



“Do you like unicorns?” I whisper. Eyelashes as thin as golden sunlight cast shadows like forest leaves onto wan cheeks. Eyes closed and sniffling, Anna sinks into her bedsheets, stiller, paler, colder. Jonathan holds his hand in front of her nose. Not even the slightest breath filters through his fingers. Inch by inch, I extend my hand and touch her cool, rigid chest. My hand recoils and I wipe it on my pants. I can’t bear to see her die.

Forehead wrinkling, scar burning, Jonathan dashes into the hall, shirttail billowing behind him. As soon as the door slams shut, my horn, a transparent spear bursts through my forehead. I plant one foot toward the door and another toward Anna, unmoving in either direction. Did the equus really stand, proud and serene, amidst the filthy Outerim? I stiffen each second, waiting and praying, petrified. With a jolt, my limbs, back, and head elongate; I crash onto the floor, mane flapping in my face, all four legs sprawled in all directions. Have I mentioned transforming isn’t graceful at all?

I examine my reflection in a railing. My ears resemble a donkey’s, my eyes are beady, and my nose is fat. It should’ve been majestic Jonathan, deserving the moment fit for a painting. But once I lift my hoof in the air, I gasp. An unexplainable desire to run and fly, fluid and strong, with Anna on my back surges through me.

I concentrate all the strength I have into an energizing spell, orange sparks that lift me onto my hooves and whirl around my horn. Directing the sparks into her body, I raise my head over her bed, tossing my mane unli