

# NIGHTMARE RISING

This campaign sketch is designed to offer the Game Master a collection of story seeds that connect into a series of linked adventures. The Game Master will have to expand a lot of the detail here so this is designed to offer inspiration for the Game Master to create a new campaign of their own.

In this campaign, Nightmare Moon reawakens in dreams. The player characters will need to uncover what is going on, and eventually face Nightmare Moon to free Princess Luna from her shadow, bringing her into the real world where she can be contained. It can be suitable to any level of character. The Game Master can simply adjust any Threats to an appropriate level for their player group. Facing Nightmare Moon is obviously going to be pretty scary. But the key to defeating her does not lie in simply facing her in combat. Once the player characters have the tools to deal with her, it is their dedication and the power of their friendship that will see Nightmare Moon finally defeated.

With all these adventures it will be up to the Game Master to decide when and where the player characters should gain a level as a reward. Depending on how much the Game Master expands the ideas here, each player character should probably gain two or three levels over the course of the campaign.

## BEYOND THE VEIL

Everything is peaceful in Ponyville, except there is a rumor that Princess Luna is not feeling well and will be absent from some of her duties for a while. If the player characters know her or Princess Celestia well, they might even pay a visit to Canterlot. If they do they discover Princess Luna is feeling very tired and has taken to bed. She'll be too sleepy to see anyone but even Princess Celestia isn't very worried and expects her to be up and about soon.

That night, each of the player characters has a dream featuring one of their friends. When talking about it later on they discover their friend has had the same dream from the other perspective. Somehow it seems they were both in the same dream together. This might happen a few times, enough for the player characters to experiment a little and prove they are indeed sharing dreams.



Eventually, they all find themselves together in the same dream. At first they might think they are just dreaming about each other. But they soon realize they all know things about each other they couldn't know. Everything feels so real, but this dream is not like the others. They are in some sort of nightmare. Strange monsters from nightmare attack them and nothing they do seems to allow them to wake up! Eventually they meet a large and powerful presence in the dream that seems to be the source of the nightmares. The presence tells the player characters that they will soon leave the dream realm to bring nightmares to Equestria. They tell the PCs to tell the world they are coming—and then the PCs wake up!

**Threats and Obstacles:** In the dream realm the player characters face all manner of horrible monsters. They come in such a variety the Game Master can take the profile for any monster whose threat level suits the character group and describe its physical form in some new and strange way. The creatures of nightmare need not make sense, they are creatures of fear and chaos. The player characters might also find their way into other pony's dreams to protect them from similar monsters.

**Rewards:** There are not many rewards here, except the revelation that something is on the way. But in travelling the dreams of others, the player characters may also learn some valuable secrets.

## WAKING NIGHTMARES

Princess Luna remains very ill, and the player characters might conclude the dream trouble is connected. After all, Princess Luna is the one who usually guards dreams. If she can't find the nightmares, this might be why they are getting out of hand.

But before the player characters can investigate the illness, there is trouble in Ponyville! Several ponies have fallen into a deep sleep and can't be woken up. Worse yet, their nightmares are manifesting in the real world. Various creatures, nightmares of all shapes and sizes, keep appearing and attacking the ponies of Ponyville and Canterlot.

Twilight Sparkle and Princess Celestia believe they can figure out a spell to force the nightmares back into the dream realm. But they will need time. So the player characters must face some powerful

spirits and horrors and keep the magicians safe to work their magic. Player characters not suited to fighting can help Twilight and Celestia with their magic during the battle.

Eventually Twilight and Celestia will find a way to enchant weapons that will banish the nightmares back into dreams. Then the battle is engaged anew with each nightmare only needing to be struck once to be banished. But as the nightmares are cast out of Equestria, many of them promise this is not the last they will see of them. They reveal the dark presence the player characters contacted in the previous adventure is actually Nightmare Moon, and she is about to return!

**Threats and Obstacles:** Once again nightmares are the enemy, although this time in the real world. The Game Master can suit these threats to the level of the player characters. They might fight the most dangerous, or the weakest, depending on what level they are. For a low level group the Mane Six will take the lead on the toughest monsters, and the player characters can back them up. However, this should not just be about simple combat. Each nightmare will represent something to the player characters they will have to overcome to face it.

As well as fighting, there will be plenty of ponies that need rescuing. Those who can't defend themselves are at the mercy of the nightmares. The player characters will need to both distract the monsters and get the ponies to safety.

**Rewards:** Ponies that are rescued will be very grateful, which might mean the player characters collect a lot of gratitude and promises of favors.

## POTION OF DREAMS

It is clear by now that whether or not Princess Luna's illness is the cause of this problem, Equestria needs her help and dream expertise. But Princess Celestia has tried everything she can think of to help her. So the player characters are dispatched to the Everfree Forest to talk to Zecora and see if she has any ideas.

After a dangerous trek deep into the Everfree Forest the player characters meet Zecora who does have an idea for a remedy. But the potion she can create requires some rare ingredients. The player characters will need to search the Everfree Forest to get what she needs, and then help her with brewing the potion.

As the potion will help with a dream illness, the final ingredient is a selection of actual dreams. The player characters will have to relive one of their dreams for Zecora so she can add its essence to the potion. Once this is complete the player characters have to return the potion to Canterlot for Princess Luna.

**Threats and Obstacles:** The Everfree Forest is full of all manner of plants, dangers and creatures the player characters will have to encounter in their travels. This might be anything from cragadiles and timber wolves, to fallen trees and deep crevices. But there is also the danger of getting lost, or trapped by falling rocks. Even when they reach Zecora, she can be pretty intimidating if they don't already know her well.

**Rewards:** The player characters will face many trials in the Everfree Forest that might bring them together as a group. Zecora can also teach them many things about magic and life outside Ponyville. She might become a useful contact if treated well and with respect.

## SHADOW PLAY

The player characters return to Canterlot to deliver the potion to Princess Luna. She is now very ill and Princess Celestia is deeply concerned. As the player characters prepare to give Luna the potion, a change comes over her and she transforms into Nightmare Moon with a shriek of triumph. Thankfully, she is still weak as Luna fights within, giving the player characters time to try and feed her the potion.

The potion begins to work, but not swiftly, and before Nightmare Moon is banished back into dreams, she blasts the player characters with a wave of power. She tells them she has had enough of their meddling and wants them to see how they like it! Not a moment too soon, Princess Luna is restored, but she is still weak and unwell. It is taking all her strength to keep Nightmare Moon at bay.

A while later, with the player characters still considering what to do next, the Royal Guard arrives to arrest them! There have been reports of them doing mean things in Ponyville. Luckily Princess Celestia can vouch for them and dismiss the guard but she tells the player characters to find out what is going on.

It turns out the blast of magic from Nightmare Moon has created evil twins of the player characters. They are in Ponyville causing all manner of trouble. Each is the reverse of the player character in question, although they are physically identical. By the time the player characters arrive in Ponyville, they have already caused enough mischief to turn the town against the player characters.

The way to defeat the evil duplicates is to find a way to help them heal from their past. Each duplicate is a dream of an alternate life where each player character never found the power of friendship. Each player character can uncover what this moment is, as they experienced the same moment, but instead discovered a better path. If each player character can figure out what that moment is, and help their duplicate learn the lesson they were unable to grasp, they will fade back into dreams in peace.

**Threats and Obstacles:** The main obstacle here is the alternate versions of the player characters. They are all opposites of the player characters (with the same level and abilities) which is best represented by the opposite of the player character's Role. These are:

- **Generosity:** Covetousness, the character wants everything for themselves and hoards whatever they find.
- **Honesty:** Deceit, the character cannot help but lie and cheat, even when telling the truth would be easier.
- **Kindness:** Nastiness, the character is a bully who enjoys causing hurt and upset to others.
- **Laughter:** Seriousness, the character is horribly negative and sarcastic, belittling any fun anyone has.
- **Loyalty:** Selfishness, the character thinks only of themselves and their needs.
- **Magic:** Mundane, the character is so mundane they are almost immune to magic and drain it from the nearby area.

Additionally the duplicates don't follow the ideals of friendship, so they will argue and fail to work as a team. This is a weakness the player characters can capitalize on.

**Rewards:** Defeating the duplicates will restore their reputation in Ponyville. But they will also get a good look at a path not taken, helping them understand themselves much better.



## THE FINAL NIGHTMARE

While the player characters may have defeated the plots of Nightmare Moon so far, she is still a deadly danger. As Zecora's potion takes effect, Princess Luna has recovered a little, but Nightmare Moon is still waiting in her dreams to escape, and it is taking all her strength to contain her.

Using the last of her power Princess Luna sends the player characters into the dream realm to face Nightmare Moon. But the plan is not to simply fight her directly. The player characters must draw out certain aspects of Nightmare Moon's power to weaken her. Then they must trick her into leaving the dream realm where Princess Celestia can capture her.

As they are in a place of dreams, the player characters can find ways to hide from Nightmare Moon as she hunts them, and seek out aspects of her to encounter. These are the negative feelings she draws power from, such as her anger and the way she can instill fear. The player characters can search out these aspects as locations in the realm, such as a haunted house representing her scariness. Facing these emotions successfully will conquer them and reduce Nightmare Moon's power.

Eventually the player characters will have faced several negative aspects and reduced Nightmare Moon's power. Next they must help her escape, without looking like they are helping her, otherwise she will realize their plan. Her goal is to escape the realm, but she expects to crush the player characters first. So the player characters must appear to be doing their best to stop her escaping, but make sure she does! As soon as she leaves, Princess Luna and Princess Celestia (with the help of the player characters) can use their magic to contain Nightmare Moon forever.

**Threats and Obstacles:** The main obstacles are the aspects of Nightmare Moon. But the player characters might face anything in the dream realm. Their own past or future might collide, as will their hopes and fears. These can all become physical challenges.

**Rewards:** Certainly defeating Nightmare Moon will gain the player characters a level at the very least! But they will have also gained the respect of Princess Celestia and Princess Luna. They may also have learned to navigate the dream realm and understood some of its power. They might become apprentices of Princess Luna in her role as guardian of dreams.



Author: Andrew Peregrine  
Developers: Kevin Schluter  
Producer: Kevin Schluter  
Graphic Designer: Sarah Robinson



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