

Nightmares! The terrible, horrible, no good dark dreams that everyone has.

Every night, someone has a nightmare,  
and every night, someone has to face it.



Of course, they are not alone.

You see, nightmares don't just  
exist in some kind of flippity  
floppity force we can't see.

No no, that would be silly indeed.

You see, the thing about nightmares is that there is only one.

The dreaded

# Night-Mare!

Queen of darkness, she loves nothing  
more than causing bad dreams  
in the minds of people as they sleep.

And everynight, she goes galloping through  
the land of sleep to spread her horrors!



Now of course, to every evil, there is something or someone to oppose it. While **Night-Mare** may be queen of darkness, kind **King Morpheus** is the benevolent ruler of the Land of Sleep, and swears to protect all in his kingdom

His kingdom, the Land of Sleep, is the place where all people go when they dream in their beds at night. There, the kind king grants the wishes and desires of his guests, giving them pleasant dreams, and allowing them rest from the world of the waking.

The King is not alone either, for he is the proud father of the young Prince Culania.

Culania has always been a rather shy child.

For every part his father is brave and kind, Culania seems equally afraid and timid.



That's not to say the prince is mean or nasty, he's just so scared, he barely speaks to anyone.

Most days the Prince can be found in his room playing with his toys...



He tries to wield the magic his father has to bring dreams to life around him, and grant wishes.

He's not very good, but he still tries his best.



Despite this, The King still encourages his son. "Culania," says he, "one day my kingdom will be yours to command and lead. Please, won't you come out and meet with your people?"

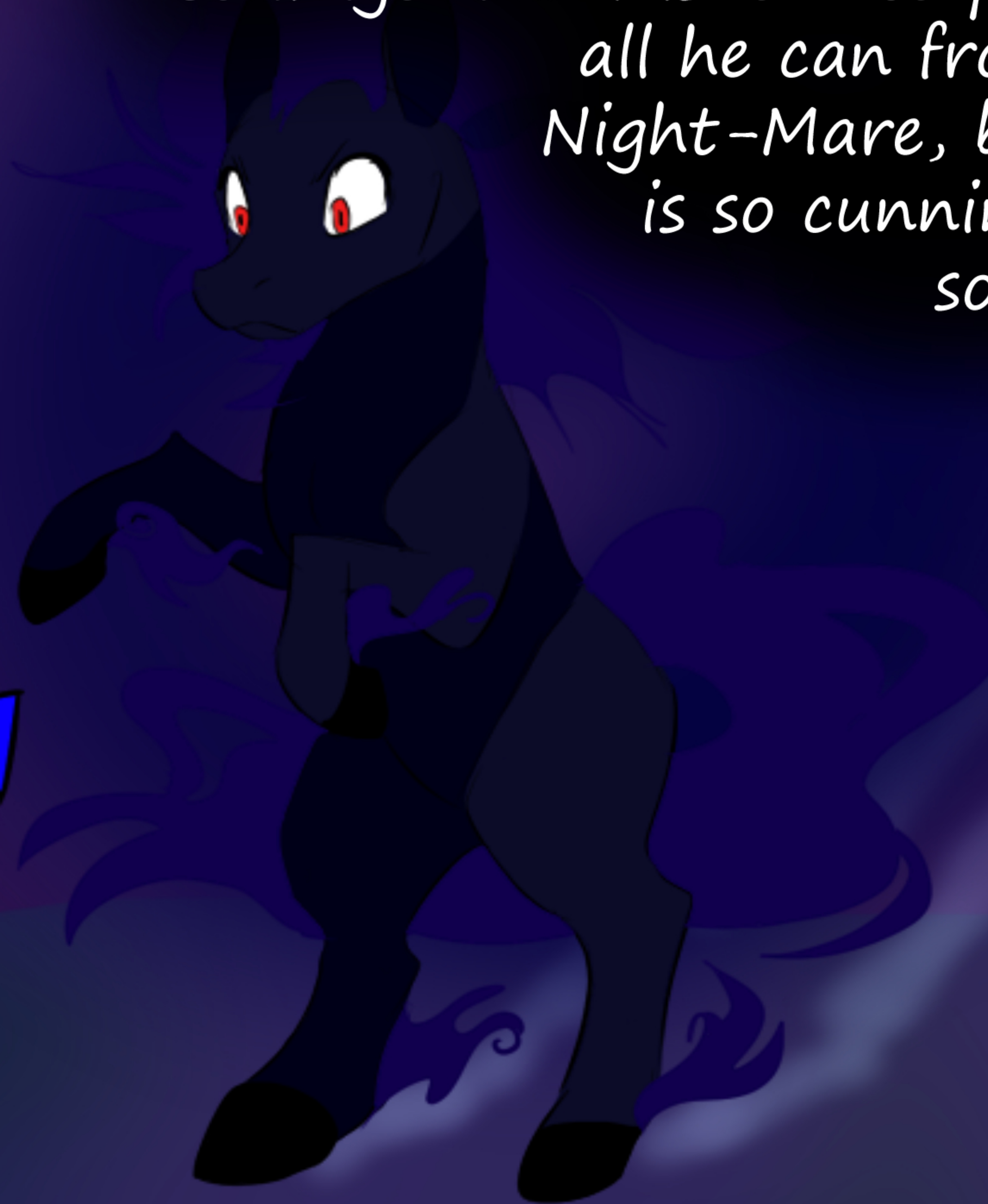
But Culania is always too shy to leave his room. "No! No, please Dad, those people out there are so big and scary! Any one of them could easily crush me!" The King would sigh to this, shake his head, and say, "Well, perhaps tomorrow."

At night...

...at night comes the time where King Morpheus and the dreaded Night-Mare do battle for the kingdom.



The King fights on with all his courage and wisdom to protect all he can from the Night-Mare, but she is so cunning and so slick...



...some fall to her.



One day, the worst news of all came to the kingdom.

"The King has fallen! The King has fallen!"  
the guards all cried.

The town was in a panic at the loss,  
"It was her! Night-Mare has stolen our King!"

The villagers and travelers,  
the dreamers and the guards  
set about boarding up the town,  
for with the King gone,  
no one could stop Night-Mare.

No one, except maybe shy, timid, Culania...



The Prince now sits alone in his room, crying into his toy. "Oh Raz! Raz! Dad's gone, and I can't do anything! I'm too afraid, and I can't go out, and can't fight, and and... and I just wish I could save him somehow!"



Now, perhaps it's magic, perhaps a miracle, but something hears the child's cries. And that something decides to give him exactly what he needs to hear.

Kind Rasputin, Culania's only friend.

Through whatever magic  
the young prince held,  
the toy came to life!

"Culania... Culania, you  
have to be brave." he said.

"B-but I'm not brave!  
I'm so afraid!"  
Culania cried.

Raz just laughed, and said,  
"Bravery doesn't mean being fearless.  
Bravery means being afraid, and doing the job anyway."



He sat there for a moment,  
wiped the tears from his eyes,  
and said, "Okay. I-I'll try."



"Come then," Raz says,  
"we have a long way  
to go to get to Night-Mare."

Now something you should know,  
is the layout of the Land of Sleep.



At the heart is the Castle of King Morpheus.  
To get to Night-Mare's fortress, one must first  
cross the Lotus Sea, and then travel through the Forest of Fear.

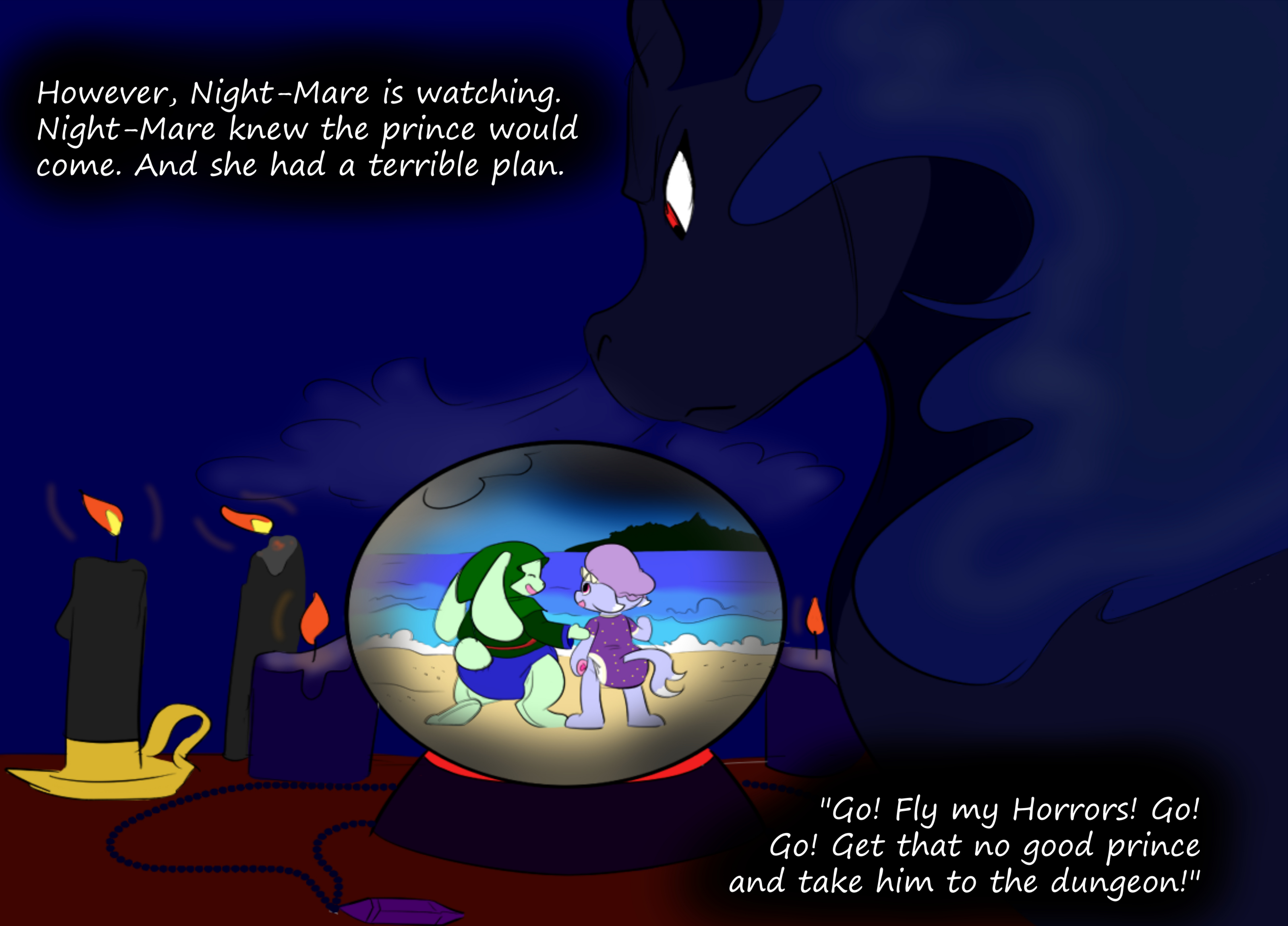
The Prince and his toy make for the coast,  
they come to the sea, and try to figure out how to cross.



"See that island over there Culania?"  
Rasputin asks.  
"That is the home of Night-Mare!"

"Culania, you have great power." Rasputin says.  
"Please, call forth a ship with that power, so we may make it across."

However, Night-Mare is watching.  
Night-Mare knew the prince would  
come. And she had a terrible plan.



"Go! Fly my Horrors! Go!  
Go! Get that no good prince  
and take him to the dungeon!"

Her Horrors; large gangly things with too many legs,  
and sharp, sharp teeth.



They could move at the speed of darkness,  
which is faster than the speed of light.


They went to the coast, and attacked the prince!

"Raz!" Culania cries, "Raz, save me! I'm too scared!"  
He says as he tries to hide behind a rock.



"Be strong Culania!"  
Rasputin says, as he fights back against the Horrors.  
"They may be big, and they may be frightening,  
but they can not harm you if you refuse to be afraid!"





That feeling... the one from before...  
Culania feels it once more!

Magic, a miracle, the pulse of something he had never felt before. He gathers himself and stands.  
"I'm not afraid... I'm not afraid..." he repeats to himself.

"I am not afraid!"


Suddenly, emerging from the water, a large ship, bigger than any Culania had seen before.



It washed over the Horrors,  
driving them back to their dark home.


As the sun sets, the pair board the ship. They shake paws with the captain, a shark named Anselm. He can not speak, for no shark can. But still he greets them warmly, and agrees to help them cross the sea.





They make their way across the Lotus Sea to Night-Mare's island "Culania," Rasputin says, "soon we shall arrive. We will be here for you, but you must be brave."


"We shall make it to her fortress. We will save your dad!"



Sounds play in the Forest of Frear. Sounds of wild beasts and evil cries. Howlin, hooting, and all manner of fearful things.


A chill runs up and down the spines of all who enter, and no one wants to stay for long.

Every step they take, they feel more and more afraid. Poor Culania is so afraid, he believes that before they even make it to Night-Mare's fortress, he'll break down into a crying mess.



With a cackle and a snort, the Night-Mare arrives!  
"Foolish child! You dared to enter  
my realm? You are not even  
worth my time! I shall destroy  
you, son of Morpheus!"

Culania cries, he can't hear his friends.  
But something stirs in him, not the feeling  
from before. It's his father's voice. "My son.  
One day you will rule over this kingdom. Please, come out and lead them."



With that, his mind clears. The world fades away.  
and he realizes what he had felt this whole time.  
This feeling, this power, something pure and wonderful.

*...Courage.*

He stands, tears now gone, and he  
shouts with all the roar of a lion,  
"I am not afraid of you!"

Coming from the woods, Culania's strongest ally yet.  
Large, lumbering, and carrying an upturned tree,  
the mighty bear Hercules!



"Sic her!" Culania commands!




A mighty swing of the tree,  
and Night-Mare is sent flying,  
never to be seen again!

She is no more, and so  
our heroes set upon her  
fortress to rescue the king.

They return home to the cheers of their people.  
"Huzzah! Hooray! Culania did it!"  
"The king has returned,  
the Night-Mare is  
no more!"



"Culania found his courage!"  
"He summoned a hero, and sent her packing!"



Later that day, a celebration is held.  
The King gives a speech to everyone.  
"Good people, the Night-Mare is gone."

"Yet..." he admits,  
"her influence remains."

"Brave Culania, champion of the people."  
"My son, you have done so much for us."  
"I ask you now for one final favor. Will you continue to protect the people?"


"Yes!" Culania says to the crowds. "We shall protect you all!"  
"With the help of my friends, Rasputin the wise, Anselm the bold, and Herculese the strong, we shall not fail!"

Clever Rasputin already  
devised a plan to help.

"A brilliant idea!"  
Culania responds.

"Good people, hear it now! If ever you have trouble with Night-Mare, if ever you are afraid of the things that go bump in the night, then hold fast onto a toy like my friends. For I shall grant all plush toys the power to combat Night-Mare!" His speech over, the crowd cheers for their heroes!





"Then it is settled!" King Morpheus says.  
"And I hereby crown you king of all  
plush toys! May your rule be long,  
and all your dreams come true!"

The crowd cheers, and the party continues on.  
Come tomorrow however, little Culania starts his next adventure!

Artwork by Tato



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