

Light Horse Dark Horse

Book Two

The Light Horse

Authored & Illustrated

by

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The Light Horse

Book 2 of the Light Horse, Dark Horse series

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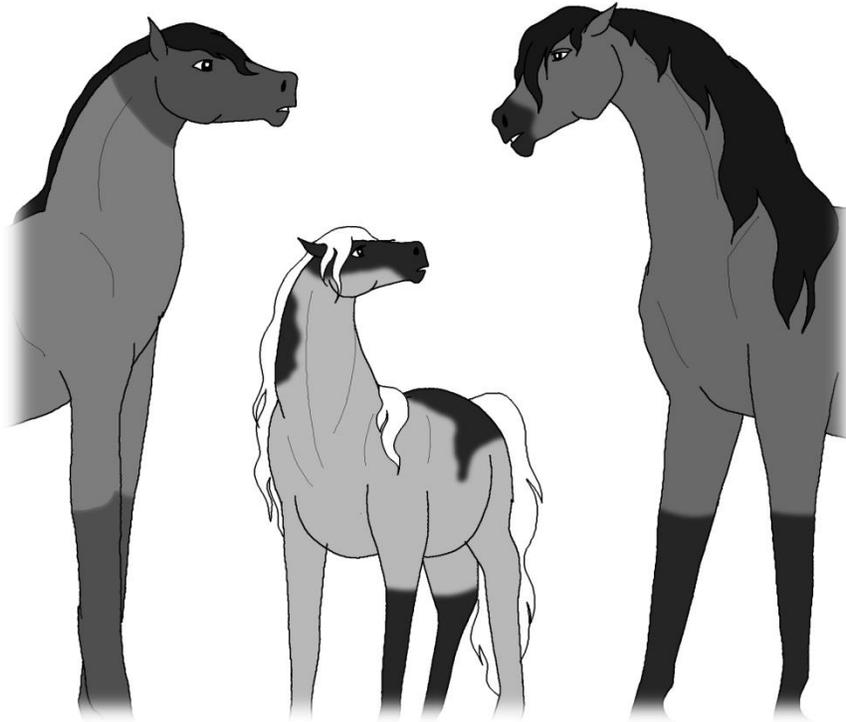
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Chapter 1

The Mission



One warm, sunny morning in the region of Great Plains, home of the Mustang horses; a great herd was grazing near a river. Shadow, the grullo lead stallion, stood on a hill, watching for danger with his team of guard stallions and studying the almost-biggest herd in the land.

Some years ago, the herd was previously owned by Shadow's mate's father, Strider. One day, however, Argon, Strider's twin brother and the ruthless King of the Mustangs, stole Strider's herd and territory, greedily adding them to his own possessions. Sometime later, King Argon died. No one knew how it happened, though a few believed that it was a heart-attack. Meanwhile, Shadow, being mated to Strider's daughter, redeemed the herd, while Argon's title, herds, and territory were inherited by his long-lost son, Wildfire.

Shadow scanned his herd, spying his mate standing near a group of mares. Sierra could be easily spotted within miles away, for no one else in the herd possesses her rare golden coat with black patches, white mane and tail. She was unusually small, and most would mistake her for a

pony if she hadn't grown a few inches in the past year, and her head could just reach Shadow's withers.

Standing next to the mare in nursing was Dawn, their two-week-old daughter. She is almost similar to Sierra, only her golden coat is covered in white patches instead of black, and she inherited her father's dark mane, tail, and legs. Like her mother, she was born small, but her long legs indicated that she would grow as tall and as her father.

Shadow approached his family and gave his daughter a playful nip on the rump. Startled, the foal peeked at her father, licked the milk from her lips, and then went back to her feeding. Shadow then attempted to nuzzle Sierra, but when he noticed that her face was wet with tears, he paused in concern.

"Sierra?" he nickered. "What's wrong?"

In response, Sierra glanced at her mate with a very troubled look on her face.

Then Shadow knew. "You had another nightmare, didn't you?"

She turned away as she nodded. Recently, the young mare had been experiencing various dreams that seem to connect to each other, but grew worse later on. On the first night of the week, she dreamt of a glowing horse in a deadly battle with another horse covered in a black mist. The next night's dream revealed the shadowy horse beating the shining horse. In the dream of the night before last, the glowing horse was ambushed and trampled by a mob of horses.

"Don't worry, darling," Shadow said, resting his muzzle on his mate's head. "It was just a dream... just like the last time."

She abruptly looked up at him. "But this one was even worse than before! I dreamt of the same glowing horse, only this time, it was lying in a pool of blood, and... it's body was too horrible to describe!" Drawing a shuddering breath, she came close and rested her head on her mate's chest. "Shadow, I'm scared. What do these dreams mean?"

Shadow nuzzled the small mare. "Maybe there's a message behind the dreams." He lifted his head, gazing behind him. "Perhaps... The Great Horse is telling us something about His Son."

Sierra turned to see a tall stallion standing on another hill nearby. She couldn't take her eyes off of Him, for He looked so magnificent. With His head held high, His long dark mane and tail flowing in the breeze, and his rich, blood bay coat gleaming in the sun, Soter's majesty clearly revealed His true identity: the Light Horse, Son of the Creator, The Great Horse.

Sierra smiled a little, remembering the first words of an ancient prophecy that very few remembered, the Prophecy of the Light Horse, foretelling the arrival of their savior:

Born from an unbred filly, nurtured by a stallion, the Light Horse shall come as a mortal, yet untainted by Evil's curse.

Four years ago, these exact words— the First Stage— of the Prophecy of the Light Horse was fulfilled. The Great Horse had chosen Sierra— a young, “dwarf” filly of the Great Plains— to give birth to His Son, the very One Who will one day defeat the evil Dark Horse and rule as the King of all equines— the entire world of Equus!

“... is He doing?” Shadow’s voice broke Sierra’s thoughts.

She glanced at her mate. “What did you say, Shadow?”

“I was wondering what Soter is doing,” Shadow replied. “He’s been standing there all night. I wonder if He got any sleep.”

Sierra turned her gaze to the stallion. At first, she thought that He was asleep, for His eyes were closed. But when she noticed His ears slowly rotating back and forth, and His head nodding every few seconds or so; she stood corrected.

“Maybe...” she nickered indirectly. “... the Great Horse is speaking to Him.”

Shadow nodded thoughtfully. “Maybe He is.”



Two days later, Sierra was busily grazing while Dawn napped when she lifted her head at a gentle nicker from behind her.

“Mother,” it said.

She looked up to see Soter walking towards her. When her gentle brown eyes met His brilliant blue ones, she couldn’t look away, feeling as if she was staring into the Great Paradise, the celestial realm of the Divine Ones. With an ever-loving smile on his dark muzzle, the young Stallion lowered his head and nuzzled her.

“I need to speak with you,” He whispered gently. “... and Father.”

She looked up at him with a puzzled frown at his handsome face. “Of course.”

Soter lifted His head, catching the attention of Shadow, who was standing on another knoll. “Father, may I speak with you?”

Shadow heeded the call and trotted towards the young stallion. “Is everything all right, Son?”

Soter paused for a moment, sadness on his face. "I will not be staying with you for much longer. This will be my last day."

"You're leaving?" Sierra nickered in confusion.

"Why so soon?" Shadow added.

"It is the command of My Father of The Great Paradise," Soter replied. "It is time for Me to begin My mission: to redeem the lost and captive souls and return them to My Father... to Us."

Neither Shadow nor Sierra said anything else. Deep inside, they weren't extremely surprised by their son's news, for it wasn't uncommon for young stallions to leave their herd to find a mate and begin their own herd. On most occasions, they were forced out by the lead stallions in the attempt to eliminate the possibility of a fight for the herd. Fortunately, Soter never challenged his father for leadership out of his deepest respect and love for him. And Shadow never wished to banish the Son of The Great Horse.



Later that night, Shadow's herd had fallen asleep. The guard stallions surrounded the mares and foals and young horses, facing away from the herd; while Shadow took his position on his lookout knoll, watching for danger. Soter slept on His side near the knoll, while His mother and sister lay next to Him.

Several minutes later, Soter opened his eyes to notice that Sierra was still awake, having a faraway gaze on her face. "Mother?"

Sierra turned her head to Him in response. "Yes, Soter?"

"Something is weighing your heart." He paused, gazing deeply into the little mare's eyes. "What is it?"

Sierra lowered her gaze with a smile. She knew better than to lie to her perfect "Son", for He could read the hearts and minds and souls of all horses, just like His Father, the Great Horse.

"I was thinking about the time when You were born," she answered, and then chuckled. "You were so beautiful when the moon shone its rays upon You. I remember how the night became so peaceful...and so bright with the stars and the moon."

Soter smiled in remembrance, urging her to continue.

Now solemn, she looked down at the grass. “Somehow, I’ve always felt that You won’t be an ordinary stallion, but...” She paused, trying to keep herself from crying. “... I...” Unable to finish her sentence, a sudden sob escaped her lips as a tear rolled down her cheek.

Soter gently brushed His muzzle against the little mare’s cheek. “I know, Mother. I know of the nightmares that are haunting you. I also know that your heart is deeply troubled, for you do not understand what will happen in the days to come.”

He lowered His head to look directly into her eyes. “Mother, I must do what My Father commands. This mission—this destiny— was bestowed upon Me ever since the beginning of time. It must be done.” Then He added with a smile: “Do not be afraid, My beautiful mother. Everything will be all right.”

She returned the smile, her heart and soul suddenly filled with great peace. As Soter nuzzled her once more, she laid her head on His shoulder and fell into a deep sleep.



The next morning, the herd was preparing to say good-bye to Soter. One by one, Soter touched each of the horses’ muzzles in farewell, spending an extra few minutes with the foals, to which He had always loved to play with and tell stories to them ever since He was a yearling. Afterward, He approached his family. First, He nuzzled his little sister, the one foal of his herd He cherished the most, and then He playfully nibbled her short mane. Then, He nuzzled His beloved mother.

“I love you,” He whispered in her ear.

“I love You, too,” Sierra replied as she pressed her muzzle against His cheek.

Shadow tried to remain strong, but Soter nuzzled his face so lovingly that he had to let a tear escape his eye.

“May Your... *real* Father be with You,” Shadow said, smiling.

“He is,” Soter replied with a smile. “and He is with you.”

“Come back and visit,” Sierra added.

“I will.”

Soter then trotted a short distance away, and then stopped to look back towards the herd. After a long moment of gazing at his family, he reared on his hind legs and neighed in a final farewell. The horses whinnied in return as they watched their beloved Friend gallop away.

