

NEW FRIENDS, NEW ENEMIES

The final chapter of the *Warcraft In Equestria* series.

by

GeodesicDragon

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FOREWORD

IF YOU HAVEN'T READ THIS STORY ON FIMFICTION, PLEASE SKIP TO PAGE FOUR, AS THERE ARE SPOILERS IN THIS FOREWORD.

This story marks the end of my *Warcraft In Equestria* trilogy. I hope you've enjoyed reading said trilogy just as much as I enjoyed writing it. Without your support, I never would have bothered writing *Harmony In Azeroth*.

The decision to kill off Zorann and Luxxoria was not an easy one to make. Pretty much all of my stories have a happy ending, so just for once, I decided to write one with a sad ending. And given the fact that I was keen to keep my *Warcraft in Equestria* series as a trilogy, I decided that it would be this one.

Anyway, since I haven't got nothing else to add here, let's just get on with the story!

--

Christopher "GeodesicDragon" Urquhart

Author

1. PROLOGUE

The sun's warming rays fell upon the pond, casting a shimmering reflection onto the surface of the water.

By the waters edge sat six ponies under shade, as they attempted to cool themselves off with whatever they had at their disposal.

"Shoot," Applejack said, "Ah'm sweatin' worse than Ah do after a hard day's work, and Ah ain't even done nothin'!"

"I feel like I've flown a marathon." Rainbow Dash groaned.

"I feel like I've made a thousand dresses in a day." Rarity whined.

"I don't mind the heat," Pinkie Pie said, "since I work in a bakery and all. I'm kinda used to it."

Fluttershy didn't speak, preferring to lie under a tree.

"All the magic in the world can't keep me cool." Twilight said.

"Speak for yourself." the voice was male, and came from the tree Fluttershy was lying under. She squeaked and hid behind her mane.

Looking up, Twilight and the others saw a humanoid figure that resembled a bovine.

"Oh look," Rainbow Dash said, "it's our favourite tauren."

"Hi Zorann!" Pinkie Pie said excitedly.

Zorann leapt out of the tree and landed next to Twilight. Unlike the others, he appeared unphased by the heat. The six friends looked at him in awe.

"All right, sugarcube," Applejack said, "spill. How are ya not feelin' the darn heat?"

Zorann chuckled.

"Being friends with a Frost mage has its advantages." he replied.
"Speaking of which, where the heck is Luxxoria?"

The sound of laughter caught everyone's attention, and they looked out onto the lake.

And the blood elf who was skating along the surface of it.

"Whoa, cool!" Rainbow Dash shouted. "How's she doing that?!"

Zorann lightly tapped Dash's forehead.

"Hello?" he said teasingly, "She's a FROST mage?"

Dash blushed.

"So, she's basically just froze the lake?" Twilight asked.

"Damn right I did!"

As the elf walked back onto dry land, the water thawed, eliciting a groan of disappointment from Dash.

"Aww, come on!" she whined, "That looked like fun!"

"Sorry, Dash." Luxxoria replied, "But the spell requires me to channel the frost beneath my feet, which is a huge drain on my mana reserves. That, and the ice is only strong enough to support one person."

Dash grumbled angrily to herself.

Luxxoria smiled.

"If you want," she said, "I can show you another spell. One that'll benefit all of you."

"Benefit us how, exactly?" asked Applejack.

"Let me show you," the elf replied, "and you'll see."

The six friends shared a glance with each other and shrugged.

"Excellent." Luxxoria said, clapping her hands together. She raised them above her head, and looked towards the six ponies.

"I almost forgot to tell you," she said, "but er, don't freak out."

"Freak out?" Pinkie asked, "Why would we freak o-"

The air around the six friends suddenly became colder. Their breathing quickened, erupting from their muzzles as mist. As Luxxoria concentrated, large blocks of ice fell from the sky, smashing into the ground around the group.

As she finished casting, Luxxoria's arms fell down back by her sides. The ground was littered with bits of ice, and the air was still chilly. The only thing the elf cared about was the looks of shock etched upon each pony's face.

"That spell..." Twilight said, "... you used that when-"

"-when Zorann and I attacked Ponyville." she completed the unicorn's sentence, "I know. But just like Zorann and his healing, my spells can also be used to make life easier."

She held her arms out and waved them over the ice blocks.

"For a start, it's not so damn hot any more."

The ponies relaxed at her words.

"I guess that's a good thing." Dash said hesitantly, "Besides, if you wanted to hurt us, we'd be dead, right?"

Zorann sighed.

"Yes, I know she used that spell to kill ponies on that day," he said, "but remember - I brought them back to life, and I like to think that we've passed all that now."

"Yeah," Luxxoria said, "I thought we were friends?"

"We are," Twilight said, "but it's hard to get used to your magic. Remember, you tried teaching us, but it didn't work out."

Luxxoria exhaled sharply.

"I never would have thought that learning magic from another world would nearly kill you." she said, "It's a good thing Zorann was quick on his feet with those heals."

"Well, at least we tried." Twilight said with a smile, "There's no denying that."

Luxxoria smiled as Zorann shivered.

"It's too damn cold now." he groaned.

The eight friends sat in Sugarcube Corner, the table and floor littered with empty bottles.

"Hey Lux," Zorann said, "any more water?"

"Check my elemental," she replied, "I'm using it as a cooler."

She snapped her fingers and the wall of water approached, several bottles floating within it.

"Just as well these things don't have faces," Zorann said as he reached in and grabbed eight bottles, "because it would have a really pissed off expression right now if it did."

The others chuckled as they opened their fresh bottles.

The door to Sugarcube Corner opened and a pegasus entered. She was grey with a blonde mane, and she had a saddlebag stuffed with envelopes slung over her back.

"Zorann and Luxxoria?" she called out.

"Oh, hey Derpy." Zorann replied, "Over here."

The mailmare trotted over and took a couple of envelopes from her bag, passing them to Zorann. He gave one to Luxxoria, who put it on the table, before smiling at Derpy.

"Thanks, Derpy." he said, "Get yourself a muffin, and tell the Cakes its on me, okay?"

Derpy smiled and trotted over to the counter.

Zorann turned his attention to the envelope, glancing at the outside of it. As he did so, his face fell.

In one corner of the envelope was the image of a golden lion against a blue background.

"Oh, no," he groaned, "a summons from Stormwind."

Luxxoria snatched her envelope from the table and tore it open, wrenching the letter out and casting her eyes over it, while Zorann read his out loud.

Zorann and Luxxoria,

I hope you've enjoyed your little holiday in Equestria, but I'm afraid that I must ask you to return to Stormwind immediately, to assist me with an urgent matter.

My son, Anduin, has gone missing.

His last known location put him and his fleet off the coast of an uncharted island, which we now know to be called Pandaria.

His fleet was ambushed by the Horde and shipwrecked. We have launched a rescue mission, and have now succeeded in establishing a foothold in this new land.

We have gained the help of the locals, and I am putting out a call for all able-bodied Alliance to join in the search for my son. You may be former Horde, but you're also the best chance I have to find my son. And your knowledge of the enemy may prove invaluable to defeating them.

Say your farewells - for I don't think you will be returning to Equestria any time soon - and meet me in Stormwind as soon as you possibly can.

For the honour and glory of the Alliance.

*VARIAN WRYNN
King of Stormwind*

P.S. Not everyone is used to the idea of former Horde helping the Alliance. Luxxoria should have received an item which can help rectify this problem. Make sure she uses it.

Looking up from the letter, Zorann could see the pained expressions of the six ponies, while Luxxoria had her head buried in her hands.

"Crap," he muttered, "we've been drafted."

2. A FAREWELL TO OLD FRIENDS

The Blood Elf and the Tauren sat in shock, their faces not showing any sign of emotion.

"I guess there's no getting out of this?" Luxxoria asked solemnly.

Zorann shook his head.

"No, I doubt it." he replied, "We agreed to help the Alliance, and I intend to stick to that agreement."

Luxxoria nodded.

"As will I."

They both sighed.

"Why do you have to go?" Twilight asked, "I thought you were done with war?"

"I thought so too," Luxxoria replied, "but maybe this time the Horde has nothing to do with this, and Anduin is just stuck in a cave somewhere, waiting to be found."

"You hope." Zorann muttered.

Luxxoria sighed and looked at her letter.

"It says here I was supposed to get something." she said, "But I don't see anything except the letter."

"Maybe Derpy still has it?" Dash replied, turning to the mare in question, who was eating a muffin, "Hey, Derpy!"

The grey mailmare looked up from her treat.

"Luxxoria says she was supposed to get something besides the letter." Dash said, "But she didn't get it. Any chance you're still carrying a parcel for her?"

Derpy swallowed a mouthful of muffins and trotted over.

"I don't think so," she said, "but I can look if you want."

"Please do." Luxxoria replied, "I'm curious as to what it could be."

Derpy removed her mailbag and set it on the counter, before opening it with her teeth and peering inside. She rummaged around in the bag with her head before emerging with an envelope in her mouth. She placed it on the table before grinning sheepishly.

"Sorry," she said, "I guess I missed it."

"No harm done, Derpy." Luxxoria replied, as she picked up the envelope and opened it, "At least I have it."

Reaching inside the envelope, Luxxoria removed a folded piece of parchment which shimmered in the light.

"What the hell is that?" Zorann said.

Luxxoria unfolded the parchment and cast a sceptical gaze over it, her eyes widening as she did so.

"It's a spell." she said, "According to this, the effect is similar to that produced by an Orb of Deception, but lasts for as long as the user wishes it to, meaning it can be toggled at will."

"An Orb of what?" Twilight asked, her brow furrowed in confusion.

"Orb of Deception." Zorann explained, "It's an artefact which allows Horde to disguise themselves as Alliance, and vice versa. It only lasts for a few minutes though."

He sighed.

"I'm guessing Varian wants you to use that spell to disguise us as Alliance," he said, "since I doubt the people of Stormwind would welcome two Horde with open arms."

Luxxoria nodded.

"I'd better learn this then." she said.

She read the text on the parchment out loud. As she did so, the shimmer of light became a glow, before the parchment suddenly vanished in a flash of light.

"Is that it?" Zorann asked, "You've learnt that spell?"

"I have," Luxxoria replied, "and I'm going to cast it on you first."

Zorann opened his mouth to protest, but decided against it, having realised that time was short.

"Get it over with, then." he grunted, "I'm keen to see what race I get turned into."

Luxxoria muttered a few words, and soon Zorann was enveloped by the same blinding light as the parchment.

"Well," he said, "how do I look? Because I certainly feel different."

"... you're a Night Elf." Luxxoria replied.

"Good." Zorann replied, "I was hoping for that. Anything but one of those flea-bitten Worgen."

Luxxoria cast the spell again, surrounding herself in the by now familiar light.

"What the hell?!" she shouted, "Why has everything gotten bigger? ... Oh, no ... don't tell me."

"You're a Gnome!" Zorann said gleefully, before collapsing on the floor holding his sides as he laughed out loud.

Luxxoria sighed.

"Come on," she said forcefully, "we have to get going."

Zorann got to his feet, still laughing.

"I guess this is it then." Twilight said, "You're leaving, and we'll probably never see you again."

Zorann stopped laughing as his face fell.

"Crap," he muttered, "I forgot about that."

"We'll miss you." Rarity said, stifling a sob, "Both of you."

"Likewise." Luxxoria replied.

Chanting another spell, a portal to Stormwind soon opened in front of the group. On the other side, Varian could be seen pacing around his throne room, occasionally throwing his arms up in exasperation.

"Looks like he's waiting for us." Zorann said, "Better not piss him off any more than we already have."

"Take care of yourselves, girls." Luxxoria said.

"It's been nice knowing you." Zorann added.

The six ponies grabbed the two Horde and smothered them in a group hug, sobbing uncontrollably.

"Be safe," Pinkie said, "and try to come back to us. I really love your conjured cakes."

Luxxoria chuckled.

"We'll try." she replied, "I promise."

Zorann and Luxxoria pulled themselves away from the group. With one final wave, they stepped through the portal, which closed immediately afterwards, much to the disappointment of six ponies.

"What now?" Applejack asked.

"Now..." Twilight trailed off.

"... we wait." Rarity completed the sentence.

The six friends sighed together and turned their attention back to fanning themselves from the heat.

"It's about damn time you two got here!"

"Sorry, your Highness," Luxxoria said, "but we got delayed. It's not easy saying goodbye to your friends."

Varian sighed.

"I see that you are making use of the spell I sent you." he said, "That's good. The last thing I need is two Horde being lynched by an angry mob."

"Yeah, yeah." Zorann groaned, "Just tell us about Anduin."

Varian shot the tauren/night elf a vicious look before walking over to a table in the middle of the room.

"Anduin's last known location was somewhere in this area." he said, "Apparently, he and his crew discovered an uncharted landmass, but were ambushed by the Horde."

Zorann and Luxxoria nodded.

"We sent reinforcements to the area and destroyed a Horde base on the shore. We made contact with the locals, whereupon we learned that the landmass was none other than Pandaria."

"Pandaria?" Luxxoria said, "The land shrouded in Mist for ten thousand years?"

Varian nodded.

"The mist has cleared, and now the Horde seek to claim the land for themselves." he said, "The Alliance aims to stop them. Needless to say, the fighting has been fierce."

"No surprises there, then." Zorann deadpanned.

Varian ignored him and continued talking.

"Unfortunately, the Horde isn't the only problem. We have also had to deal with mantids and mogu. But these are insignificant when compared to the Sha."

"Sha?" Zorann raised an eyebrow.

"They are the physical manifestations of negative emotions like fear, hatred, and anger." Varian explained, "And with the war still ongoing, those emotions are plentiful."

"Sounds lovely." Luxxoria said sarcastically, "And where exactly does Anduin come into all of this?"

"His last known position was somewhere in the region called the Jade Forest." Varian replied, "Your search will begin in Paw'don Village. The rest of the team awaits your arrival."

"And who is the rest of the team?" Zorann asked.

"They are adventurers like yourselves." Varian said, "There is another druid, and a paladin."

"Only four of us?" Luxxoria chimed in, "I guess that makes sense. Four people would attract less attention."

"What are their names?" Zorann said.

"The druid is Navitas, and the paladin is Baegon." Varian said, "I should warn you that they don't really like the Horde that much."

"I can't imagine why." Luxxoria sighed.

"So needless to say, they don't know who you really are." Varian continued, "Keep those disguises up at ALL TIMES."

"Gotcha." Zorann said dismissively, "When do we leave?"

"Immediately." Varian replied, "Several Pandaren from the Wandering Isle have joined the Alliance. They have a small settlement on the shore of the lake. There is a portal there that will take you to Paw'don Village. Navitas and Baegon will be waiting."

Zorann and Luxxoria saluted.

"Find my son, and bring him back safely." Varian said, "Dismissed."

The two Horde walked out of the keep into the cool Stormwind air. Taking to the skies on their flying mounts, they spotted the portal to Paw'don Village in the distance and headed towards it.

"Right, here's the plan." Zorann said, "Go to Pandaria, find Anduin, maybe kill a few things, bring him back and then return to Equestria and chill with our friends. Sound good?"

Luxxoria nodded as they landed in front of the portal.

"Right then." Zorann clapped his hands together, "Let's go."

No words were spoken as both Horde stepped into the portal.

And into the unknown.

3. SIGNS OF TROUBLE

As Zorann and Luxxoria emerged on the other side of the portal, a couple of people who were nearby walked over to them. One was a female Night Elf, while the other was a Human.

"You must be Zorann and Luxxoria." said the human, "I'm Baegon and this is Navitas. King Wrynn speaks very highly of you, and yet you arrive here late."

"Yeah, sorry about that." Zorann replied, "Something came up."

"And that's all we're telling you." Luxxoria added. "Now, let's find the Prince and get the hell out of here."

"Very well." Navitas said, "But first, we need to plan. What are your specialisations? I find it handy to know someone's talents, in case a situation arises whereby they could be used."

"My specialisation is Guardian," Zorann said, "and Luxxoria's is either Frost or Fire magic."

"Though I prefer Frost." Luxxoria said with a grin, "There's nothing like freezing your enemy solid and then smashing them into a million little pieces."

"Guardian, huh?" Navitas said, putting a hand on her chin, "That's great. I specialise in Restoration magic, while Baegon here is a master of Retribution."

Baegon flexed his muscles.

"Not that I like to brag, of course." he said.

Luxxoria sighed.

"Can we get going?" she asked, "We're not going to find the prince if we hang around comparing specialisations."

Navitas nodded.

"Of course." she said, "I underwent a ritual earlier which allowed me to locate the Prince. He is currently at a small camp near an ancient well, along with two of the local Pandaren."

Zorann and Luxxoria stood unblinking for a moment.

"If you know where he is," Zorann asked at last, "then why the hell are you not out there GETTING HIM?!"

Baegon sighed.

"Because the entire area is crawling with ancient spirits." he said, "Not to mention the Horde have been seen in the area, along with their new hozen allies."

"Hozen?" Luxxoria checked.

"Monkeys, basically." Navitas replied, "Only with more aggression and less intelligence."

Luxxoria nodded.

"Right then." she said, "Let's go get the Prince, and kill any bozos who dare to get in our way."

"Sounds like a plan to me." Navitas said, as she summoned her Mekgineer's Chopper, "Get in."

Luxxoria climbed into the sidecar as Baegon summoned his own Chopper, beckoning Zorann to get in.

The two vehicles sped off through the forest, the scenery passing by at great speed. The relaxing atmosphere was ruined by the sounds of distant combat, and the smell of smoke.

"The mogu are attacking a Pandaren orchard nearby." Baegon explained, raising his voice so he could be heard over the engine of his Chopper, "Other adventurers are dealing with it, so it's none of our concern."

Approaching the springs, several spirits could be seen, their constant wailing soon making the hairs on Luxxoria's neck stand on end. Exiting the sidecar, she summoned her Water Elemental and placed an intelligence buff on the others. Zorann applied his Mark of the Wild, while Baegon increased everyone's Mastery of their chosen specialisation.

"All right. The camp is on the other side of this place." Baegon said, idly swinging his two-handed sword around, "Let's get going."

The four of them ran into the camp, attracting the attention of the spirits. Screeching in rage, they swarmed the group.

"Be at peace, spirits!" Baegon yelled, swinging his sword in a wide arc in front of him, "We have no quarrel with you!"

"The living are not welcome here." replied one of the spirits, its voice a mix of whispering and hissing, "You must die."

"You first!" Baegon replied, as he unleashed a flash of blinding light from his body. The spirits screeched and writhed in agony before disappearing in a puff of shadowy smoke.

Zorann looked disappointed.

"Is that it?" he asked, "Damn, I was hoping for a proper fight."

"We don't have time to fight everything." Navitas replied, "I can see a campfire on that hill. That must be where the Prince is."

Zorann sighed.

"Don't worry, Z." Luxxoria soothed, "We'll no doubt get to fight something later. Maybe the Horde or their hozen buddies?"

Zorann smiled as Baegon and Navitas walked up the hill towards the campfire. The two former Horde steeled themselves and followed behind.

They took a few steps forward before Luxxoria grabbed Zorann's sleeve forcefully.

"What is it?" he asked her.

Luxxoria glanced at Baegon and Navitas, who were now talking to another human, who was female, and a male dwarf.

"I just realised something." she replied, lowering her voice, "Doesn't Anduin know who we really are?"

Zorann put a hand on his chin in thought.

"He does." he replied, before pointing at their two colleagues, "But I don't think he'll tell those two."

"Maybe so," Luxxoria replied, "but we still need to be careful when we find him."

Zorann nodded and the two of them joined the group around the campfire. The dwarf was sitting down on a blanket with an annoyed expression on his bearded face, while the other human was explaining the situation to Navitas and Baegon.

"... and that's when he used the Mind Control spell on Sully there, forcing him to let him leave." she said, "Needless to say, the Admiral is not happy about it."

Navitas sighed.

"Any idea where he could have went, Kearnen?" she asked.

"He said something about 'finding the Vale' and ran off to the north-west." Kearnen replied, pointing angrily at the dwarf, "I couldn't pursue him because I had to tend to Sully."

"And by 'tend'," Sully chimed in, "she means she read me the riot act about gettin' mind controlled."

He sighed.

"I still cannae believe the cheek o' the wee bugger."

Kearnen tutted.

"I'm sorry, Navitas, Baegon." she said, "But that's all the info I have. If you want to find the White Pawn, you'll have to start by heading in the same direction he did. But I must warn you that the Horde and their hozen allies have been seen in force in the area. They are preparing an attack on our jinyu allies at Pearlfyn Village."

She motioned to Sully to follow her and the two of them saluted the group before leaving the camp.

"We're goin' ta help the jinyu!" Sully called over his shoulder, "Good luck finding the White Pawn!"

As soon as they were out of sight, Baegon drove his sword into the dirt with an exasperated growl.

"So now we're back to square one!" he groaned, "What the hell are we going to do now, Nav?"

"We'll camp here for the night," she replied, "and we'll plan our next move in the morning."

The others nodded.

"Zorann, get some wood." Navitas ordered, "Luxxoria, get a fire going, and Baegon... get us some meat."

Baegon and Zorann left to do their tasks, while Luxxoria threw a fireball into the slowly dying campfire.

"You do realise that I can conjure up some food?" she asked.

"Yes," Navitas replied, "but I'm sick of Conjured Mana Cakes. They get tasteless after a while."

Luxxoria shrugged and resumed throwing fireballs into the fire pit, as Zorann and Baegon came back, carrying a pile of wood and meat respectively. Zorann threw some wood on the fire while Baegon passed the meat to Navitas.

"Looks good." she said, "What kind of meat is it?"

"Crocolisk." Baegon replied, "There's loads of them nearby, so I killed as many as I could. Mostly for the meat, but also to keep them away from us."

Navitas smiled.

"Four crocolisk steaks, coming right up." she said, as she used some of the wood to make a spit.

The four of them sat down around the fire, watching as the stars slowly came into view. Luxxoria nudged Zorann in the side.

"Luna does a much better job." she whispered.

"Yeah, she does." he replied, "At least with Luna you can expect a great view. But this... this is just random."

A moment of silence followed the brief exchange.

"I wonder what the girls are doing just now?" Luxxoria said, "I hope the heat wave is over at least. They can't cope without my frost to cool them down."

Zorann yawned and settled himself onto the ground, throwing a blanket over himself to keep out the cold.

"Whatever they're doing," he said, "they're doing it without us."

Luxxoria sighed and lay down, encasing herself in her Molten Armour as an alternative to a blanket.

"Show off." Zorann muttered.

Luxxoria didn't reply as sleep claimed them both.

"I'm sure they're fine, Pinkie." Twilight said, "They're just there to look for somepony. I don't think they'll let themselves be dragged into the war."

"I sure hope you're right, Twilight!" replied the bounding party pony, "I can't wait for them to get back! I'm gonna throw them the biggest, most super-fantastically-awesome welcome back party they've ever-"

Pinkie's words were cut off as she suddenly began shuddering involuntary, much to Twilight's horror.

"Pinkie Sense?" Twilight asked, "Oh, no. What is it?"

"I don't know." Pinkie replied, "But whatever it is, it's a doozy!"

The shuddering was punctuated with a series of rapid blinks and ear twitches. Pinkie gasped in shock.

"Oh, no. No, no, no..." she cried.

"That was new." Twilight said, "But what does it mean?"

"It means..." Pinkie replied, "... that our friends are in danger."

Twilight's jaw dropped.

"We'd better round everypony up, then!" she said, "Safety in numbers, and so forth!"

As she galloped for the door, Twilight suddenly found herself unable to move. Glancing behind her, she saw that Pinkie had her tail in her mouth.

"Pinkie, let me go!" Twilight shouted, "I have to warn the girls that they could be in danger!"

Pinkie spat out Twilight's tail and shook her head.

"It's not our pony friends who are in danger." she said solemnly.

Twilight blinked in surprise.

"If it's none of us," she said, "then who... oh."

Pinkie nodded, her mane and tail deflating.

"Zorann and Luxxoria are the ones I meant..." she said, as tears began to form, "... and there's nothing we can do."

Twilight wrapped Pinkie in a hug.

"Celestia help them."

4. UNMASKED

"WAKE UP, ALLIANCE FILTH!"

Luxxoria yelped as she was woken up by the feeling of something poking her in the side. Her companions let out similar cries as they too were poked. As they opened their eyes, they were immediately confronted with the facial features of an orc.

"Horde!" Baegon snarled. "How did they get the drop on us?"

"Because you were asleep, you fools!" the orc replied. "Now get up, and don't try anything funny!"

Groaning, the four Alliance stood up and raised their arms above their heads. The orc snapped his fingers, and a Forsaken priest stepped forward and saluted.

"Yes, Gordul?" he asked.

Zorann and Luxxoria exchanged a shocked glance with each other as Gordul pointed to their group.

"Dispel any and all magical effects on them, Santee." he barked. "And bind their hands, especially those of the gnome."

Santee nodded and looked towards the group. Navitas and Baegon were glaring at him fiercely, while Zorann and Luxxoria were gazing uncomfortably at the ground.

Chanting a few words, Santee snapped his fingers, engulfing the group in a flash of white light.

"Mark of the Wild, gone. Blessing of Might, gone. Arcane Intellect, gone." he said, as he sensed the magical effects vanishing. "Wait... what's this?"

As the light vanished, Navitas and Baegon groaned. They glared at Santee, who had a grin on his rotted face.

"Well, well, well." said Gordul. "This was certainly unexpected. I was hoping I would get to see you two again."

Navitas and Baegon exchanged a puzzled glance at each other before turning towards Zorann and Luxxoria.

And gasping.

Where once a night elf and a gnome stood, a tauren and a blood elf had taken their places.

"What the hell?" Baegon yelled. "We were travelling with HORDE?!"

"They're not Horde." Gordul spat. "They lost the right to call themselves that when they killed Warchief Hellscream and chose to serve your king and his pathetic Alliance."

Baegon blinked.

"KING WRYNN KNEW ABOUT YOU TWO?!" he roared.

"It's complicated." Luxxoria said. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you the whole story."

Baegon grunted and looked at Navitas.

"Try us." she said.

Luxxoria sighed.

"Very well." she said. "But first things first."

She grinned and lowered her arms.

"You didn't bind my wrists."

Those words were followed up by an Ice Lance slamming into Santee's chest. He fell wordlessly to the ground as Gordul gasped.

"KILL THEM ALL!" he roared.

"You want to fight?!" Zorann snarled. "Very well then, Gordul. It's time for round two!"

Shifting into cat form, he leapt towards Gordul, slamming him to the ground. Gordul retaliated by bringing his knees up into Zorann's chest, causing him to roar in pain and swipe out with his claws.

Navitas and Baegon nodded to each other. Baegon immediately grabbed the orc holding him, breaking his neck in one quick motion, before grabbing his sword from the ground. Navitas summoned a bolt of orange lightning, sending it into another orc who was attempting to aid Gordul.

Luxxoria laughed as she conjured a pillar of fire, engulfing the Horde soldiers who were standing close together. They screamed for all but an instant before turning to ash.

Baegon charged towards Gordul, kicking him off Zorann and sending him sailing into a nearby tree. Coughing, Gordul stood up to see the four of them advancing towards him.

"This isn't over!" he yelled, as he vanished into the shadows. "You will pay for this, you traitors! Mark my words!"

The group dropped their combat stances. As Navitas applied healing to everyone, she and Baegon glared at the two Horde.

"Explanation." she said sternly. "Now."

Luxxoria sighed.

"Take a seat." she said. "Because it's a long story."

"... and that's everything up until we got here." Luxxoria said. "And I'm fairly certain that you both know the rest."

"Let me get this straight." Baegon said. "You opened a portal to another dimension populated by sentient ponies, some that can fly and use magic, attacked them and got killed by six ponies wielding the power of friendship."

Luxxoria nodded.

"Several months later, you saved what you believe to be travellers from a bunch of Durotar scorpions, only to find out that you had actually saved the same six ponies who killed you. So you decided to take them to see Garrosh, who got pissed off about you 'attacking innocents'. You were told to train the ponies in Azerothian magic, but on your way to Moonglade, you were ambushed by a party of night elves, whom you then killed. Am I right so far?"

"You are." Zorann said flatly.

"A few minutes later, you were ambushed by Shattered Hand assassins acting on Garrosh's orders. He thought that these ponies were Alliance spies, so he wanted them dead. And he wanted you two dead because he thought you were a pair of incompetent fools. You defeated the assassins, and opened a portal to Moonglade. There you found out that Garrosh had the scroll containing the spell you used to get to... Equestria? Is that what you called it?"

Luxxoria groaned.

"Yes..."

"Right, right. Anyway, you realised that Garrosh was planning an invasion, so you set about trying to replicate the spell. Instead you ended up in Stormwind, persuaded the Alliance to help, went to Equestria... and pretty much saved the day."

Luxxoria and Zorann grinned and nodded.

"Yep."

Navitas and Baegon looked at each other for a moment.

"Yeah, okay." Navitas said. "We believe you."

"... you do?" Luxxoria replied.

"Yeah." Navitas chuckled. "I've heard of weirder things. I've even seen some weird stuff. For example, when I was a child, I spent a lot of time fishing in Darnassus. I used to have dreams about the fish fighting back. A few years later, and what do you know? I'm fighting murlocs in Darkshore."

"And I never thought I'd see the day when the Horde would fight each other." Baegon added. "But after seeing you two doing it... well, it's certainly made my opinion of you change."

"So..." Zorann said hesitantly, "... you're not going to kill us?"

The two Alliance shook their heads.

"Nope." Navitas said. "Besides, you're both really handy to have in a fight. And if King Wrynn trusts you... I guess we can too."

"So I don't need this stupid spell any more?" Luxxoria asked.

"Only if we go near an Alliance-held town." Baegon replied. "But that won't be for a while. We still need to find the White Pawn."

"Well, we have the direction Kearnen pointed towards." Zorann said. "We should head that way, see what we can find."

"Sounds like a plan." Baegon nodded.

The four of them set off in the direction suggested to them. As they walked, a pair of eyes watched from the cover of a tree.

"This. Isn't. Over."

5. FAVOURS AND THE FUTURE

Two full days passed, and the small group of adventurers found themselves on a small bluff, from which they could survey the Jade Forest in all its beauty.

"As far as I know," Zorann said as he pointed at various places, "that's the Temple of the Jade Serpent, that's the Greenstone Quarry, that's Groomin Hill, that's Pearlfen Village and that's..."

The others, noticing Zorann's sudden silence, looked at him with concern. His jaw hung open in shock, and his eye twitched erratically. Following his gaze, the other three soon found themselves sharing his expression.

In the middle of the forest, the signs of a battle were clear for all. Corpses of hozen and jinyu, along with the occasional human and orc, were spread around the remains of a statue which resembled the fabled Jade Serpent.

But nothing could have prepared the group for what they could also see amongst the carnage. The land itself was as black as night, and strange creatures stalked among the dead.

"By the Light..." Baegon mumbled, "... what happened here?!"

"I don't know." Navitas replied. "But I do know that I don't like the looks of those creatures down there. They look like shadowfiends, only... creepier."

"They are the Sha." said a voice behind them.

The group spun around on their heels to see a male pandaren sitting on the ground in a meditative pose.

"The Sha?" Luxxoria repeated. "You mean the dark energy which is the physical manifestation of negative emotions?"

The pandaren nodded.

"Indeed." he said. "And when this battle erupted, plenty of those emotions were around. You are most fortunate to be here now. For the Sha you see now pale in comparison to the monster that was summoned while the fighting was ongoing."

The group exchanged curious glances with each other as the pandaren stood up and walked towards them.

"Oh, I'm sorry." he said. "I seem to have forgotten my manners. I am Lorewalker Cho, and I must say that you four are unusual."

"We're not the only ones." Luxxoria muttered.

Cho looked at her puzzled for a moment before a flash of realisation entered his eyes.

"Oh, no!" he said. "I don't mean that in a bad way. I meant that I have met many of your Horde and Alliance over the last few weeks, and each of them is of the opinion that the other is their enemy. So to see you four together like this... is remarkable."

"We used to be part of the Horde." Zorann said. "But that all changed when we were betrayed. It's a long story, one I really don't want to tell again. All you need to know is that we work for the Alliance now, as hard as that is to believe."

"But of course." Cho replied. "If you do not wish to discuss it, then it is not my place to pry. But... should you wish to talk in the future, you will find that I am a very good listener."

Zorann nodded as Navitas stepped forward.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Lorewalker." she said. "I am Navitas, a druid like Zorann. This is Baegon the paladin and this is Luxxoria the mage. We are looking for a human by the name of Anduin. Perhaps you have seen him?"

"I have seen many humans in the last few weeks." Cho responded. "But if it is a particular one you seek, perhaps I can be of assistance... but I would ask for help in return."

"Name your deal, Lorewalker," Baegon said, "and we will see if it is worth our time."

Cho nodded and the group huddled together.

"He hasn't tried to kill us yet." Luxxoria said. "That's a good thing, right? And if he says he can help us find the White Pawn, then I say we trust him."

"I agree with Lux." Zorann said. "... did I really just say that?"

He grunted as Luxxoria elbowed him in the stomach.

"I say we help him." Baegon said. "If he tries anything funny... well, there's one of him and four of us. We'll just kill him."

"Then it's agreed." Navitas announced. "We help the Lorewalker."

The four of them nodded and separated from their huddle, turning back to face Cho, who was looking at them expectantly.

"We will help you, Lorewalker." Navitas said. "Tell us what you want, and we shall do it."

Cho smiled and pointed out towards the battlefield below.

"I have been cleansing the Sha infestation for many a while now," he said, "and I grow tired. If you could destroy as many of them as you can, I will gladly help you to find your lost friend."

The four of them stared at him blankly.

"... is that all?" Zorann asked. "There's nothing else?"

Cho shook his head.

Zorann looked at Luxxoria, who shrugged.

"Okay." he grinned. "Let's go kill things! But I must say it'll take a while to get down from here. Lux, would you be so kind...?"

Luxxoria nodded.

"Slow Fall!" she shouted. A soft yellow light illuminated all four members of the group. Shifting into his bear form, Zorann jumped off the bluff — closely followed by the other three members of the party. Landing gracefully on the ground below, Zorann roared at a nearby Sha. The creature let out a roar of its own and charged.

"Come on then, you worthless piece of matter!" Zorann cackled. "Show me what you've got!"

As the sha continued charging towards him, Zorann felt a chill approaching. He stepped to one side as a bolt of frost flew past his ear and slammed into the sha, causing it to screech in pain and fury, and slowing its movements.

"Dammit, Luxxoria!" he yelled. "Watch where you're aiming!"

"Sorry!" she replied. "These things look tough. You sure we can handle it?"

Zorann snorted.

"Of course we ca—"

His words were cut off as the sha finally got within striking distance, which it did with furore. Striking out with a shadowy appendage, it left a gash along Zorann's side. He bellowed in agony as Luxxoria summoned her water elemental.

"Crap!" he muttered. "That *actually* hurt!"

"Allow me to be of assistance."

Zorann cocked his head and saw a tree standing next to him. He smiled as it waved its wooden arms, and a feeling of relief washed over his injured body.

"Thanks, Navitas." he said.

"Call me Nav." she replied. "All my friends do."

Zorann smiled and growled at the sha, which had turned its attention to Luxxoria, who was running around with her hands on fire as she shot small bolts of flame at the beast.

"Time to get mangling!" Zorann said, as he charged. Clawing and biting, he unleashed a flurry of attacks on the sha, which let out a final blood-curdling cry of pain before disappearing.

"That's one." Zorann said.

"Er, guys? I've got a bit of a problem on my end!"

Looking around, Zorann saw that Baegon was surrounded by several smaller sha creatures, which were trying to overwhelm him. The ground beneath Baegon's feet glowed a pale yellow, which seemed to invoke shrill cries of agony from the enemy.

"I overshot the landing, and they attacked me!" Baegon yelled. "My consecration is holding them off, but I still need help!"

"Just a sec!" Luxxoria called. Holding her hands above her head, she closed her eyes in concentration. Soon, large blocks of ice appeared above Baegon's head, plummeting to the ground and crushing the sha beneath their weight."

"I love blizzard." Baegon said as he hurried back to regroup with the others. "It's just so... overpowered."

"Don't relax too much." Navitas said. "We're still not done. But those big ones are way too strong. We need some way of weakening them. Any ideas?"

Baegon and Luxxoria shrugged while Zorann looked around. A glint of light caught his eye, and he cocked his head towards it. A small piece of green stone was lying half buried in the dirt. As he watched, one of the smaller sha creatures bumped over it — only to screech in agony before disappearing completely.

Zorann snapped his fingers.

"The jade." he said. "The smaller sha are killed off completely when they touch it, so perhaps we can use it to weaken the bigger ones? That way they're easier to kill... meaning I hopefully won't get another unsightly gash."

"It's worth a try." Navitas said. "Okay, everyone grab as much of the stuff as you can carry. We're going to show these creatures not to mess with the Alliance."

The four of them split up, searching the immediate area for pieces of jade, avoiding the larger sha manifestations and destroying the smaller ones.

Moments later, each member of the party had a few pieces of jade on their person.

"So, er... how do we use this stuff?" Baegon asked. "Do we just throw it at them or something?"

"Let's find out." Luxxoria replied.

With slow, deliberate steps, the elf nervously approached one of the larger sha manifestations. The creature sensed her presence and turned to face her, emitting a low growling noise. Luxxoria gulped, before throwing a piece of jade with all her might, before engaging her ice barrier and teleporting a small distance away.

The jade hit its target, causing a much louder roar to come from the sha. It writhed in agony before shrinking to a smaller size from what it previously was.

"I guess that answers that question!" Luxxoria yelled as she prepared a frostbolt, sending it cascading into her target. Another volley of magic followed, and soon the sha was nothing more than a dark blob on the ground.

"Okay, good job Luxxoria." Navitas said. "Now, let's clean house."

The four of them let out roars of courage and ran further into the mass of sha. Moments later, the air was once again filled with the sounds of battle.

"Let me get this straight, Twilight. Pinkie's Pinkie Sense thinks that Zorann and Luxxoria are in danger?"

"That's what I said, Rainbow." Twilight replied. "And there's nothing we can do to help them."

Silence descended on the bakery as the five mares, with the exception of Pinkie Pie, sat around a table, the ticking of the clock being the only audible noise. Eventually, Applejack spoke up.

"Shoot, Ah reckon they'll be fine." she said. "They're good at what they do. And, as much as it pains me ta say, they're certainly good at fightin'. Maybe Pinkie, fer once, misunderstood what her Pinkie Sense was tryin' ta tell her?"

The other four looked at her with raised eyebrows. Applejack groaned and put on a pout.

"Ah was only makin' a suggestion." she defended. "Just because her Pinkie Sense was right before don't mean it always is."

"You're right, AJ!"

Applejack yelped at the sudden voice in her ear. She turned nervously to see that Pinkie had somehow integrated herself amongst the group without anypony noticing.

"Ah... Ah was?" Applejack said, dumbfounded.

"Yep-a-roonie!" Pinkie replied. "Turns out that I did get it wrong. How, I don't know. But I did!"

"So... if they're not in danger," Twilight offered, "then what was your Pinkie Sense trying to tell you?"

"That Zorann and Luxxoria are coming back to us..." Pinkie said plainly, "... but they're not alone."

A chorus of cheers erupted from the table.

"That's great news, darling!" Rarity said.

"It is." Fluttershy added. "I bet you have a party planned for them coming back. But, er, what did you mean by 'not alone'?"

Pinkie sighed.

"I'm not sure." she said. "That's the only thing I wasn't able to decipher from my combo. But I can't shake the feeling that whatever it is, it's bad news..."

She fixed a steely gaze on her friends.

"... for all of us."

The bakery descended into silence once again as each mare contemplated not only her future...

... but that of her friends.

6. RETURN

Lorewalker Cho smiled as he surveyed the four adventurers standing in front of him. They were covered in cuts and bruises, their clothing was tattered, and they were drenched in sweat.

"You have done well." he said. "I watched you in action. I must say that the four of you work well together. You've destroyed more of the sha in an hour than I have in the last few days!"

The four of them flashed a grin at him.

"Happy to have been of service." Navitas replied. "Now, I believe we made a deal?"

Cho clapped his hands together eagerly.

"But of course!" he chimed. "A pandaren does not go back on their word. You have assisted me, so I will gladly assist you. But before I do, I need to know which one of you has the clearer mind. For in order for me to help you, one of you will need to meditate. Only once your mind is clear, will you find who you seek."

"Not me. My mind is fried." Zorann said quickly, before pointing at Luxxoria. "But not as bad as hers. I've lost count of the number of times she's blown herself up trying to improve her spells. You'd think she was a goblin engineer or something."

Navitas raised a hand.

"I'm a healer." she said. "And I think we all agree that it requires a lot of concentration, since you need to keep focused on the rest of your group. And getting lost in your own little world means that people will die."

Cho nodded.

"Indeed." he said. "Your mind will be clearer than that of your friends, as one does not need to concentrate in order to swing a blade or flail like a beast."

"Hey!" Luxxoria said. "Opening portals isn't as easy as it looks!"

Cho laughed.

"I never said it was, Luxxoria." he said. "But Navitas is right. Concentration is indeed vital when taking care of your friends."

Navitas smiled.

"Then let's go." she said. "I'm keen to get this done. No offence, Lorewalker, but I want to get out of the Jade Forest. I'm sick of the sight of it."

"None taken." Cho replied. "Now come, let us make haste. The longer you delay, the less time you have to find your friend."

The four of them nodded and followed Cho. As they walked down a path leading off the bluff, Zorann winced.

"You okay, Z?" Luxxoria asked concernedly.

"I'm fine." he replied. "One of those big sha creatures got lucky and scored a hit on my side. It's a bit tender, is all."

"You sure?" Luxxoria said. "Because it doesn't look—"

"I said I'm fine!" Zorann snapped, causing the elf to flinch.

"All right, all right!" she retorted, holding up her hands defensively. "I only asked! No need to bite my head off!"

Zorann rolled his eyes and continued walking, Luxxoria warily following him from a safe distance.

An hour later, the group was being led through an exquisite-looking archway, and towards a small house.

"This is my home." Cho said. "Zorann, Luxxoria and Baegon, make yourselves comfortable. Navitas, come with me. To prepare you for meditation, you need to clear your mind. And what better way to do that... than through manual labour?"

With those words, he picked up a pair of shears from a nearby table and handed them to Navitas, who took them without question. Cho led the druid to a nearby tree, which was thick with leaves.

"You can start by pruning this tree." Cho said. "But do not think about how you're going to do it. Simply do, and let the tree tell you when it is done."

Navitas looked back at the others, who simply shrugged. Facing the tree, she closed her eyes and began cutting randomly. After thirty seconds, she opened her eyes.

On the ground in front of her was a small pile of leaves and branches, the tree they came from now having a corkscrew pattern. Cho clapped his hands eagerly.

"Good, good!" he said. "You certainly have an eye for this sort of thing, that much is certain."

"I'm a herbalist." Navitas replied. "If there's one thing I know, then it's plants."

Cho smiled and walked towards a wall. Putting the shears down, Navitas joined him.

"This wall could do with a painting." Cho said, handing Navitas a paintbrush and pallet. "Paint whatever you like on it. Feel the brush strokes, and let your mind flow free."

Navitas walked up to the wall and pondered for a moment, before beginning. The paint flew as she worked diligently. Minutes later, a painting of a human boy was on the wall.

"It's Anduin Wrynn." she said. "The Prince of Stormwind, and the man whom we seek. This is him from when he was younger."

"I see." Cho replied. "It would seem that your Alliance expects much from everyone who serves it, even your young. Now, one final task remains before your mind is clear enough for you to meditate on where young Anduin might be."

Navitas put the paintbrush and pallet on a nearby chair and followed Cho, who had walked over to a small bucket in front of a small group of trees, among which were several tall birds.

"This is my collection of exotic birds." Cho explained. "These are cranes. They are marvellous creatures, and you shall be the one who feeds them today."

Navitas stepped up to the bucket and took a handful of bird feed from it. With slow movements, she began throwing handfuls of it into the trees. The cranes came forward timidly, before pecking at the ground, savouring the treat so thoughtfully provided for them.

"That's it, gently now." Cho replied, as the cranes approached Navitas and began eating from her hand. "Oh, well isn't that lovely? I think they like you."

"Druids are always at one with nature." Navitas explained, as the cranes ate their fill and retreated back to the trees.

Cho nodded.

"Your tasks are complete." he said. "Now, come with me, and we shall begin your meditation. And just to be sure your mind is crystal clear, I will be doing my best to distract you... as will your friends over there."

Luxxoria and Zorann perked up, grins spreading over their faces, while Baegon produced a large warhammer and began swinging it idly, before bring it crashing into the ground with a loud thud.

"Sounds like fun." Navitas said grimly, as she followed Cho.

"Pinkie, are you sure we should be planning a party?" Fluttershy asked timidly, as she assisted the party pony in hanging up a banner celebrating the return of Zorann and Luxxoria.

Pinkie nodded eagerly.

"Our friends are coming home, Fluttershy!" she chirped. "We have to have a party for them! It wouldn't be very nice of us if we didn't celebrate them coming back!"

"But you said something about 'bad news for all of us'." Fluttershy squeaked, as she landed on the ground. "I just don't feel comfortable having a party if there's the risk of danger."

"Don't worry about that, Shy!" Pinkie said, wrapping a hoof around Fluttershy's neck in a hug. "My Pinkie Sense has been off lately, so there's a high chance I could be wrong about the danger. Though why it's been off is something I can't quite put my hoof on."

Fluttershy didn't reply.

"Now come on, you silly filly!" Pinkie exclaimed. "We still have lots to do before we can have this party, so let's get busy!"

She zipped into the kitchen as Fluttershy sighed.

"I hope she's right." she muttered. "I don't think I can take any more trouble..."

Navitas sat cross-legged in a gazebo, as Cho walked around her, occasionally stopping to hit her in the head with a random item. Baegon was using his warhammer to strike a small gong, Zorann was roaring in Navitas' face, while Luxxoria conjured the occasional blizzard on top of her.

Throughout it all, the elf didn't move a muscle. Cho walked around to her front and looked closer at her face. The glazed expression in her eyes caused him to smile and raise his hands, signalling for the others to stop what they were doing.

"She has achieved inner peace." he said. "The dream elixir I gave her will now be taking effect, and soon you will have the location of your missing prince."

"Wow, she said that she had lots of concentration," Zorann said, "and this proves it, without a doubt. If it was me, I probably would have killed you all by now."

He grinned sheepishly.

"Likewise." said Luxxoria and Baegon together.

A sudden gasp drew their attention back towards Navitas. Her eyes were wide open in shock, and a look of terror was on her face.

"Whoa, Nav." Baegon said. "Are you all right? Do you know where the White Pawn is?"

Navitas nodded meekly.

"My dream did indeed reveal the location of the prince." she said. "But only for a moment. He is in the Krasarang Wilds... in the company of his father and the Alliance fleet which has just landed. The rest of the dream took me to a place I have never been to, but I remember hearing about."

"Where?" Baegon asked.

Navitas pointed at Zorann and Luxxoria.

"Your pony friends are in danger." she said bluntly. "Great evil threatens them, and I fear they will not be able to stop it."

"*What?!*" Zorann roared. "Crap, we've got to help them! Luxxoria, open a portal, *now!*"

He looked at Luxxoria to see that she had already done as he asked, and a portal to Ponyville was shimmering softly next to her.

"Right, the White Pawn has been located." Zorann said. "Mission accomplished. Now we're going to help our friends. Anyone who dares to threaten them will answer to us."

His eyes flashed with anger.

"And I will take *great pleasure* in ending their lives... *slowly.*"

He stepped through the portal. Luxxoria looked at the two Alliance, before saluting them. She bowed to the Lorewalker, who returned the gesture.

Taking a deep breath, she followed Zorann through the portal, with a single thought at the front of her mind.

Why must war follow us to a world of peace?

7. DOWNFALL - PART ONE

"Come on, everypony!" Pinkie yelled. "We don't have much time left! Let's get the buffet table set up, and the games ready!"

Sugarcube Corner was a hive of activity. Pinkie was perched on top of the counter, shouting instructions through a rolled up newspaper, which helped to amplify her excited voice to every living thing within the Ponyville town limits.

"Pinkie," Twilight said, as she and the others picked their way through the mass of ponies, "don't you think, excuse me, that you're taking this a bit too far? I mean, we don't even, pardon, know when they'll be back."

Pinkie opened her mouth to answer, but snapped it shut when she felt a tingling sensation. She craned her neck back and saw that her tail was twitching erratically.

"Twitchy tail?" she said, before bringing her makeshift megaphone to her muzzle. "TWITCHY TAIL! EVERYPONY WATCH YOUR HEADS, BECAUSE SOMETHING'S ABOUT TO FALL!"

Ponies looked around sceptically, wondering what would fall on them, given that they were indoors. A dull thud from outside caught their attention, followed by voices.

"Ow, my face!" one yelled. "Dammit, Lux! Since when does that portal open in the air?!"

"I don't know, Zorann." Luxxoria replied. "It's never happened before. However, I have two things to say in my defence. Firstly, at least it opened a few feet above ground, rather than a few *hundred* feet. Secondly, at least it took us straight to Ponyville, rather than dumping us in that creepy forest."

Zorann groaned.

"They're back!" Pinkie squealed, racing out the door in a flurry of party materials, closely followed by the others. She grabbed the two new arrivals in a tight hug. "Welcome back, you two!"

"Yeah, hi Pinkie." Zorann said, pushing her off him and standing up abruptly. "Where's the threat?"

"Threat?" asked Rainbow Dash. "There's no threat here. Unless you count being hugged to death by Pinkie."

"What?!" Zorann bellowed, turning to Luxxoria. "But Navitas said that there was a threat! The dream elixir told her so!"

Luxxoria shrugged.

"Maybe she got it wrong." she replied. "Besides, you don't really believe that mumbo-jumbo, do you? Dreams are exactly that, dreams. They cannot predict the future."

Zorann growled.

"Then she lied to us." he snarled. "She probably wanted to get rid of us the first chance she got. I bet her and that human were colluding from the moment they found out we were Horde!"

"Whoa, calm down, dude." Rainbow Dash said.

"YOU STAY OUT OF THIS!" Zorann snapped. Dash flinched for a moment, before anger flashed across her eyes. Puffing her chest out she flew into Zorann's face.

"I don't know what in the hay is wrong with you," she snapped back, "but whatever happened while you were away did not involve us, so that does not give you the right to shout at me like that!"

Zorann pushed her aside.

"That night elf *bitch* told me I was her friend." he said bitterly, almost spitting the words. "And then she goes and lies to my face about there being trouble here. I must be right. She and the human used us to help them find Anduin. And once we done that, they decided to dump us the first chance they got!"

Luxxoria scoffed and rolled her eyes.

"What in the Nether is wrong with you?" she said. "You're being really paranoid, which isn't like you at all. As I said, maybe Navitas got it wrong. But since I can't see any threats here, I'm beginning to think that is the case."

"Are you defending her?" Zorann asked, narrowing his eyes.

"Uhhh... yeah." Luxxoria replied. "I guess I am. Look, just relax, have a few cakes, and enjoy the party that Pinkie has no doubt put on. You'll soon forget all about this nonsense."

Pinkie nodded eagerly, causing Luxxoria to laugh as she walked towards the bakery.

"So, Pinkie." she said. "I take it you want me to rustle up a few of my Conjured Mana Pies?"

"Mmmmm, you betcha!" Pinkie replied, licking her lips.

"All right then." Luxxoria replied. "I'll start on that right n—"

Her words were cut off as a brown blur tackled her to the ground, sending her onto her back. She grunted in pain and tried to move her arms, only to find them being pinned down by the large black bear on top of her.

"Argh!... Zorann? What the hell?!" she shouted. "Get off of me!"

"You defended the elf and the human." Zorann snarled, bring his teeth to Luxxoria's face. "You were in on the scheme as well. I thought I could call you my friend. In fact, there was a time when I called you 'sister'. But now, I doubt where your loyalties lie."

Luxxoria grunted under Zorann's weight and looked into his eyes. Where once was compassion and joy, anger and hatred had taken over. The elf gasped as the tauren's eyes turned black as night, and a low guttural growl escaped from his mouth.

"That noise..." she said sadly, "... no, it can't be."

A shadowy tendril appeared from Zorann's mouth, inching its way to Luxxoria's forehead. She shouted out in anger as she struggled to free her arms. With the tendril just inches away, a blur of colour suddenly knocked her assailant off.

"GET AWAY FROM HER!" Rainbow Dash shouted as she flew at full speed into Zorann's side, sending him sprawling onto the ground. "You wanted to know what the threat was? *You are!*"

Luxxoria scrambled to her feet.

"Thanks, Dash." she said. "He's been possessed by a creature known as a 'Sha manifestation'. I don't have time to explain it, but just know that it's bad."

"What are we going to do?" Dash asked, as the rest of the girls joined the two.

"*You lot* are going to get everypony indoors immediately." Luxxoria said flatly. "As for me... I've got no choice but to kill him."

"WHAT?!" the group of mares chorused.

"I'm sorry, girls." Luxxoria replied. "But as far as I know, there is no other way."

"What about the Elements of Harmony?" Twilight asked.

"You can't teleport all the way to Canterlot." Luxxoria said grimly. "And it would take too long to get there. No, this is the only way. Now get everypony inside!"

The girls looked downtrodden, but nodded and began shouting out to everypony to get inside.

Zorann stood up and glared at Luxxoria, who adopted a defensive stance. Letting out a blood-curdling roar of fury, he charged towards the elf, who sighed.

"I'm sorry, old friend." she said softly. "But I'm afraid you leave me with no other choice... FLAMESTRIKE!"

As she snapped her fingers, a column of fire plummeted from the sky, covering a small area in fire and ash... and causing Zorann to roar in agony as he was caught in it. Ignoring the pain, he raced through the fire and began swiping with his claws, prompting Luxxoria to engage her Ice Barrier.

"You cannot defeat me!" he bellowed. "You are weak, pitiful and worthless. I am the superior being here!"

"No!" Luxxoria shot back. "You stopped being superior when you forced me into combat with my oldest friend! And if I have to kill him in order to kill you, then so be it!"

"Not if I kill you first!" Zorann yelled. "You will be the first casualty in my campaign to destroy this pitiful world!"

Increasing the speed of his attacks, Zorann quickly smashed the Ice Barrier, following it up by clamping his jaws around Luxxoria's leg. She screamed in agony before setting the bears fur on fire with a quick bolt of flame.

As Zorann released his grip, Luxxoria began hammering him with Ice Lances and Frostbolts.

Zorann shrugged off the damage and began a new assault. Summoning her Water Elemental, Luxxoria commanded it to freeze Zorann in place, which it did. To her dismay, Zorann broke the freeze by shifting into his cat form.

The elemental charged up a spell, which proved to be a futile gesture as Zorann leapt in front of it and, with one swift motion, destroyed it with a flurry of swipes.

"Damn!" Luxxoria snarled. "Oh well, at least it bought time for my Ice Barrier to come off cooldown."

She snapped her fingers to cast the spell. To her horror, nothing happened except for a slight fizzing noise and a few sparks of magic. Luxxoria cursed in Thalassian and grabbed her staff with both hands.

"Great." she muttered. "Out of mana already. I guess that's what happens when I mess with my spells. The more powerful they are, the more expensive they are to cast."

Zorann saw the elf's vulnerability and charged. In desperation, she began swinging her staff wildly, hoping to score a hit. But Zorann's agility tipped the balance in his favour, as he deftly avoided every blow, finally colliding with the exhausted mage and sending them both falling to the ground.

Once again, Luxxoria found herself pinned underneath the tauren she once called friend. Zorann hissed and snarled as he opened his mouth, the shadowy tendril once again making an appearance.

Luxxoria stopped struggling and lay still, a single tear rolling down her cheek and onto her robes.

I am ready to accept my end.

8. DOWNFALL - PART TWO

"And now to make you suffer." Zorann snarled, as the shadowy tendril snaked towards its target. "Once this touches you, you will be introduced to a whole new level of pain and agony. Your tauren friend is gone, and soon these ponies will share your fate. Enjoy these precious seconds, elf, for they will be your last."

Luxxoria did not reply, preferring instead to shut her eyes, if only to avoid the horrified gazes of six ponies standing nearby. Her body was numb, yet her mind was clear, and she was awaiting her fate.

Suddenly, Zorann roared in fury. Luxxoria felt a weight leave her as the cat which had been pinning her to the ground was thrown off.

"FOR THE ALLIANCE!"

Luxxoria's eyes snapped open to see Navitas standing over her, the druid's hands glowing with healing energy. In the distance, Baegon and Zorann were locked in battle with each other, the paladin calling upon the power of the Light to assist him.

"H-how did you g-get here?" Luxxoria asked weakly.

Navitas chuckled.

"You're not the only one who can use a portal." she replied. "Sorry we're late, though. We got dumped in a forest for some reason. I flew Baegon and I over here on my X-53, and we saw everything. At first we thought it was a friendly duel... but then we saw that creepy-looking tendril, and realised what was up."

Luxxoria nodded.

"He must have been possessed when he was wounded while we did that favour for the Lorewalker." she said grimly. "I can't think of any way to get it out of him other than killing him."

"We'll need to act fast then." Navitas said. "When we kill Zorann, the Sha will no doubt seek a new body. We must strike it hard and fast. Once it's defeated, I will ressurect Zorann."

"Sounds like a plan." Luxxoria replied. "But he's too powerful."

"For you, maybe." Navitas retorted. "But you have allies now. Baegon will keep him busy while you hit him with everything you have. I will keep the two of you alive."

Luxxoria placed her staff on her back and summoned a new water elemental. She nodded curtly to Navitas and turned to face the battle raging in the middle of Ponyville.

"Pathetic mortals!" Zorann bellowed. "There is no victory against the Sha! You will bow before me, or perish!"

"Don't make me laugh!" Baegon spat. "Your power is nothing next to the power of the Holy Light! I will smite you where you stand, abomination, and end your hold over my friend!"

"And we'll help!" Navitas shouted, as she and Luxxoria joined Baegon. "This ends, now!"

The three of them began their assault, Luxxoria throwing spell after spell, while Baegon swung his sword around wildly. Navitas stayed at the back, casting healing spells and the occasional bolt of orange lightning at their friend turned enemy.

Zorann buckled under the combined efforts and was soon on the defensive, engaging every survival ability he had.

"He's weakening!" Luxxoria yelled. "Just a little more!"

"No... NO!" Zorann yelled. "I will not... be... DEFEATED!"

He let out a loud roar of fury, which caused Luxxoria, Navitas, Baegon and the Elements of Harmony to cower in fear.

As they recovered, they saw Zorann fall to the ground. A twisted mass of energy seeped out of his body and convalesced into a single lifeform. It was twice the height of the tauren and had several rows of teeth, as well as multiple flailing appendages.

"I will not go down so easy, mortals!" the sha yelled in a slow, rasping hiss. "Already, I have my next host in mind! And soon, you shall all suffer for your arrogance!"

"KILL IT!" Baegon yelled. "Don't let it escape!"

Luxxoria let off a fireball, which streaked towards the sha at speed, leaving a trail of burning embers in the air. As it neared its target, the sha dispersed into a cloud. The spell hit its mark, only to fizzle into nothingness as the cloud took to the air and vanished.

"Crap!" Luxxoria snarled. "It got away! Now what?!"

Navitas looked towards where Zorann lay motionless on the grass.

"We resurrect him." she said. "And then we hunt that thing down and end it, once and for all."

As she ran towards Zorann's corpse, mocking laughter began to ring in the air. Suddenly, Navitas was lifted into the air and thrown to the ground with a painful thud.

"I never left, mortals." a voice said. "I told you I had a new host in mind, and this one is just right."

"That voice..." Luxxoria said, "... oh, felfire. Not him again."

Movement in the corner of her eye caused her to spin around, unleashing a cone of cold as she moved. The freezing air struck a target, causing a figure to emerge from the shadows.

"I told you it wasn't over, elf." Gordul snapped. "This 'sha' and I, we both have a common enemy. And now, we will combine our powers to rid ourselves of you and those meddling Alliance."

"You're LETTING that thing possess you?!" Luxxoria yelled. "Are you crazy, orc? Is your desire for revenge that much, you would risk your very sanity?!"

"Yes, I would." Gordul replied. "Now, die!"

He lunged forward, daggers outstretched, when he was suddenly knocked to the side by a blast of purple energy. Luxxoria gasped as she saw Twilight and the others, all of them wearing their respective Element of Harmony.

"How did you get them so fast?" she asked. "I thought Canterlot was too far away to get them in time?"

"I can't teleport that far," Twilight replied, "but the Princesses can. I sent them a letter requesting assistance, and they got here a few moments ago, Elements in hoof." She looked Luxxoria in the eyes before adding, "Azerothian magic has done enough in this fight." she said. "Now, let Equestrian magic deal the final blow."

Luxxoria bowed.

"By all means," she smirked, "go ahead. And if you happen to kill Gordul as well, that would be great too."

Twilight smiled and nodded to the rest of the Elements, who took up their positions as Gordul got to his feet.

"Pathetic creatures!" he bellowed. "You dare attack me? I will take great pleasure in listening to your anguished cries as I suck the life from your bodies!"

With those words, several appendages shot off from his body, each one grabbing an Element around the neck. They cried out in fear as they were strangled.

Gordul grinned and took a deep breath, savouring the sounds filling his ears as Luxxoria looked on in horror.

"Filthy orc!" Baegon yelled as he charged. "You dare to harm the innocent? The Light take you!"

Another appendage shot out from Gordul's body and arced towards the advancing paladin, striking him across the face. He sailed through the air before colliding with the side of Town Hall. His body dropped slowly to the ground, where it lay, unmoving on the cobbles. Gordul cackled with glee.

"I told you our powers had combined!" he said triumphantly. "And now, mage, you will watch your friends die. Once that is done, then you will learn the *meaning* of suffering!"

Luxxoria blinked back tears as she surveyed the area. One of her friends lay dead, two more were unconscious, and another six were being subjected to unimaginable agony. Slowly, her rage began to build. She straightened her shoulders, and looked Gordul in the eyes. The orc matched her glare with one of his own.

"Suffering?" Luxxoria said with a laugh. "You call *this* suffering? You poor, deluded fool... YOU KNOW NOTHING!"

Summoning all the strength she could muster, she unleashed a continuous wave of fire from her hands. The spell struck Gordul with enough force to interrupt his attack on the Elements of Harmony, destroying the appendages holding them and dropping them to the ground in a dazed heap.

Gordul roared in agony as the flames licked away at his very being. The sha inside him added its own roars as the two of them flailed and burned. Gordul dropped to the ground, a slow gurgle escaping his lips, as once again the sha escaped its latest host.

The strain of the spell had severely weakened Luxxoria, who fell to the ground. The sha looked around, its gaze falling upon Navitas, who was coming to. As it prepared to take over the druid, a sudden blast of pure white light struck it.

Twilight and the other Elements of Harmony focused all their energy into maintaining the rainbow which was now bombarding the entity with the power of friendship. It let out a final shrill screech before exploding into nothingness.

A deathly silence descended on the town as the townspoonies peeked out of their windows, noticing that the sounds of battle had faded. They saw two figures slowly get to their feet. One was near Town Hall, and the other was in the middle of the town square. The Elements of Harmony, their spell complete, were on the ground, exhausted and panting.

The townspoonies cautiously exited their homes and stood around the Elements. Rarity was the first to get to her hooves.

"Is... is it over?" she asked.

From her position on the ground, Twilight nodded wearily.

"It is," she said, "and thank Celestia for that."

Baegon and Navitas approached, the latter casting a few healing spells to soothe the many injuries plaguing them.

"Is everyone all right?" Baegon asked.

"We're fine, thank ya very much." Applejack replied. "Ah don't know who y'all are, or how ya got here, but Ah'm mighty happy ya helped us out."

"We had to help our friends." Navitas said.

"Silly billy, we're not your friends!" Pinkie Pie said eagerly. "But I hope that'll change soon!"

Navitas laughed.

"I'd like that," she replied, "but I was actually referring to Zorann and Luxxoria. Speaking of which... we'd better see if they're okay."

Baegon approached Luxxoria and looked over her. He knelt down and placed a hand on her neck for a brief moment, before withdrawing it in shock.

"She's dead." he muttered.

A collective gasp of horror escaped the lips of everyone present.

"B-b-but how?" Fluttershy squeaked. "She was fine a moment ago!"

Navitas sighed.

"Whatever was in that spell she cast must have really taken it out of her." she said. "Baegon, you go and ressurect Zorann. I'll take care of Luxxoria."

Baegon nodded and sprinted towards Zorann's body.

The druid and the paladin began casting spells. Navitas' hands swirled with orbs of green, while Baegon's hands were glowing a bright white as he muttered a prayer. Both spells finished casting at the same time.

Suddenly, both casters were knocked to the ground as their spells backfired on them.

"What the...?!" Navitas yelled. "What was that?!"

"I don't know!" Baegon yelled back. "Some kind of magical interference left over by that sha, perhaps?"

Twilight's horn lit up, only to fizzle out with a pop.

"I'm getting it too." she said glumly. "How long will it last?"

"I don't know." Navitas replied. "But we'll keep trying our resurrection spells. I will not lose them. Elune, grant me strength!"

"Light, give me the strength to prevail!" Baegon said, as he began re-casting his spell.

Soon, the only sound that could be heard was the faint hum of magic, as the townspies watched in silence.

"Nothing." Navitas said with a heavy sigh. "It's been fifteen minutes. I think that's it."

"I agree." Baegon replied. "They're both gone."

The townspies gasped, some with tears beginning to form.

"What?!" Twilight shouted. "But, you can do it! You have to try! If Zorann was able to resurrect all the ponies he and Luxxoria killed when they first got here, then surely you can resurrect them now!"

"That only worked because the laws of magic are different here." Navitas said bluntly. "They were able to resurrect those ponies because they are not Azerothian. However, this is Azerothian magic being used on Azerothian citizens, therefore our rules of magic now apply. I'm sorry, girls... but they're dead. Permanently."

The six elements fell back onto their haunches as they began to cry. Soon, the whole town was.

"How ironic..." Rarity said, wiping her eyes with a hoof, "... that our one-time biggest threat would turn out to be our saviours."

As the two bodies were laid side-by-side, the townspies gathered, and offered one final salute.

Thank you... and goodbye.

9. EPILOGUE

The tolling of bells sounded throughout Ponyville as the autumn leaves fell to the ground. The cemetery was packed with mourners, each of them looking to get a glimpse of the two freshly-dug graves which had been added.

Beside the graves stood the Elements of Harmony, a human and a night elf, the latter two with their heads bowed and the former six dabbing at their eyes with handkerchiefs as they fought back tears.

Princess Celestia came forward and addressed the gathered mourners, her voice cracking with emotion.

"Citizens of Ponyville," she said, "we are gathered here today to mourn the loss of two of our dearest friends, and lay them to rest. They gave their lives to defend us from a threat the likes of which we have never seen before. And were it not for their actions, as well as those of Navitas and Baegon here, the consequences would have been much worse."

Navitas and Baegon nodded meekly as Celestia continued.

"Although at one point, we saw these two as our enemies, I think I speak for all of us when I say that now, they are our friends... and our saviours. They have done so much for Equestria in the short time they've been here, which we always remember them for."

She looked out over the cemetery.

"Does anypony else have anything they would like to say?"

Navitas raised a hand. Celestia nodded and moved aside as the elf approached the speaker's platform.

"When I first found out that Zorann and Luxxoria were Horde, my immediate reaction was hostility." she said. "As far as I was concerned, they were my enemies, people I should treat with suspicion and hatred. But once I took the time to get to know them, and learn their story, I began to see them as allies. I began to see them... as friends."

She wiped her eyes as she continued.

"Zorann may have been the threat I saw in my dreams, but we must remember that he was not acting of his own free will. Do not hate him for what he became. Instead, remember him for what he *was*... a good friend, and a stalwart ally."

Gentle applause filled the air as the townsponies applauded Navitas' words. She stepped down from the platform, which allowed Baegon to come forward.

"Navitas has pretty much said everything I was going to." he said. "But I will add that although we were once on different sides of a meaningless conflict, I eventually cast aside my prejudices and embraced their friendship. They were good friends, and I'll never regret having met them. Er... that's pretty much it."

He stood down and turned to the graves.

"Light preserve you, brother and sister." he muttered, as the Elements of Harmony approached the platform as a group.

"It is true that Zorann and Luxxoria were our enemies." Twilight said. "But they have made up for what they did. In fact, I can see some among you who fell victim to their attack, now walking among us once more thanks to Zorann's resurrection spell. They have also saved our lives on several occasions, as well as taught us much about the world in which they live."

"Yeah, and they were super fun to party with." Pinkie said. "To be honest, I was really jealous about the fact that Luxxoria could make cakes just as well as I could!"

A small chuckle came from the crowd.

"They were really cool to hang out with." Dash added. "Literally, in Luxxoria's case. And Zorann's strength as a bear was awesome. At first I hated them, but now I have nothing but respect for them. I may be the Element of Loyalty, but Zorann and Luxxoria outclassed me in that. They kept their loyalty to Ponyville... until the end."

She stifled a sob. Pinkie Pie draped a hoof around her neck as Applejack spoke up.

"As the Element of Honesty, Ah could tell that those two were mighty sorry fer what they did, and that they were real keen to make it up ta us. And they did, time and time again. First they helped us ta fight off the Horde, and then they brought back all the folk who died. Their remorse was genuine, and so was our friendship. And Ah can honestly say... Ah'll miss 'em a lot."

Rarity was the next one to speak up.

"They always said they had had enough of fighting. And now, they are... although not in the way anypony wanted. How ironic it is, that they found the freedom they wanted... through that which plagued them the most. It is thanks to them that we find ourselves enjoying peace once again. And I for one intend to make the most of this wonderful gift they so selflessly bestowed upon us."

Several murmurs of agreement sounded off from the mourners as Fluttershy took to the stage.

"Um, I don't really know what I can say that hasn't been said already. We all have memories of them which we will keep forever. I for one have a scrapbook of memories, which I will cherish for the rest of my life, as I live it the way they would have wanted me to."

She stepped down as Princess Celestia took her position.

"Does anypony else have a eulogy?" she asked.

The mourners shook their heads. Celestia nodded and turned to the coffins nearby. Her horn ignited, and both coffins were lowered gently in to their respective grave. The dirt then rushed in, completing the burial process.

"It is with great sorrow," Celestia said, "that I commit their bodies to the earth they fought to defend. May they find everlasting peace in the afterlife. Thank you, Zorann and Luxxoria, for everything."

She turned back to the mourners.

"For Zorann and Luxxoria!" she yelled.

"For Zorann and Luxxoria!" the mourners yelled back.

"For Equestria and the Alliance!" Navitas and Baegon added.

"For Equestria and the Alliance!" the mourners shouted.

"FOR PEACE AND HARMONY!" they roared together.

"The ceremony is over." Princess Celestia said. "We must now look to the future, but not at the expense of the past."

The mourners saluted one last time before trickling out of the cemetery, leaving behind the Princess, the Elements of Harmony, Navitas and Baegon.

"I must return to Canterlot." Celestia said. "I am honoured to have seen them into the next life, but I'm afraid my royal duties cannot wait any longer."

Twilight nodded and nuzzled her mentor, who returned the gesture warmly before vanishing in a blaze of white light.

"Do you think they liked their funeral?" Navitas asked.

"I'm not sure." Baegon replied. "I think they would have."

Navitas smiled.

"Come on, everypony. Let's get to the wake." said Twilight. "We can reminisce all we want there."

The eight of them nodded and together, they made their way out of the cemetery, chatting fondly about memories of old.

On a hill overlooking the cemetery, two figures watched events unfold. Both of them shimmered in the mid-afternoon sunlight as they observed their friends leaving.

"That was some funeral." one of them said. "Wasn't it, Lux?"

"It was indeed, Zorann." Luxxoria replied. "It was indeed."

The two of them shared a laugh before they turned around, placed their hands on each others shoulders and walked away.

A few steps later, the two spirits vanished.

And soon, the cemetery was quiet once more.

*** **THE END** ***

10. ORIGINAL PROLOGUE

"Two hundred ships at my disposal," the man said, slamming his fist on the table, "and the one carrying my SON goes missing!"

He motioned to the elf near him.

"Let me hear the last communication they sent."

The elf nodded and walked over to a small bowl. Throwing on some powder, the image of another man appeared.

As the message played, two figures watched events unfolding. One was male, and the other was female.

"What do you think, Luxxoria?" asked the male. "You reckon it's the Horde up to their old tricks again?"

"Maybe," Luxxoria replied, "but you'd think they'd have learnt their lesson after what happened in Equestria."

She turned to face her companion.

"So, Zorann," she said, "do you think we'll be part of the team they send to find the Prince?"

Zorann nodded.

"Without a doubt." he replied. "And even if we're not chosen, I'm going anyway. After all, we fought in the last war the Horde started. ... even if it did mean killing our former allies."

Luxxoria sighed.

"They got what they deserved when they betrayed us." she said, a trace of venom in her voice.

"Though," Zorann laughed, "I still can't believe you turned yourself into a gnome."

"I already told you," Luxxoria said, "that gnomes are much smarter than the other races. And as a mage, the extra intellect benefits me a lot. Especially when I'm tweaking my spells."

Zorann patted her on the head, much to her chagrin.

"And why did you choose to become a night elf?" she asked. "Why not a worgen? It would suit your ferocity."

"Night elves are more agile," Zorann replied, "which helps me immensely when I'm in my cat form."

Luxxoria stuck her tongue out at Zorann, as the man they were watching approached.

"I'm so glad to see you two acting so jovially," he said sarcastically, "despite the severity of the situation."

"Sorry, King Wrynn," Luxxoria replied, "we were just sharing a joke or two. What can we do for you?"

"I want you two to head to the last known location of the White Pawn," Varian said, "and assist in his recovery."

"Of course." Zorann replied. "When do we leave?"

"It will take a few days to prepare the Skyfire for departure." Varian said. "Be back here on Tuesday at dawn."

He strode away as Zorann and Luxxoria saluted.

"Excellent," Luxxoria said, "he's just given us three days off. I suggest we use it."

"How?" Zorann asked. "All we do is hang around Stormwind and get drunk. Hardly worth it."

"Well, let's go on holiday." Luxxoria replied.

"Yeah, sure!" Zorann said. "I heard that the Undercity is just LOVELY at this time of the year."

"Less of the sarcasm, please." Luxxoria replied. "Or I'll kneecap you. I was suggesting a holiday to another world."

"No way in hell," Zorann replied, "am I going to OUTLAND for a blasted HOLIDAY."

Luxxoria covered her face with her palm.

"Ah, forget it." she said. "We'll just do what we always do, and get completely wasted."

She sighed and started to walk away.

"I swear," she muttered, "it would seem that becoming an elf has affected your intelligence."

The little gnome, so engrossed in her thoughts, failed to hear the running footsteps behind her.

She did however, feel the kick that sent her flying through the air.

Twilight and her friends watched as the stone block was removed from the town square.

"Its about time they got rid of that memorial stone," Applejack said, "since the ponies on it ain't exactly dead no more."

"I still can't believe he was able to bring them all back." Rarity chimed in. "It was very noble of him, especially when you consider the fact that he killed most of them to begin with."

"That's in the past," Twilight replied, "so let's leave it there. We need to look to the future."

"I wish they'd come back." Rainbow Dash said, earning a stare from each of her friends. "Not to attack us, of course. They were pretty cool once we got to know them."

"And Zorann really enjoyed my massages." Fluttershy said timidly. "He's actually quite docile as a bear."

"I wish they'd stayed," Pinkie Pie moaned, "since Luxxoria's conjured cakes were REALLY tasty!"

"They have their own lives to live, Pinkie." Twilight said. "They only stayed so they could teach us about their ways of magic. And now that they have, they had no reason to stay here."

"Do you think we'll see them again?" Applejack asked.

"I hope so, Applejack." Twilight replied.

All six friends gazed wistfully into the distance.

"I really hope so."

"Mist," Luxxoria muttered, "mist everywhere."

"I can see it too," Zorann snapped, "you don't have to keep up a running commentary."

"Sorry," she replied sheepishly, "but I was hoping we'd have seen the Prince's ship by now. Or at least, something to indicate where in the world we are."

"We're in a place full of mist." Zorann replied. "But I'll tell you one thing, I want to get off this blasted airship before-"

"HORDE OUTPOST SPOTTED!" the voice of the captain rang out.
"ALL HANDS, TO YOUR STATIONS!"

"Before what, Zorann?" Luxxoria asked, as the crew ran around them, manning their posts and firing at the enemy below.

"Before I kill someone." Zorann said flatly.

"But it looks like we'll be doing that anyway." Luxxoria replied.

"You two!" the captain yelled, "Get to a gyrocopter and assist in the attack, NOW!"

Both friends stifled a sigh, before saluting and running to the flying machines nearby.

"We should never have left Equestria." he muttered, as he clambered into the gunner's position, with Luxxoria at the controls.

"I couldn't agree more." Luxxoria replied, as she started the engine. "You know, I still have that scroll..."

"You do?" Zorann said, a small smile on his face.

Luxxoria nodded.

"I was trying to suggest we go there earlier, but you had to have a stupid moment."

Zorann chuckled.

"Sorry about kicking you," he said, "but you gotta admit - I think you broke a record."

Luxxoria opened her mouth to reply before the barking voice of the captain interrupted her.

"What are you waiting for, Winter Veil?!" she screamed. "GET DOWN THERE AND JOIN THE ATTACK!"

"Yes, ma'am!" Luxxoria replied, as she took off from the deck.

"Bitch." Zorann spat.

As the flying machine descended into the sky, both friends were met with the sounds, sights and smells of battle.

"Here we go again." they muttered, as they reluctantly began their attack run.