she ever get her magic back? How would her friends be able to trust her? And how could she stay in her town when everything felt so wrong?







CHAPTER THREE

The moons passed. The young Unicorn spent more and more time at home, reading and baking and doing anything that didn't remind her of the magic she'd once had. Glitter Drops and Spring Rain still came by to see her every once in a while, but they never asked her to go to the clearing with them to practice magic. They never even mentioned her horn. Instead they





pretended as if that day in the cave had never happened.

So when they knocked on her door one morning, she hoped maybe something had changed. Maybe they weren't afraid of her after all.

She flung open the door.

"Where to?" she asked. She'd already put on her hat. It had been so long since she'd seen her friends; she couldn't help but miss them and all the fun times they'd had. She'd just go with them to get some apple cider, and then she'd come home. She wouldn't even talk about magic or what they used to do in the clearing.

"Actually..." Glitter Drops began slowly. She looked a little sad. "We wanted to talk to you about something."

"What do you mean?" the young Unicorn asked.





“We took the entrance exams for Princess Celestia’s School for Gifted Unicorns,” Spring Rain said. “We wanted to tell you before you heard it from any other pony.”

The young Unicorn tried to hide the hurt in her expression, but she could already feel her eyes welling up with tears. Since the day she’d broken her horn, she’d tried to bury her dreams down deep in her heart. She hoped that one day her horn would grow back, along with her magic, and she could go to Princess Celestia’s school, but until then she tried her best to forget. Sometimes she wouldn’t even glance up at Canterlot. It was hard to see the city glittering in the sky and not think of all the possibilities of a future there.

“I didn’t realize they’d happened already,” the young Unicorn said. “I just . . . I hadn’t thought about it since . . .”





“We know,” Glitter Drops said. “And we know your horn is going to grow back soon. It’s only a matter of time. But we felt like we had to take the exams this moon. The term starts in the fall.”

“So you’re going?” she asked as she tried to steady her voice.

“Yeah,” Spring Rain said. “But you’ll come next moon. We’ll all be together again soon. And we’ll come back to visit all the time. We’ll still be friends.”

“Right,” the young Unicorn said. “Of course. We’ll always be friends. I’m happy for you.”

The young Unicorn put on her best smile, even though she was hurting. Glitter Drops and Spring Rain looked relieved that she was being so nice about it. She said good-bye to her friends, and they promised that they’d see





one another the next day. She told them they were going to have the best time at Princess Celestia's school. Then she closed the door and started to cry.



The young Unicorn put on the cloak she had pieced together and stared at the bag on the floor. She pulled it onto her back, knowing she had no other choice. If she stayed, she'd always be different. The Unicorn with the broken horn. The Unicorn without magic. The Unicorn whose friends left her behind. What kind of life would that be?

She stepped outside, pulled up her hood, and turned back one last time to say good-bye to her cottage. She'd leave tonight, for good. There were other places she could go, and other





ponies who might accept her. She couldn't keep pretending she was happy here. This town no longer felt like home.

As she started off into the night, she reminded herself of the worst part. She'd been the brave one that day in the forest. She'd volunteered to go into the cave to get the ball so her friends didn't have to. She'd yelled to Glitter Drops and Spring Rain, telling them there was an *ursa minor* inside so they wouldn't get hurt. She'd done everything right.

And what did she have to show for it? What did she get for being a good friend?

Nothing, she thought as the lights from the town grew smaller in the distance. *There's nothing left for me there.*





DISCOVER TEMPEST SHADOW'S STORY
IN THIS EXCITING PREQUEL TO
MY LITTLE PONY: THE MOVIE.

Find out how a sweet
and kind pony became
one of the most feared
throughout the land.

Tempest Shadow wasn't always the angry, relentless leader of the Storm King's fearsome hordes. Once, she was a happy Unicorn, living with her friends in Equestria and dreaming of attending Princess Celestia's School for Gifted Unicorns. When an act of bravery costs Tempest her horn, and ultimately her magic, her life is ruined. Disappointed and bitter, Tempest flees into the world beyond Equestria—eventually setting her on a collision course with the dreaded Storm King. When the Storm King promises to restore her horn in exchange for her service, Tempest Shadow agrees to launch an epic campaign to destroy Canterlot...

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