

GABRIELLA DAWN DIAS

*Light  
of Luna*

SAMPLE READING

# Chapter Two

## No Mistakes

“**W**HaT jUsT hApPeNeD?” said Drift, turning to her parents in horror. Drift couldn’t believe her true love had just been taken away to be imprisoned.

“The right thing, my love,” replied Claw. Drift didn’t want to answer her father. She fled to where the prisoners were kept. In the dungeons everything was silent except for the sound of a leaky tap dripping. Indeed, it sounded more like fresh blood than dirty, stale water. Drift was horrified and hoped she wasn’t too late.

*I can do this. Let’s hope Mother and Father don’t notice Noah’s disappearance.*

Drift gazed at all the prisoners on the brink of eternal captivity and finally came to a tank full of brown water

where she found her NoNo. His body was floating around in the dirty water. His eyes were shut.

Drift's heart sank.

"Noah!" cried out Drift, banging on the glass. When Drift didn't get an answer, she felt warm wet liquid fall from her sad eyes. Nearly losing hope, she saw one eye open from Noah's un-cared for figure.

"I'm here Drift!" came Noah's muffled voice from the tank. She could see Noah through the dirty water, but she didn't see her true Noah.

"How do I get you out?" said Drift, staring at all the cracks she thought would help with his escape. Noah pointed to a lever on the outside of the tank that had a fingerprint on it. It was the Barleria fingerprint that only the royal family has. Drift's face lit up. She scanned her claw on the lever and suddenly the tank opened releasing a giant amount of dirty water that flushed out onto Drift.

"Hewp!" Drift's flushed voice had a lisp with all the water echoing in her disgusted mouth. Clearing her eyes

she saw a fin right in front of her face. Drift held onto it and was quickly heaved up by Noah.

“Let’s go,” said Drift, tugging Noah with her.

“Don’t leave me here to die!” cried out a female voice. Drift looked up to see a young hippocampus.

“Why should we help you, Celine?” asked Noah.

*Celine. He knows her.*

“Because you’ll help your big Sista,” said Celine. “It’ll be the biggest headline ever.”

*Sister. That’s my NoNo’s sister?!*

“We won’t help you. You’re here for a reason. Don’t try to fool us with this amnesia trick,” stepped in Drift.

“Ugh,” groaned Celine. “You harm one person and suddenly you’re the bad guy.”

To Drift, Celine’s voice sounded like the mother from the Simpsons. [Oops is that copyright dear Reader?]

“Yeah!” Noah shouted, staring at his unhealthy sister. Drift hated Celine’s voice, it was all low and raspy and groany. [Groany is not a word Loyal Reader, but it’s my book so roll with it!]

Celine cleared her throat and left Noah and Drift to go to her rotten food she had been storing for a while.

“REMEMBER ME NOHION!” bellowed Celine, going over to drink the cleanest water she could find - which wasn't that clean.

“It's Noah ...” corrected Noah, leaving with Drift. They walked out of the crusty gate and once outside Drift stretched her legs and arms like she hadn't seen the sun in years.

“Hop on,” said Drift, bending down for Noah to hop on as he couldn't walk, run or fly. Noah struggled to get onto Drift's uncomfortable back. Drift lifted off the ground and flew away heading for the abandoned beach. Every wingbeat was harder. She didn't like that Noah had disobeyed her and turned himself in. She didn't like that she was carrying almost twice her weight. Every time her eye opened, the other closed. Every time one wing flapped, the other did the same stressful thing. Once they were on the borders of the beach, Drift dumped Noah angrily on the ground without saying one single word as it was too painful.

“OW.”

Drift ignored Noah. She didn't want to talk to him until she was calmer.

*This couldn't get any worse.*

“You disobeyed me,” pointed out Drift. “Now the cameras might have caught me sneaking you out. Do you understand what this means? I won't be Queen. What kind of Queen breaks out her prisoners. Hmm? That's what I thought! This is terrible. I'll never rule Barleria at this point. My life is ruined. It's ruined! Why me?! Ahhhhhh! I can never be Queen. I can never take control of Barleria. It's all over for me Noah, but you can still make it.”

“Are you done?” asked Noah, tapping his front fin.

Crickets were laughing with their creaky tone in the background.

“I'll give you one more chance,” said a merciful Drift. “Next time, the gloves are coming off!” Drift stared at her claws and noticed she didn't *have* any gloves. Drift hid her claws behind her back and heard a laugh coming from Noah's direction.

“Those are some *amazing* gloves, hun. Are you thinking of selling them? They’ll be *very* popular,” teased Noah. Drift groaned and shot Noah *the look*. Drift didn’t even laugh, she was too upset that her throne was gone.

[Narrator sings: IF YOU LOVE ME LET ME GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO ... Oh, didn’t see you there, Loyal Reader. I was just thinking of ... ADDING SONGS TO MY BOOKS! Oops caps lock [clears throat]. We will get back to that later, Loyal Reader, now, LISTEN TO THE STORY AND DO NOT DISTRACT ME LIKE DE PAST (oops caps lock).]

“Hun,” said Noah, coming closer to Drift who was lying on the floor groaning. “It’s OK. You don’t *need* the throne. I need you. Do you need me?” continued Noah, trying to make Drift feel guilty. Drift didn’t buy it.

“Well,” said Drift, getting up and crossing her arms. “If you need me, listen to me.” Noah was angry. Drift wasn’t so sure why.

*What’s wrong? Doesn’t he have to listen to the Princess?*

“Drift,” said Noah. “Don’t.” Noah took something out of

his bag that was hanging around his neck. Once the little thing emerged from the pouch, it looked like a black velvet box. Noah carefully removed something from the box which looked like a very serious engagement ring.

“Noah,” said Drift, pointing at the ring. Noah groaned with frustration and fumbled the ring back into the soft box and pouch.

“Oh, shoot!” exclaimed Noah, trying to hide the fact that he was holding an engagement ring. Drift didn’t know what was going on, but she had some idea.

*No. Would he? I don't know ... would he? Uh ... no. He wouldn't. Then who is that for-? Wait, what-- ... is that a portal?*

At that moment a portal opened right in front of Noah and the Princess. A very young, chestnut foal popped out with another foal as white as a lion’s teeth.

“Is that a unicorn?” asked Noah curiously. “Where’s its horn? Did you rip it off? How do you do that? Please tell me, I have enemies that are unicorns from preschool that I’d like to give a piece of my mind to.”



*Ha, preschool? We're talking about last week, are we?*

“Why would you do that now?” asked the white one. “It’s easy to do anything like that. Find the biggest kid in the yard and take ‘em to knuckle town!”

“Taylor!” warned the female chestnut foal. “These are not the people you want to do that to!”

Drift stared at them, especially at the chestnut.

*I remember you.*

“What have you come here for?” asked Drift, shooting her a death stare. The chestnut didn’t look intimidated. Drift was surprised, ever since she was born when she gave someone a bad look they were terrified.

“We’ve come to talk to the spirits,” said the foal.

# Chapter Three

## Memories

“**W**HAT?!” bellowed Drift, watching the birds fly away in fright. “You can’t do that!”

The white foal finally spoke up.

“Oh, she can and she will,” he said. Drift held back a laugh. She wasn’t sure that a puny foal was going to stop the Princess. “Please,” the white one begged. “I know you don’t want to help us, but we do need it. I don’t know what’s going on but Glint does, and I would do anything to keep her happy.”

*Glint. That name rings a bell. She must’ve been the horse that stayed in Juniper’s room before he ... disappeared. Because he’s out there. I know he is. I’m coming for you Juniper. My long-lost brother.*

“Hun,” said Noah, turning to Drift. “I say we help them. I get what he’s saying. Come on.”

Drift thought of that. “You’re lucky I’m nice!” Drift muttered crossing her arms as tight as she could.

“Yup,” joked Glint. “*Really* nice.” Drift held her head up high expecting someone to suck up to her. Nothing happened.

*What? I’m a Princess! They should be bowing!*

“Are you sure you’re a Princess?” came a voice. Drift had heard that voice many times before, yet it wasn’t instantly recognisable.

“Who are you?” asked Noah, inspecting this strange character walking towards them.

“Oh,” the stranger said. “That shouldn’t worry you, what *should* worry you is what I do to my enemies.” Drift spun round to see a leucrocuta [pronounced loo-croc-yutah] meeting her eyes. This half-lioness, half-hyena had a dull brown coat, with a whip-thin tail. Her eyes were regal and majestic. She had white splotches splatted around her brown fur, shining in the sun when she ruffled her coat.

*Edith?*

“Oh, hello Drift,” went the stranger. “I’m sure you remember *moi*.”

“Edith,” began Drift. “I thought you were dead. After Juniper disappeared, I thought you disappeared.”

*What a GREAT image.*

“This isn’t Romeo and Juliet,” objected Edith. “If he’s gone, he’s gone. Life is too short to spend it doing the things we hate.” Drift gave that comment some serious thought. It was true, life should be something you love. Drift hadn’t thought of life like that, she didn’t want to but sometimes thoughts you don’t expect pop into your mind.

“It’s good to see you, Edith,” said Drift unconvincingly. “How’s your life been?”

“Miserable, miserable, and even more miserable,” replied Edith. Edith’s cold, black eyes greeted Drift’s as Drift remembered why Edith and her lost connection.

“What about being a Princess of the Leucrocutas?” asked Drift, trying to be like Juniper. Always looking on the bright side.

*What happened with him was so strange. One day he was perfectly fine and the next he was gone. Poor Edith. She and Juni were something serious.*

“Eh,” started Edith. “My Mother doesn’t trust me with the throne at all. I guess I’m not really a Princess if I’m not treated like one.”

“That’s sad, Edith,” replied Drift sarcastically. Edith was unsure if Drift was being truthful.

“Yup,” agreed Edith. “My boyfriend has been lost for 15 years and I am not getting what I deserve. How great is THAT?”

“Great,” sighed Drift.

*Don’t remind me of Juniper. Oh, C’mon Drift! This is what Princesses do. Give ‘em an inspiring speech of some sort.*

“Oh, oh no,” argued Edith, reading Drift’s mind.

“Alright,” said Drift, ignoring Edith. “I’m a Princess so what I say goes and you guys need some motivation. So uh ... do your best, and ... uh ... have fun?”

“Wow,” said Noah, uninterested. “I feel so uplifted.”

“Yup, a real rebel,” teased Edith.

“Yeah,” agreed Glint. “I feel like I could tackle a megalodon now.”

Drift heard a yawn come from the white foal, who Drift guessed was Taylor.

“Anyways,” said Glint, hopping up. “Can we skip to the part where you help us find the spirits?” Drift was deep in thought ... was it worth knowing you did a good deed? Drift didn’t think so. She should be the one getting what she wants. She was the Princess! But Drift was worried she was no longer a Princess now that she had rescued Noah, so was she just like Edith? An ex-Princess? She finally decided she wasn’t going to help these Sister Planetarians for free.

“We will help you-”

“WOOHOO!”

“If!” continued Drift. “You find my brother.”

“Ugh,” groaned Glint. “You drive a hard bargain. You never mentioned we need to find someone who’s DEAD.”

*No. no. He’s not dead. He’s alive. My brother’s alive! But what if ... she’s right?*

“Well,” cried Drift. “You never mentioned we had to

find spirits who aren't even solid." Drift caught herself. She was a Princess after all (well, she wasn't exactly sure) and no Princess would fight with a low-life Sister Planetarian.

"AHEM," coughed Taylor, as he stepped on Glint's hoof reminding her that they needed Drift. Glint sighed in frustration and came over to Drift.

"Come on," said Glint, trying to push Drift back to the others.

*Not the best apology so far.*

"Drift, I'm just trying to make sure we don't waste our time looking for someone who isn't with us anymore. You can believe he's alive, but that's a matter of opinion," said Glint. Drift looked at the mare and saw a fiery red flame in her ginger eyes, and then quickly followed Glint back to the others.

*Don't believe her. It's not a matter of opinion. He's out there, I know he is.*

"Glint, I- " Taylor cut off before they started walking.

"Yes, yes, I know about the wagon. We'll just get the water thingy to pull it," interrupted Glint.

“The what?” asked Noah, but before he could say anything else, Taylor heaved a wagon full of Glint’s studying scrolls and strapped it around Noah. Drift laughed, certain that the stallion didn’t know what she was heading into. Danger. Hearing groans from behind her Drift saw Noah struggling to pull the wagon. She went up to Noah and giggled slightly.

“Looks like you aren’t so perfect, eh?” teased Drift. Noah stopped pulling and glared at them all.

“I’m perfect in the ocean. Here I’m as weak as John Cena,” he protested.

“Whatever,” joked Drift. “Looks like you could use some help, though?”

“That’d be great.” Noah sighed in relief.

“Wouldn’t it?” said Drift cheekily and walked back to Glint. Noah sighed and kept on pulling.

“You alright there?” asked Glint once Drift had caught up. Drift kept walking not really wanting to talk. Glint stopped.

“Wait,” she said. “Where are we heading to first?”



“Drift’s brother,” said Noah.

“The spirits,” Taylor said at the exact time as Noah.

Taylor cleared his throat. Then Noah did.

“Ahem.”

“Ahem.”

“Ahem.”

“Ahem.”

“Noah,” interrupted Drift. “It’s ok. Spirits come first.”

“But-”

“I’m sure Juniper’s dead anyway Noah,” lied Drift.

## Chapter Four

### Closely Guarded

**N**oah stared at Drift like she had mushrooms growing behind her ears. Drift mind-called Noah to make sure they were on the same page.

NOAH: *WhAt JuSt HApPeNeD?!*

DRIFT: *Sorry I know that's not true. They are guests on Barleria and I'm just trying to be the best future Queen I can be.*

NOAH: *Hmmm, sus ...*

DRIFT: *Anyway, they're looking at us as if we've gone nutso.*

Drift left the mind-call, certain that Noah had too. Glint was confused, but Taylor ... he just looked angry and discombobulated at Noah.

“You alright?” asked Glint, interested. Drift smiled wanting to keep everything smooth and have no drama at the moment. Drift was suddenly thrown into a mind-call, but it sounded like the people in it didn’t know she was listening.

TAYLOR: *I don't trust the hippocampus.*

GLINT: *Why? He's super nice. He's carrying our wagon.*

TAYLOR: *A piece of wood doesn't change a person, Glint.*

GLINT: *But he's helping. He's using his muscles for us.*

TAYLOR: *Muscles don't make you nice, Glint.*

At that moment the mind-call ended. Back in focus, Drift headed towards Noah. He pulled her towards him out of sight from Taylor and Glint, then took out a black velvet box. It's covering was soft and had a hint of dark blue in it, with a pretty gold outline.

As Noah stood in front of Drift, the clouds shifted and a ray of sunshine shone in the sky. His eyes were soft, their

navy-blue colour being so mesmerizing, Drift could hardly look away.

“Drift, I have a question to ask you, “ he said.

“Oh, do you?” Drift raised her eyebrow with a grin.

Noah laughed. “Will you make me the happiest hippocampus ever, and—”

“Oh shush, you know I wouldn’t say no!” said Drift softly but with joy, as she tumbled onto Noah. As they lay there together, Drift had never felt so happy in her life. They got up and Noah took the ring out of the box to put it on her claw ... but it just fell right through his fins.

“What-” said Noah, as the ring fell onto the ground.

Drift picked up the ring and studied it with her claws. She looked at Noah, his figure seemed to be fading in and out.

He looked like a ... hologram?



## Chapter Five

### Noah?

“**N**OAH! WHATS GOING ON?” said a terrified Drift. Noah looked at his fins, then at Drift with petrified eyes.

“I don’t know!” Noah exclaimed as he tried to shake his fins hoping that they would turn solid again. Taylor came running to Noah making a hard stop in front of the hollow hippocampus.

“As I suspect- -ed,” observed Taylor. “He is not a real anom.” Millions of questions rushed through Drift’s head, worry flooded her mind. Anger filled her head, but one thing she still knew was: *hologram or not, he’s still my NoNo.*

“Wha-” asked Glint as she came running up to them. “Barlerian Sea thingy? What’s wrong with you?”

Noah ignored her and kept staring at himself. Drift

couldn't look. She just couldn't look at Noah. In her heartache Drift gazed up to the Moon, her great ancestor, where the Man in Moon will one day grant a great wish for all. At least that's what the scrolls say. Drift began to study the Moon, as she saw the Man in Moon's figure, it looked as if there was someone else in the Moon. A griffin? Drift studied the griffin closer; it was facing her left and was lying down in the Moon. Drift was eager to get even closer.

"Drift?" asked Noah. "Where are you going?" Drift didn't want to look at her true love suffering, so she pointed up and lifted off the ground. Drift started to fly and then she started to worry. She knew she couldn't reach the Moon no matter how hard she tried.

*Wait! I have magic!*

Enough magic so that she could at least get a close enough look. She took a deep breath, focused on closing her two claws together and shot herself up into the air. Once Drift was near enough, she stopped the 'boost'. Drift blinked because of all the tears the wind on her face created and when she opened them again something seemed different ...

Light of Luna: The Sapphire Throne

*Wait, weren't the griffin's eyes closed a minute ago?*

Drift blinked again, certain her eyes were just messing with her. Something was definitely different.

*I could have sworn that griffin was lying down.*

Drift blinked again, ABSOLUTELY sure that she was dreaming.

Drift jumped. This time the griffin was staring right at her.

*Alright! That's it! I'm going take that griffin out if they're going to be ... wait ... I know that face. Juni?*

Drift wasn't positive though she *hoped* that was Juniper. She began to cry and beat her wings as hard as they could go.

*The magic got me this far, but I can go further.*

Drift started worrying ... what if she made it and it was just some random person she didn't know.

*No. that's not true. Only the royal family has griffins and hippogriffs. And Mother has only had one son, and that's Juniper.*

Finally, Drift reached Barleria's atmosphere. She knew



she wasn't far away if she had one more 'boost'. Once again, Drift focused her two claws and was shooting up into the air. Before Drift had reached the outer layer, she put a 'breathe in space' spell on herself. She arrived at the Moon's first layer and started beating at the surface with her wings to get inside. While Drift was in the process, she tried to use magic but nothing happened.

*Oh yeah, magic doesn't work in space.*

Drift sighed and kept hitting. She managed to crack one bit off. Under the hard layer there was a see-through layer and she saw a griffin staring up at her. Drift jumped and started to crack the second layer. The eyes of the griffin were deep and desperate. Drift didn't know what to do. She didn't know if this was Juniper. She hadn't seen him in fifteen years.

*Whatever. Even if there are griffins and hippogriffs beyond the royal family, I will be the hero of someone. And then, I will be Queen for saving someone. That would be awesome. If only I could believe in myself.*

As Drift kept hitting, the griffin tried to mouth some words.

*What's he saying?*

“Help me. Help me. Help me, Sis!”

*JUNIPER!*

She kept hitting the surface with her wings, determined to set her brother free. Finally, she broke another shard and let it float around in space. She kept hitting and kept imagining how Juniper had survived all these years. Drift finally cracked open the entire space and squeezed into the other side of the layer.

“Sis!” came Juniper’s voice, as he happily tumbled into Drift.

“B!” shouted Drift, hugging her brother [Loyal Reader, if you do not know what ‘B’ means it is short for ‘brother’] “I’m so happy you’re safe. What—how did you just disa—” Drift had a million questions but didn’t have enough time to ask them before she asked the main question.

“Where is the Man in Moon?” asked Drift, pulling away from him. Juniper pointed behind him and Drift saw

the greatest sight of all time. A giant, powerful griffin was spreading his wings holding his head high with pride.

“Why, hello Driftshifter,” said the giant griffin majestically.

*Driftshifter. No one has called me that since Juniper disappeared. Probably because it was his idea to shorten my name to Drift and my family wanted to keep his memory burning,* thought Drift.

“H-hi,” answered Drift. For the first time ever she was looking at someone more powerful than her.

“I see ...” said the griffin glancing at Juniper. “... you’ve met the next Man in Moon.” Drift was confused. There was always only one Man in Moon. If the scrolls were true, the Man in Moon will give hope to everyone and stay himself forever. *That’s* what the scrolls say.

“What do you mean?” asked Drift. “There’s only one Man in Moon. Juniper is heir to the throne if he gets voted by our subjects to be head King of Barleria. But the scrolls say that you look over everyone as a mighty god.”

Light of Luna: The Sapphire Throne

“After all those history lessons,” Juniper whispered to Drift. “And not *one* sunk in?”

“Like you can remember anything!” whispered Drift fiercely back. “You’ve been here over a decade.”

“Point taken,” agreed Juniper.

The Man in Moon narrowed his eyes at the fighting siblings. He seemed confused. “What are you implying, Driftshifter?” asked an irritated Man in Moon.

“I’m implying that you are incorrect. Juniper stays with his family,” hit back Drift.

Man in Moon scoffed at Drift as if she was a little chick and telling him that  $1+1=3$ .

“This is simply not true,” argued Man in Moon. “I can’t stay here. I must be free. I’ve spent a couple years here and I’m sick of it.”

*It’s been 20,000,000 years.*

“wHaT?!” Man in Moon demanded.

*Did you just-*

“Read your mind?” suggested Man in Moon. “Yes. I am the most powerful force in the entire UNIVERSE which

means I can be All-Element and have the second powers of the elements. Did you *ever* take school?”

“Ha,” interrupted Juniper. “I win the battle.”

“Hush it, Grasshopper,” commanded Man in Moon. Juniper hung his head down and kept quiet.

*You can't treat my brother like that!* Drift thought angrily.

“Actually Driftshifter,” corrected Man in Moon. “I can do whatever I like. As I said, I am the most powerful force in all of the UNIVERSE!”

*Yes, you've made that very clear,* Drift thought cheekily.

Man in Moon cleared his throat and held his head so high it looked like it was going to pop off.

“I'll just pick it up and put it back on,” joked Man in Moon as he kept listening to Drift's mind. Drift didn't think of mind-reading as an INVASION OF THOUGHTS like Man in Moon probably would if he couldn't mindread.

“Uh ...” said Juniper awkwardly, listening to this fight but not understanding it. “What's going on?” he asked, curiously.

“Grasshopper. You idiot!” growled Man in Moon. “Why

don't you know? You can read minds. You're like me. You have every element and second power. Is your brain switched on?"

"Stop it!" demanded Drift. "You can't treat him like this. He's not like you. One, he's nice and two, he doesn't have your powers."

"But our element lessons all went successfully," scorned Man in Moon.

"Well," Drift fought back. "*THAT'S BECAUSE HE IS AN ALL-ELEMENT.* He's in the royal family. The entire royal family is All-Element but do not have the second powers like you."

Man in Moon slowly crept to Drift. He held his head high, a menacing stare spreading across his face. The danger in his eyes felt like tiny sharp threads wrapping around Drift's heart causing tightness in her chest. He lashed his tail back and forth with fury, his wings beating aggressively and his eyes staring into Drift's watching her every move. With his hot breath seething out of him, Drift felt every bit *hunted*.

In a fit of rage Man in Moon stomped his feet, causing

the ground to shake and crack open, forcing Drift and Juniper to stabilise themselves from falling. He cupped his claws, and out of nowhere a bright, strong flame sparked in his palms. He chuckled cruelly as he traced the flame to hover on his sharp claw. Trapping Drift he held the flame above her head. She froze in fear, waiting silently with sweat dripping down her feathers from the flame right above her head.

“No! Not true!” roared Man in Moon, his voice deep and deafening. “I am the smartest in the UNIVERSE. You are NOTHING. I am right.”

## *Chapter Six*

### Earn Your Life

**D**rift scowled. She took one step back to breathe, but that was not enough. Drift summoned all the elements and charged at Man in Moon. Whirls of water surrounded him, and strong vines tangled him up. She tried to make him fall over with wind, but he fought back with flames that were scorching Drift's face, however she knew she couldn't stop there. She could feel her face burn when she sent meteors at Man in Moon. He tried to hit Drift with water, but she managed to dodge it and leapt at him.

Man in Moon grinned mischievously and shot drown balls at her as Drift lunged towards him. She threw her own but they ended up disintegrating into a puddle on the floor. The powerful griffin moved the ground so violently, Drift found herself standing on a huge pile of dirt, making her



an easy target. Man in Moon shot vines at her to keep her tangled up. It worked. As she lay caught up in the vines, Drift tried not to smile giving away her plan. She carefully opened her beak, slid out her tongue and closed her eyes, concentrating. A tiny puddle of poison water sat on her tongue. Dipping it on the main vine with her tongue, it dropped away, freeing Drift.

*There's one element neither one of us has used. Love, she thought.*

Drift didn't know what she could do with love. Then before she could tackle Man in Moon she couldn't move.

Darkness.

*What's going on?! Did he freeze time?! thought Drift.* She could only manage to catch a glimpse of Juniper in the corner of her eye. He was still just listening. He wasn't helping his sister, he wasn't even getting into the fight at all. *What has Man in Moon done to him??*

*Can I—I can? I can move again!*

“This *is* miraculously entertaining,” Man in Moon

commented as he unfroze time. “I love how it ends, me winning!”

*That’s not true. He’s probably lying about his vision just to psyche us out.*

Drift didn’t move even though she knew she could. She just stared at Man in Moon with upset eyes.

“You know,” she said. “Fame isn’t everything. Friends are what you want.”

*The one time my enemy comes in handy,* Drift thought, remembering her sister Skye saying it to her.

“What?!” bellowed Man in Moon. “But I have so many people who look up to me. If I have friends, they’ll think I’m too easily swindled.”

*What—no they won’t!*

“Yes, they will,” hit back Man in Moon.

“You’d be surprised what love can do,” said Drift, who was planning to send him a spell so that everyone will love him. Unfortunately she shot him some love instead and he turned into ...

... a griffin chick.

“MASTER!” Juniper shouted as he ran over to the little Man in Moon.

“Wow,” sighed Drift. “I did not mean to do this.”

“What have you done?” Juniper asked. Drift didn’t know, so she had to improvise.

“I don’t know. I was going to make everyone like him, but it turned him into a chick. What do we do with him now?” said Drift. Juniper smirked and picked up the little Man in Moon.

“I have an idea,” said Juni. He took the chick and reached the surface crack Drift had made in her rescue. Juniper beckoned Drift to follow him and they both created a boost to get back to Barleria. Once they were back, Juniper landed safely and let the little chick waddle around to explore.

“Do you think he remembers anything?” Drift asked Juniper.

“Nah,” replied Juniper. “I bet he is just living like a normal chick now.” Juniper hugged Drift.

“Oh,” said Drift. “Not a hugging person.” Juniper ignored

her and held her tighter. “Ok, ok!” cried out Drift. “Let me breathe!” Juniper chuckled and looked up into the sun.

“Now that is something I haven’t seen in years.” Juniper said. Behind Drift and her brother there was a slight gasp. Drift turned to see Edith.

“Juniper?” asked a breathless Edith.

“Edith mi amor! Estoy en casa!” bellowed Juniper, running towards Edith. [For my readers, if you do not know what that means it is Spanish for: “Edith my love! I’m home!.”] Edith snuggled into Juniper, smiling for the first time since he disappeared.

“Driftshifter,” said Edith. “You have a very special soul. Thank you for bringing him back.”

“Anytime,” said Drift, sensing Noah toppling into her. “Ahh!” Drift yelped, as the hippocampus bowled her over.

“Don’t you EVER do that to me AGAIN!” said, Noah, making sure Drift couldn’t escape his tight hug.

“Uh—can I move please?” laughed Drift.

“STAY DOWN,” ordered Noah. Drift chuckled.

*Where is Man in Moon?* Drift’s mind was in a panic.

“Uh, B?” asked Drift nervously. “Where’s the chick?” Before Juniper could answer, a scream came from Noah.

“OW!”

Noah held his tail out for everyone to see a little griffin chick hanging on by his teeth. Everyone howled with laughter as Noah tried to persuade the little monster to get off.

“What do we do with him now?” Drift asked while she was trying to pull the little Man in Moon off Noah.

“Well,” said Juniper. “He needs a home.” Drift didn’t know if she was capable of taking this little guy home.

“I-I can try,” suggested Noah. This made Taylor laugh.

“A hologram? Take care of him?” said Taylor. “If he wants a piggyback ride, he’ll fall straight through your back!” Glint scowled at him.

“You?” asked Edith.

“Yeah,” said Drift. “We can take care of him. We won’t tell him anything about being Man in Moon. He probably doesn’t have his powers so he won’t believe us. We’ll take him to the abandoned beach and show him around.”

“I guess it wouldn’t hurt,” agreed Edith. “You two are old enough to be parents anyway.” Noah seemed happier now, gently placing the engagement ring on her claw, as if to say: “Is this official?”. They both smiled happily.

“Ok,” gave in Juniper. “You can take him.”

On the way to the beach Drift and Noah passed the palace.

*Today was my Coronation,* thought Drift.

From what she could see all the guards were not perched where they usually were. Drift put her ear to the door and heard rushed conversations and mysterious murmurs.

“Hun?” asked Noah.

“Yup?”

“You-you all good?”

“Yup,” replied Drift keeping her ear to the door.

The palace was a riot of noise. A trumpet played a royal song, and Drift heard her Mother’s voice announcing: “And your next Queen is ...” there was a pause as the crowd realised Drift wasn’t going to show up. Mysterious questions filled the halls as everyone panicked about where their heir had gone?

“DRIFTSHIFTER?!” Selestia’s voice rose as the guards scattered around the palace in search of the Princess. Drift could feel her eyes starting to drip.

“Drift-- ” said Noah, trying to hug her but had to hold the little griffin as well.

“I-I just was hoping for this day,” sighed Drift. “And now it will *never* come.” Noah put the little Man in Moon down.

*How is he not fading?* Drift thought curiously.

“Huh,” said Noah. “I guess I only go hollow when I experience strong emotions.”

Drift thought about that. It was quite invasive to know what he was feeling. Noah finally hugged Drift.

“You know what?” Noah said trying to cheer her up. “You’ll be my Princess.”

Drift smiled. She liked that Noah was always finding ways to cheer her up. In the corner of her eye she noticed the little chick wondering off.

“Driftwood!” cried Drift after the little chick, pulling away from Noah and grabbing the chick.

“Driftwood?” said Noah, patting the chick. Drift smiled at the chick.

“Well,” she said. “We can’t just call him Man in Moon.” Noah’s face brightened. His eyes lit up clearly happy with this.

“Wait,” said Drift. “If they are still hosting my Coronation then that means they don’t know I snuck you out.”

Noah got it, though he was more focused on trying to get Driftwood to stop biting his tail.

“This means I still have a chance!” said Drift as her life didn’t seem so black and white. Drift took a deep breath and gave Noah a ‘See you after this?’ look. Noah gave her a ‘I’m happy for you’ look. Drift smiled and walked to the entrance of the stage out back. As she climbed the stairs leading to the crowd, she could feel her heart sinking into her body. She never thought she would be nervous attending her Coronation.

She finally made it to the top of the stairs. The lights flashed into Drift’s eyes and all the bright cameras flickered in her face as everyone noticed her. Cheers from all over



celebrated Drift's new crown. The guards dropped their spears and stared at Drift. Everyone chanted her name to the songs the trumpets played.

“DRIFTSHIFTER!”

“DRIFTSHIFTER!”

Drift couldn't think with all the photographers asking her to pose. She didn't know what to do. Suddenly, one of the two dragon royal guards (the female one, as the dragons were married) took a delicate crown made of emeralds and rubies and placed it on Drift's head. Drift noticed there were more jewels than she expected. Drift's Mother came up on stage and smiled. Then she took the crown off her daughter's head and eyed Drift.

“This is a special crown,” Selestia whispered to Drift. “Each gem represents a different Queen. The rubies are mine. The emeralds are your Grandmother's, and the topazes are your Great Grandmother's. It's time for you to have your own special kind.” Selestia handed Drift the most precious blue sapphires for her to place on the crown. Drift

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was gentle and careful as she created a pattern on the crown with her beautiful gems.

*This is my most valuable treasure now. I must take care of it,* Drift thought proudly.

Everyone watched in awe as the Princess drew her legacy. Drift finally placed the last sapphire and looked up at her Mother. Selestia beamed down at her daughter and placed the crown on Drift's head carefully.

“We have a new Queen of Barleria!” announced Selestia.