

THE MISSING PIECE: AN EPILOGUE

A fleck of purple dust drifted through the air and settled on a Musketeer hat. A Mickey Mouse glimmer brushed it away absently while he surveyed the battleground. His fellow glimmers dotted the scene, along with their Illumineer companions, as together they examined wreckage around Ursula's abandoned Lair.

"Does this mean we have to clean all this up?" Venturo said this while trying to kick off a tendril of purple kelp which had wrapped itself around his leg. Mulan prodded the kelp with her arrow to make sure it wouldn't try to entangle them. It didn't.

Martin joined Mickey atop a large dried-up reef which was split down the center. The Illumineer wore a pained look on his face, but it faded when he pointed to the ground near Venturo. "What's that?"

Shanzay and Ariel were by Venturo's side in no time, and the group stared in silence at the object that was partially nestled in the mud. "Isn't that—" Shanzay stopped short.

It was a crown—or rather, part of one. The Hexwell Crown.

The three remaining prongs that radiated upward from the crown were each adorned with an Amethyst gem, while a much larger gem sat in its center. Before anyone had a chance to say anything, Ariel reached down and tugged the crown fragment loose, the mud making a soft squelching noise as the object finally came free.

The massive gem in the crown's center glinted briefly as Ariel raised it to eye-level. Mickey gasped, and the rest of the group took an involuntary step backward. But the gem soon dulled when a single faint swirl of magic rose from the crown itself.

Venturo broke the silence. "Fascinating. Even though it's fractured, there's still some trace amounts of energy . . ." He trailed off and was quickly lost in thought.

"But look at those jagged edges," Martin said quickly. "The rest must have been destroyed." He hesitated for a moment. "Right?"

Shanzay shook her head slowly. "It's too much of a risk. We've all seen what that thing can do. If there's any more of the crown out here, we need to find it. Let's go."

Mulan took out her bun and wrapped the crown piece with the long green strip of fabric she used to keep her hair up. Venturo then gingerly packed it in his bag.

Once the group made it back to the Hall of Lorcana, they found the alcove in which the Hexwell crown was originally stored and returned the item to its rightful home. Only this time, Venturo added a clever security feature that reinforced the protective sphere around it and threw in a handful of motion-sensing drones for good measure. Shanzay, for her part, set a pair of glimmers to guard the crown: Sleepy—who was guaranteed to stay at his post—and Kronk, who provided some much-needed muscle.

While almost nothing could be certain in this realm of magical ink and wild imagination, the Illumineers could at least hope that this broken item of power was finally safe in their keeping.



