

GeneX - Spell of the Shadows

By 2BIT

Submitted: October 1, 2008

Updated: October 1, 2008

The 2008 GeneX Halloween Special!

This is a sequel to "GeneX - The Nightmare Zone", and the darker ending of that story was chosen as canon.

lol, the "Dos and Don'ts" book returns!

Happy Halloween!

Provided by Funart Central
<http://www.Funart-Central.net>

1. Spell of the Shadows

GeneX - Halloween Special
Spell of the Shadows

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

The universe is a vast place. It stretches further than the furthest reaches of the imagination. Still, a single universe doesn't even scratch the surface of what's out there. Hidden in each universe is an entrance to countless other universes, dimensions, and realities. Some are nearly indistinguishable from others. Some have only slight variations from others. Still others are drastically different. Among the many alternate realities are a group inhabited by anthropomorphic animals. A common factor in many of these dimensions is a powerful force of good, an incredibly fast blue blur known in all such realities as Sonic the Hedgehog!

Then, there is the universe of GeneX Necros. A dark universe, known for an evil land found only there: the Nightmare Zone. One year ago, Sonic the Hedgehog, accompanied by several of his close friends, journeyed into the Nightmare Zone at the invitation of a maddened Dr. Eggman. Knuckles joined them when a mysterious force blackened the Master Emerald, apparently the work of Eggman. During the journey, several of Sonic's companions were killed. Amy, Knuckles, Rouge, Punchy, and Copter met their ends at the hands of a transformed Shadow Chaos, now known as Nightmare Chaos. This transformation was caused by the dark experiments of Dr. Eggman and the former GUN Sergeant, Gunner. As Sonic and Tails confronted the creature, Eggman's robot, E-1X Xenegg, revealed that he was the one who lured them all there, and that he was a ghost. Omega had destroyed Xenegg, but the robot had a soul, and returned as a spirit to exact revenge. Using a Book of Nightmare, Xenegg fused himself with Nightmare Chaos, and easily killed Tails. Sonic, having lost everything, invoked the power of the Tailbands of Chaos he retrieved from Tails and Copter, using his anger to become Darkspine Sonic! However, the power of darkness could not prevail against Xenegg, and as Sonic lost his power, Xenegg finished him off and passed into the afterlife, his vengeance completed.

One year has passed. It is once again Halloween. In the previous year, with Sonic gone from the world, the madness of Dr. Eggman and Gunner was able to spread unchecked. As their evil spread, the Nightmare Zone expanded as well. It has now consumed Station Square, among other areas around its border. For the Nightmare Zone is not land, only darkness. The dark fiends that once roamed only in the Nightmare Zone's old border now wander more freely than before. However, the citizens of Station Square have endured, to some extent. Their numbers are few, but they have one protector. During the dark night of the previous year, Shadow was nearly killed by Nightmare Chaos, but he was warned by the spirits of the forest just in time, and used Chaos Control to escape. Unfortunately, by the time he reached Sonic, it was too late. Shamed by his failure to stop Xenegg, Shadow has been battling the dark forces of the Nightmare Zone in secret. The survivors in Station Square believed him dead as well. As he

wandered the city alone, he felt more uneasy than usual. He was walking amidst a thunderstorm, and soon he found himself face to face with the Doomsayer. "You... I haven't seen you since the night Kosmo was defeated... What are you doing here now?" Shadow asked, somewhat surprised. "My prediction last year came true. Sonic lost everything, as I warned him he would. Now, I bring a warning to you. Darkness has been allowed to spread unchecked for one full year. Tonight, it will attempt to spread further. This year, more will meet their ends. For this is another Halloween Special. Good luck. I now return to GeneX Prime. Happy Halloween!" the Doomsayer said, once again breaking the rules. (2BIT: He's in trouble for that again, too!) As the Doomsayer vanished amidst his usual hail storm, Shadow crossed his arms and sighed miserably. "Hopefully this darkness will finish destroying this... 'Nightmare Square.' Then again, this could be my chance to make up for what happened last year. I guess I'd better start looking for information..."

SPOT, now under the care of Cream & Cheese, had been receiving strange signals from somewhere in Nightmare Square since morning. Since it was too dangerous for them to investigate alone, Razor the Porcupine and Rainbow the Echidna joined her. Rainbow was one of the few survivors from the group that explored the Nightmare Zone the year before, and since losing Punchy, she became a bit cold hearted. She also trained herself to fight and handle a gun, so that she could assist in protecting the remaining residents of Station Square. However, nothing ever quite prepared anyone for Dr. Eggman's new brand of insanity. As they explored the deserted streets of the city, Eggman appeared in his black Egg Mobile, accompanied by a squad of black, demonic-looking Egg Pawns! Their eyes glowed red, and they carried various slicing weapons, like axes and knives. Eggman was holding a jack-o-lantern with his symbol carved into it, only now his symbol always looked a bit more crazed than in the past. "No jaywalking in my nightmare empire! Not even on Halloween! Robots, carve them like my pumpkin! Kyaaa ha ha ha ha!!" he said in the crazed voice he'd been using all year. Razor and Rainbow pulled out their guns and began firing at the robots, to no avail. "It's not working! Grrr! Tubby and his stupid unkillable dark-bots!" Rainbow growled in frustration. "What'll we do?" Cream asked fearfully. "Nothing to do but run for it!" Razor said, continuing to shoot at the robots in order to create a diversion for Rainbow and Cream to escape! Suddenly, more robots jumped out of the windows of some nearby buildings behind them, cutting off their escape! "Kyaaaaa ha ha ha!! No escaping tonight! I've lingered in this city long enough, so I'm going to finish what I started here and move on to the bigger world beyond!" Eggman cackled. As the robots began closing in on the three helpless animals, some of them were suddenly lifted up into the air by some unseen force, then hurled at the other robots, destroying them! "Who dares interrupt my fun!?" Eggman shouted, looking around. The invisible force grabbed his Egg Mobile and tossed it into the distance! "Kyaaaaaaaa!!! You'll die for thiiiiiiis!!" As Eggman's shouts faded into the distance, Silver the Hedgehog stepped out from a dark alley nearby. "That takes care of them!" he said, walking towards Razor and company. Cream looked most relieved out of the group. "Thanks for saving us, sir!" she said. Razor looked puzzled. "How did you do that?" he asked. Silver shrugged. "No big deal. That was just my psychokinesis." he explained. Rainbow glanced around to make sure all the robots were destroyed. "Nicely done, Shiny. But why would you help us?" she asked. Silver looked slightly confused. "You were in trouble... Weren't you? Why wouldn't I help?" he replied. Razor turned to SPOT. "Hmmm... Seems we lost the signal. I guess we better head back. I think you'd best come with us, mister..." he said, trailing off. "My name is Silver." the hedgehog said. "Where did you come from, Shiny? We haven't seen you around before." Rainbow said, a little suspiciously. Silver shared his story with them. "I'm from the future. Sometime around now, a chain of events started that led to the state of near-oblivion my world is in. I discovered a means to come to the

past, and I've arrived hoping to stop the darkness before it spreads! But... I'm not quite sure how to do that. I'd appreciate any information you could give me..." he explained. Suddenly, Gator appeared behind him in a puff of smoke! "I've got info! You're one year late!" he said. Silver jumped away from Gator, startled. "Wh-where'd you come from!?" he shouted. Gator waved to Rainbow. "Hi, pal! Do you have a birthday present for me?" he asked. Rainbow looked at him like he was nuts. "Do I know you?" she asked, since the Rainbow in this dimension doesn't know Gator. Gator frowned. "Aw... I guess that means no present. Well, I gotta go anyway, because I only get cameos in stories! But if anyone cares, I'm 888 years old today! Bye!!!!" he said, teleporting away again. Cream giggled a little. "That guy's silly!" she said. Silver scratched his head. "What did he mean I'm a year late?" he asked. Razor sighed impatiently. "We'll fill you in on the way. We got to get going before Eggman comes back. Nothing works twice on him since last Halloween..." he said, leading the group away.

Shadow was busy searching the city. He wasn't sure what he was looking for. Anything out of the ordinary would be a start. As he wandered the ruined streets of what was once Speed Highway, he thought he could hear growling nearby. Looking around, he couldn't see anyone. He was near a large building with a bell tower on its roof, and a dried up water fountain across from it. Aside from the landmarks in this area, he could see nothing. Still, he could hear the growling. "Who's there? Show yourself!" Shadow yelled. There was no response. Shadow decided to keep moving down the street, ignoring the growling, but remaining alert. As he started to walk away, however, the growling seemed to be coming closer. Shadow appeared to ignore it at first. As the growling began to sound close, Shadow stopped walking. "GRRRRRRR!!!!" A final growl, sounding almost like a shout, was heard behind Shadow. Before anything could attack him, Shadow used Chaos Control, reappearing back near the fountain! A crazed Guard the Gargoyle was slashing at the spot Shadow had been standing at with his scythe! Realizing that his attacks missed, the gargoyle turned to where Shadow had appeared. Shadow gasped as he saw Guard's face. His eyes were so bloodshot, they looked red. His tongue was hanging out of his mouth, which was foaming a little, almost as though he had rabies. It was apparent from his behavior that he wasn't currently what you'd call "sane." "What's happened to you?" Shadow wondered aloud. A crazed laugh was heard nearby as Gunner arrived on the scene. "How do you like the new, improved Guard? Heheheheheh... Prepare to die!" he said, holding up what appeared to be a remote control! The remote had Eggman's symbol on the back of it. Though Shadow wished to question Gunner about this, Guard wouldn't give him an opportunity. Under Gunner's control, Guard flew after Shadow, slashing his scythe at him as he went! Shadow ran out of the way and knocked Guard back with a Chaos Spear. "That's nothing! Heheheheheh...." Gunner said, himself seeming just as crazed as Guard. As Gunner input commands through the remote, Guard began sending energy blasts from his scythe towards Shadow, which were easily avoided. However, it seemed that it would be difficult to get at the remote while Guard was conscious. Luckily, Shadow didn't have to worry about it. As he was busy avoiding Guard's attacks, a gunshot was heard nearby, which pierced the remote in Gunner's hands! Gunner dropped the remote and glanced in the direction the shot came from. Zipp the Hornet was hovering in the air, and behind him was the rest of Team GeneX: Vortex the Chameleon, Crash the Rhino, Spiny the Porcupine, Zeke the Dragon, Whisk the Divine, and Bucky the Rat. With the remote destroyed, Guard stopped moving and fell to the ground. Gunner snickered at these events, an insane look in his eyes. "Time to go. Happy Halloween, freaks!" he said, running away. Zipp tried to shoot Gunner as he left, but Crash stopped him. "Let him go! He's no threat to us now!" he said. Zipp tossed his gun to the floor in frustration as Gunner got away. "Darn you, Crash! You ruined my shot!" he groaned. Bucky pushed past his team and approached Guard, who had been motionless since the

remote was destroyed. "Is he all right?" Shadow asked. Bucky nodded. "I think he just needs a little energy..." he said, pointing at Guard and firing a bolt of electricity through his body. In a second, Guard's eyes opened, and he stood up, rubbing his head as though he had a headache. "Grrrrr.... Wh-where am I? What happened..." he asked. Vortex carried the broken remote to him. "That sssick psssycho, Gunner, wasss controlling you with thissss." he explained. Shadow looked thoughtful. "The device was apparently created by Eggman. It seems that he may be the mastermind behind this." he said. Zeke nodded. "Eggman came from the Nightmare Zone. It seems he's been up to some really questionable things lately... More so than usual." he said. Spiny grinned at the mention of the Nightmare Zone. "Whatever he did, it lead to Sonic's death, so I think I'm all for it." he snickered. Bucky glared at him. "Would you be happy if he killed you? Eggman's plots may destroy the world at this rate. That's why I think we must find him and figure out just what he's doing." he suggested. Shadow looked around. "No one knows where Eggman's current base is. We should probably split up to find him." he suggested. Bucky glanced around the group. "I suppose you're right. Guard, you, Spiny, and Zeke should go with Shadow. The rest of you, follow me. There's no telling what may happen on the way, so stay alert!"

The survivors in Nightmare Square had mostly gathered in one area, which appeared to be the safest place in the city. It was the prison, which now held more innocents than criminals. Razor was leading Cream, Cheese, SPOT, Rainbow, and Silver to the prison, where Silver would ask around about the darkness that was spreading from the Nightmare Zone. As they neared the prison, however, they found that the Lost Ones were swarming there! "Here we go again! The Lost Ones have been trying to get us in the prison all year! Looks like there's a bit more of them than usual now, though." Razor said, shooting at the nearest Losol. Silver looked a little annoyed. "Those things are around in this time, too? Ugh!" he groaned. Cream pointed at the entrance to the prison, where Gemini the Fennec was doing her best to hold back the monsters with her magic. "We have to help!" she shouted. Rainbow and Razor were preoccupied with the enemies in front of them, so Silver decided to rush ahead. "Are you crazy!?" Rainbow shouted as Silver dashed through the swarm of Lost Ones. He used his psychic powers to push away any attacking monsters as he approached Gemini. Suddenly, another hedgehog ran towards Gemini from within the swarm! Spotting it, Gemini quickly called a spell. "Solare!!" A beam of light was shot from her wand and knocked away the hedgehog! Silver looked shocked. "What are you doing!?" he shouted, running over to help the hedgehog. "Stop! Don't go near it!" Gemini warned. As he got a good look at the hedgehog, Silver understood. It was Sonic, transformed into a Lost One! Los Sonic grinned at Silver devilishly, then ran towards him! Silver barely managed to grab him with his psychokinesis before he reached him. Gemini tried to tell Silver something. "OK, you got him, now don't..." Before she could finish speaking, Silver tossed Los Sonic away! Once his hold over it was gone, Los Sonic lead the other Lost Ones away. As Rainbow, Razor, and Cream reached the area, Gemini hit Silver over the head with her wand. "You idiot! That was Sonic!! Why did you throw him away!?" she shouted. Silver glanced back in the direction Los Sonic had gone. "He... He was a Lost One. I had to get rid of him." he said. Gemini sighed frustratedly. "I know what he was! I guess I'd better explain..." she said. Rainbow opened the prison door. "Explain inside, Wanda! You know those slimy creeps will be back!" she said. Razor agreed. "Who knows what else will come back with them, too..."

Meanwhile, Shadow and the experiments traveling with him found a large building with Eggman's symbol on the front. It wasn't the only such building in the city, because Eggman had been moving around the city a lot in the past year. Spiny walked up to the main entrance and peered inside. "It's dark in there. I guess Eggman's abandoned this base." he said. "Or, he's

just not home." Zeke suggested. Guard scanned the building with the sensors in his eyes. "Grrrr... I'm sensing something... Grrrr... There may still be robots inside." he informed them. "We'd better have a look inside, then." Shadow said, pushing past Spiny to get through the door. The three experiments followed Shadow inside, and as they entered, the door slammed shut behind them! Zeke turned around and attempted to pull the door open. "Darn it! Why didn't we see this coming!?" he growled. "We can't see ANYTHING in here!" Spiny shouted in frustration. It was almost pitch black in the room, but a pair of red lights could be seen in front of them. They were eyes! "Who's there?" Shadow asked. "Clap on!" said a crazed, robotic voice as the sound of clapping was heard. Another robotic voice responded. "Does that mean turn on the light? Okie dokey!" Some dim lights came on, revealing the room to be large, with statues of Eggman along the sides of the room. There were a couple hallways and an elevator that could be found at the back of the room. Alpha was standing in the center of the room, aiming his lasers at the intruders. "Good BAS! Now I make BOOM! And SPLAT!!" the robot shouted. Shadow and the experiments were ready to fight, but another voice caused them to hesitate. "What is happening, Alpha?" Terra emerged from one of the hallways. "More guests. Not necessary. We shall kill them!" he growled. Guard's eyes went wide. "Grrrr... That purple robot! I can't sense it!" he said. Shadow understood what that meant. "You're a ghost, like Xenegg!" he said. Terra did not pay attention to his words. "KILL!! DESTROY!!" he shouted, shooting lasers at them! They ran out of the way, but Zeke's wing was hit! "Yeow!! He may be dead, but he can still hurt us!" he shouted. Shadow pointed to the second hallway. "Let's move! No sense fighting what can't be killed!" he said. "Deal!" Spiny shouted, running for the hallway. Terra watched them run out of the room. "There is no escape!! DESTROY!!!" he bellowed!

The rest of Team GeneX were exploring near the train station. They had seen no sign of Eggman yet. As they approached the train station, Vortex noticed something. "The floor... It'sss a bit sssslimy...." he realized. Bucky glanced down. Sure enough, there appeared to be a light coating of slime on the floor. "The Lost Ones have been here recently..." he said. "Correct!! And guess what? Weeeeeee're baaaaaack!!" Looking up at the roof of the train station, Team GeneX spotted Lospector! Zipp fired a few shots from his gun at Lospector, only to see the bullets fly right through him. "Yawn, you gun nuts always try that. Get 'em, Los Foxes!" Lospector said. Whisk called the team's attention to the area behind them. "I think we're in trouble..." There were several Los Foxes in the area already, coming seemingly from nowhere! The monsters' blade-like tails were flailing around, ready to skewer anyone who came near them! Crash turned to Vortex. "Think you can muster a Chaos Hole?" he asked. "I think I'm going to need my energy." Vortex replied. Zipp began shooting at the creatures, but that provoked those not killed by his shots to approach faster. Bucky stepped in front of Vortex and Crash, fingers sparking. "Fiends! You're quite a nuisance!" he said, jolting several of the closest monsters with powerful electric bolts! Several of the Los Foxes were destroyed in moments, but Lospector just laughed. "Hey, buck-tooth! Why Los Foxes, do you wonder? Hee hee hee...." he said. This comment puzzled Bucky, so he stopped shocking the foxes for a moment. Somewhere in the crowd, he spotted what Lospector was referring to. One of the Los Foxes was actually Copter! "No..." Bucky muttered, backing away. Zipp's shooting stopped as well, but not because he spotted Copter. "Out of bullets... Rotten timing..." he groaned. As Lospector started flipping around in the air with laughter, a large jet of flame appeared between Team GeneX and the creatures! "Hey, what?! Who? Aw, heck, let's go for now!" Lospector shouted, prompting the Los Foxes to run off. Once Lospector was gone, Anubis walked out of the nearby hotel. "Despicable abominations." he muttered. Bucky approached Anubis. "I thank you, but what would anyone be doing here?" he asked. Anubis used his pyrokinetic powers to cause his flames to dissipate. "I think you have some explaining to do as well..." he growled.

As Gemini was talking to Silver, Rainbow, Razor, and Cream, they were joined by Illusi, Conan, Katie, Mia, and Chet, who were all staying at the prison as well. "You see, I've been trying to fight the Lost Ones for quite some time now. It's a tough fight. Last year, I sensed that their power had grown a bit. As I investigated this, I learned that they had corrupted Sonic. They'd corrupted me once, too, so I've been hoping to catch Sonic and try to find a way to bring him back. But, I think they took over his body after he... died. So, all that Lost One is is a soulless shell, basically. I think I can still save him, though." she explained. "Now, how could you possibly do that?" Conan asked skeptically. Gemini pulled out a book. It was "Three Thousand Dos and Don'ts of Scary Scenarios," the book Tails had been reading last year! "I found this book on a trip to the Nightmare Zone earlier this year. It contains directions on how to perform a séance!" she said, opening a page she had bookmarked. Katie pointed at the text before the instructions. "It also says 'Don't do séances unless you absolutely need to!'" she said with worry. Silver picked up the book and read further. "'Séances almost always end up with the release of evil spirits, and this usually leads to death. But, if you must call a spirit, directions for this LAST RESORT are below...!' Sounds risky." he said. Rainbow looked a bit hopeful, the first time she had in over a year. "If this works on Speedy... Do you think we could save One? I think we gotta try it!" she insisted. Suddenly, SPOT walked over to the group! The robot was beeping loudly. Cream looked over SPOT's monitor. "The signal's back! Wait... This is the Tails Tracker!" she realized. Rainbow's eyes went wide. "Tails!? He's alive? I can't believe it!" she gasped. Illusi looked suspicious. "No, if he was alive, where has he been? That device must be wrong." he said. "What if it's not?" Chet said. Razor scratched his head. "Sure seems weird. Maybe we should split up. Some of us look for Sonic, others look for Tails." he suggested. Gemini shook her head. "This book doesn't recommend splitting up. Let's just look for Tails! Maybe we'll find Sonic along the way!" The entire group agreed to this, and even Conan offered to join them. So, with Silver in the lead, the group left the prison and began their search.

After Bucky explained the situation to Anubis, the jackal told them he knew where Eggman's current base was. "In fact, that is where I was going. I have concerns about what Eggman is up to as well." he said. "So, you'll lead us there?" Whisk asked. Anubis nodded, and Whisk smiled at him. "Great, but where are we going again?" Crash rolled his eyes at Whisk's forgetfulness. "Don't mind her, Anubis. Let's just get going." he suggested. As they began heading in the direction of Eggman's base, Anubis explained his concerns. "In the past year, I went looking for the Master Emerald, and I found that it had been tainted in some way. I left it on Angel Island, and began searching for answers. Recently, I came across Eggman. After fighting with him briefly, I caused him to drop this..." He held up what appeared to be a black emerald. Zipp jumped when he saw it. "That's a Chaos Emerald! What's been done to it?" he asked. Bucky frowned at the emerald. "It's been tainted, I presume in the same way as the Master Emerald." he said. Anubis nodded. "I believe that Eggman is behind all of this, but I cannot imagine what exactly he plans to accomplish." Vortex looked thoughtful. "Maybe the blackened emeraldsss are able to harnesssss the dark powerssss of the Nightmare Zone." he said. In a few moments, the group reached the building Shadow and the rest of Team GeneX had entered. "I believe this is Eggman's current base." Anubis said. Bucky approached the door and opened it, glancing inside the dimly lit entrance room. As they followed Bucky inside, Zipp noticed something. "It looks as though there's been shooting in here recently." Indeed, there were black marks where the lasers that were fired at Shadow and the experiments hit. Anubis growled slightly. "They're hostile. And I cannot control my army in the Nightmare Zone, so I cannot call for assistance." he muttered. "You have an army?" Crash said. Vortex pointed to the elevator. "It may be ssafer to

ussse that to begin our exploration." he suggested. Whisk shuddered at it. "You think it's big enough for all of us? I don't wanna be squished..." she whined. Bucky pressed the button to call down the elevator. "We might as well try it. Don't worry, Whisk. At least you don't have to squeeze in with Zeke!"

Shadow, Guard, Zeke, and Spiny had managed to evade Alpha and Terra, and were now busy exploring the base. They had wandered into what appeared to be a laboratory of some sort. Initially, they were just going to pass through as they continued searching for any sign of Eggman, but Shadow stopped them upon seeing some familiar capsules in the lab. "Those capsules... Just like the one Rouge found me in after I fell from the ARK..." he muttered. Guard glanced at the capsules. "Grrrr... Someone's inside them. They're in suspended animation..." he informed the group. Shadow peered inside the capsules. "Anyone we know?" Zeke asked. In one of the capsules was Blaze the Cat, while the other held Marine the Raccoon. "The cat looks vaguely familiar... But I can't recall where I've seen her." Shadow said. (Is Mario & Sonic at the Olympics canon?) Spiny examined the capsules and pressed some buttons on them, causing them to open! Blaze and Marine stumbled out of the capsules, caught by Shadow and Spiny. "Are you all right?" Shadow asked Blaze as he placed her on the ground. "Wh... Where..." Blaze muttered. Marine jumped out of Spiny's arms as she awoke. "Crimony!! You startled me, Sonic!" she gasped. Spiny growled angrily. "I'M NOT SONIC!!!" he screamed! Zeke grabbed Spiny and covered his mouth. "Are you nuts!? You want the ghostly robot to find us!?" he shouted. Blaze glanced around a moment, and then looked angry as her memory seemed to return. "I can't believe I was captured! I should have been paying more attention!" she groaned. Marine looked around at those who rescued them. "Strewth! You blokes are awfully creepy! You aren't working for the buggers who caught us, are ya?" she asked. Guard shook his head. "Grrrr... Why would we release you if we were your enemy?" he reasoned. Suddenly, Alpha and Terra burst into the room, lasers blazing immediately! "KILL!!! MAIME!!! BURN!!!" Terra roared! As the group attempted to take cover, Shadow realized that Terra would easily kill them all at this rate. "Everyone, over here!" he shouted. Once they were all close together, Shadow enabled their escape! "Chaos Control!"

Lospector was watching Silver's group as they followed SPOT in hopes of finding Tails. They knew he was watching them, too, since he was laughing as his armies of Lost Ones continuously made their search difficult! Silver was a great asset to the group, since his psychic powers kept many of the monsters at bay. Conan and Illusi kept the creatures busy a lot as well, leaving the rest of the group relatively safe. Lospector, however, just seemed to find everything funny. "You guys know that you can't keep this up forever! What could be so important that you'd go trudging through a swarm of us?" he asked between fits of laughter. Illusi sent a Wrongo in Lospector's direction, which actually managed to knock him back a little. "Ow... You're a bad friend, Illoser! I just asked a question." he groaned. "Like we'd tell you anything, you slime cloud!" Illusi shouted. Cream glanced around at the swarming monsters in the area and stopped walking for a second. "M-maybe we should just go back... This is... dangerous!" she said shakily. Mia took her hand and pulled her along. "And just think, your friend Tails is out there in this! You think he'd abandon you?" she asked. Cream understood. "You're right... We've got to find him!" she said. As Silver tossed more Lost Ones out of their way, he turned to SPOT. "Are we getting close? I don't know how long I can keep this up..." he said, looking a little tired. Razor and Rainbow stepped forward with their guns ready. "Take a breather, Silver! We got this!" Razor said. "These slimy creeps are nothing we can't handle!" Rainbow added. Lospector started laughing louder than usual at this point. "What's so funny now, you clown?" Chet growled. Lospector held back his laughing to reply. "Nothing you can't

handle? You're heading into the un-handleable! Lookie ahead..." he said. Katie and Cream gasped in alarm as they saw what Lospector was talking about. Losipher was ahead of them! "So, you've grown weary of living, and have arrived so I may end your misery?" the lost lord asked. "Not a chance! Now, die!" Conan shouted, firing Chaos Spears from his sword at Losipher. They did nothing to him. "Fool!! Now, YOU DIE!!!" Losipher roared, transforming into one of his monstrous forms! Illusi pointed left and right. "Pick a path and run! Losipher's invincible in the Nightmare Zone!!" With that, the group began scattering in their panic!

Team GeneX, accompanied by Anubis, entered the elevator. It was just large enough to hold all of them. As the doors shut, the lights within the elevator went out! "Eeeek!! We're doomed!" Whisk shouted. The elevator began moving upwards at high speed, as though it was being propelled with the intention of blasting off like a rocket! "Oh, shoot! This box is haunted or something!" Zipp whined. As the experiments began panicking, Anubis and Bucky seemed surprisingly calm. Suddenly, the elevator stopped, but the doors didn't open. Crash was holding his stomach. "Can I throw up now...?" he asked. Ghostly laughter could be heard all of a sudden, and Whisk could stand no more. "I don't want to die in here! I'm leaving!" she shouted. Vortex tried to stop her. "Wait! You can't teleport here! You can't ssssee where you're going!" he warned, but Whisk didn't listen, and vanished in a flash of light! "Going down..." a ghostly voice said, prompting the elevator to begin plummeting back down the tower! Zipp grabbed hold of Crash and started screaming. "We're gonna be pancakes!!!" he cried. Bucky yawned at these events, obviously not afraid. Anubis remained motionless, as though nothing were out of the ordinary at all. Just as it seemed the elevator would crash, it changed direction and headed back upwards! "Sssshoooooot!! Now I want to throw up!!!" Vortex yelled. In a few moments more, the elevator came to a stop. The ghostly laughter started up again as the doors slid open. "Your floor, sirs!" one of the voices said. Bucky and Anubis calmly exited the elevator as the experiments stumbled out dizzily. Bucky turned in the direction of approaching footsteps and spotted Shadow, Spiny, Zeke, Guard, Blaze, and Marine. "You guys sure look wobbly. Is that elevator fast?" Marine asked as they approached. "So, you found this place, too." Bucky said. Guard stepped toward Bucky. "Grrrr... We have not seen Eggman, but his robots are here." he reported. Vortex was the first of the experiments to recover from the elevator ride. "Excussse me, but have any of you sssseen a divine?" he asked, concerned about Whisk. Shadow's and his companions shook their heads. "EEEEEEK!!!" At that moment, a scream was heard coming from a nearby hallway! Vortex immediately recognized Whisk's voice. "Let'sss go!" he shouted, leading the way. "Must we always be running...?" Spiny moaned. (Possibly just because it was something Sonic would never say.) Soon, they reached the source of the scream, where Alpha was holding a passed out Whisk in his arms! Zeke growled at Alpha. "Put her down, bot, or you'll join the other bot in the afterlife!" he warned. Terra suddenly flew up from under the floor next to Alpha, as though he'd heard Zeke. "YOU MUST DIE!!" he shouted. Suddenly, an unfamiliar female voice was heard over the announcement system. "Alpha and Terra! Capture one more female in the group, then kill the rest!" the voice ordered. Zipp pulled out a gun. "I'd just like to see you try it, bots!" he said, aiming at Alpha's head and firing several shots at him! The robot dropped Whisk on the ground, only for her to be caught by Terra! As Terra carried Whisk away, Alpha's robotic body fell to the floor, leaving a ghostly Alpha hovering in the same spot! "Hee hee! That tickled! Now, I tickle you!" the now dead robot said with disturbing glee! "Genioussss, Zipp!! Now we've got an invincible opponent!" Vortex shouted. Spiny glared at the ghost of Alpha. "We'll see about that! Chaos Spear!" he yelled, firing several spears at Alpha, which all flew right through him! Shadow and Bucky understood the magnitude of the situation first. "Run! Fighting is suicide!" Bucky shouted, following as Shadow led the group away! "Criiiiiiiiiikeeeeeey!!!" Marine yelled as she followed. Spiny continued tossing spears at Alpha as

the group was leaving. Blaze stopped to reason with him. "Spiny! You'll be killed! Stop that and let's go!" she said before turning to run herself. Spiny stopped his attacks as he was left alone. "I guess I've bought them enough time. Bye, bot!" he said, starting to leave. However, Alpha was no longer distracted watching the spears fly by, and he immediately fired a shot at Spiny, which struck him in the head, killing him! As Spiny fell to the ground, Alpha kicked at the ground. "Shucks, how come they didn't go through the blue guy?" Ghostly laughing could be heard as Alpha left Spiny's body behind.

Losipher's attack had caused Silver's group to split up into two groups. Katie, Chet, Conan, and Gemini were still with Silver, and Gemini was very concerned about the second group. "WHY did we split up!? We already agreed that was a bad idea!" she said worriedly. Chet shrugged. "It didn't seem as bad an idea as staying together with the Lost Ones. They stopped chasing us when we split up." he said. Katie frowned at him. "That's probably because the Lost Ones are chasing the other group!" she realized. Conan started walking away. "Who cares? There's nothing we can do for them now! We might as well resume our searches! Shall we look for Sonic or Tails?" he asked, not really caring much. The rest of the group began to follow him. "There's a chance that the other group got away and is looking for Tails, so we should probably look for Sonic." Silver suggested. "Looking for Sonic?" came a voice nearby! Everyone started looking around, until Gemini spotted something overhead. "Over there!" she pointed. The Babylon Rogues, Jet the Hawk, Wave the Swallow, and Storm the Albatross were hovering above them on their extreme gear boards. They had traded their usual boards for black ones, and Wave had replaced her normal clothes with black as well. Jet and Storm were wearing black capes. Silver looked at them curiously. "Do you know where Sonic is?" he asked. "You must be psychic, 'cuz you read my mind." Wave said. The three birds dropped to the ground and hopped off their boards. "We can show you where to find him." Storm offered. Katie shuddered at them. "No offense, but you guys creep me out..." she said. Jet frowned. "Now, that isn't nice... On our part, that is. Scaring such a pretty one... Come with us, we'll help you find who you're looking for..." he said. Chet stepped next to Katie. "I agree. I have a bad feeling..." he said. Conan scoffed at them. "You two are so jumpy! Let's just follow them!" he insisted. Gemini and Silver nodded in agreement. "Lead the way, um..." Gemini said, trailing off. The Babylon Rogues introduced themselves. "I'm Jet, he's Storm, and she's Wave. Come, this is moving too slow for my taste..." Despite their concerns, Katie and Chet followed the Babylon Rogues with the rest of their group.

Rainbow, Mia, Razor, Illusi, Cream and Cheese had evaded the Lost Ones as well, and were following SPOT in search of Tails. "I hope the others are OK..." Cream said. "I'm certain they're all right, at least for now." Illusi assured her. "Yeah, they got Silver. I say worry about us..." Mia said fearfully. "We're not that bad off. We've got Mousy with us." Rainbow remarked. Suddenly, a terrible scream was heard nearby! "Someone's in trouble! Let's go help!" Razor shouted, leading the way in the direction of the scream. "I don't think Gemini's book would recommend this!!" Mia shouted, chasing Razor in the hopes of talking him out of it. Soon, they found the screamer. It was Heather the Phoenix, who was on fire! In a moment, the fire went out, and she was fine. "Wh-whoa..." Razor muttered in disbelief. Heather glanced at the group that had come to her aid. "Could've come before I died... At least I'm a phoenix..." she muttered. "Who attacked you?" Razor asked. Heather's eyes went wide as she realized what was going to happen. "Run! He can't kill me, but he can kill you! Get away from here!" she shouted. Suddenly, an energy blast hit Heather from behind, causing her to die and resurrect again! As Heather was reviving, the group spotted the attacker. It was the Deathbringer! "Wh-who are you...?" Cream asked fearfully. The Deathbringer said nothing, but was growling softly. Illusi

grabbed Heather by the arm once she was revived. "We must go! That being... It's out of its mind!" he said, running off with Heather! Mia, Cream, Cheese, and SPOT followed immediately. "Come on, Razor!" Rainbow shouted. Razor pulled out his gun. "Don't worry about me! I'll keep him busy so you can escape!" he shouted. Rainbow knew he would probably die, but she didn't bother to argue with him. She knew there would be no changing his mind, so she ran off. Razor turned to face the Deathbringer and began shooting at it, but it quickly flew out of his way. "Stay still! You are NOT following them!" Razor shouted, firing at the Deathbringer in hopes of making it return to the ground. The Deathbringer simply threw an energy blast at him, which pierced his chest, ending his life. With that, the Deathbringer flew away.

Shadow, followed by Bucky, Blaze, Marine, Anubis, and the experiments, were hurrying out of the main entrance of Eggman's base. It was apparent to them that Eggman himself was not currently there, and despite Vortex's objections, the group agreed that it was too dangerous to attempt to rescue Whisk. High up Eggman's tower, someone was watching them escape. It was an orange, female cat, wearing black witch's robes and a pointy black hat. She held a broomstick in her hand. "Almost ruined everything, those pests." she sneered, turning to the ghosts of Alpha and Terra. "You two have failed! Not only did they free our prisoners, you let them escape without capturing new prisoners!" she yelled. Terra looked somehow apologetic. "Please, mistress Tabitha, grant us one more chance. We did capture one." he said. Alpha didn't seem to care. "I can see inside me! Wheeee!!" he giggled. Tabitha groaned at them. "I should never have trusted you two. Time is running out, and I can't stand for failures now!" she said, raising her hand, which conjured an orb of magic. "I banish you to the world beyond! May you burn in hellfire forever!!" she shouted, tossing the orb at the two robots, who screamed horrifically as their spirits vanished from the world forever! With the robots gone, Tabitha walked over to the window, positioning herself atop her broom. "Never get in the way of a witch! They will pay dearly for all of this! Hmmm... This might be fun! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!!!" Tabitha was cackling as she crashed through the window, flying off into the night on her broom!

Rainbow's group, with Heather along, had escaped the Deathbringer and followed SPOT to what remained of Twinkle Park in Nightmare Square. Exhausted, the group was resting in the starting area of Twinkle Circuit. The bumper cars no longer worked, so they were going to exit from the same way they entered after resting up. "Any idea why that creature was chasing you?" Rainbow asked. Heather shook her head. "I was just looking for my creator, Bucky. I got separated from him when we got to this city. I guess they aren't looking for me because they know I'm not likely to truly die." she said. Cream and Cheese were seated nearby, comforting each other. The whole group knew that Razor was dead by now. Illusi knelt down next to her. "It'll be all right, Cream. I promise, none of us will let anything happen to you. Or Cheese." he said, trying futilely to make her feel better. "I know you can't promise that... But... Thank you..." she said. Mia stood up from where she was sitting. "I think I'll look around..." she said. "Are you nuts! Don't go off alone!" Rainbow insisted. Mia ignored her. "I need to be alone a minute. I'll find you guys when I'm ready..." she said. Illusi summoned a Wrongo. "Take this with you. It could... maybe... protect you." he said.

As Mia walked around the park with the Wrongo following, she couldn't help feeling as though she was being watched. This was a common feeling in the Nightmare Zone, though, so she didn't think much of it. However, soon she began to hear footsteps. Looking around, she saw no one. "Razor? Is that you? Did you get away after all?" she asked, but when there was no answer, she knew it wasn't him. "Oh, god... I'm about to die..." she gasped, realizing that it could only be a monster nearby. She turned to run, but wouldn't get far. Something quickly

smashed the Wrongo, causing it to disappear, and then turned its attention to Mia! "Wait! No! Don't! NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!"

Elsewhere in Twinkle Park, the Babylon Rogues were leading Silver and friends through a hall of mirrors. The hall was very dark, and there were holes in the floor that seemed to go on forever. Chet glanced down one of the holes nervously. "Um... Are you sure we need to go this way?" he asked. Jet didn't stop moving. "This is the fastest way. You don't want to be out all night, do you?" he said. Conan chuckled at Chet. "Don't worry, if you fall, I'll hit you with some Chaos Spears so you die before you hit the ground!" he told him. Wave frowned. "We could also use our boards to SAVE him, idiot!" she said. "Not to mention I could catch you with my powers!" Silver added. Chet chuckled a bit. "I get it, I get it! I'm safe as long as Conan isn't put in charge!" he said. Katie was glancing at the mirrors as they walked through the hall. The Babylon Rogues were holding their boards so that their reflections were blocked, which seemed slightly odd to her. Still, she didn't mention it. As they neared the exit of the hall, Gemini, who was flipping through the "Dos and Don'ts" book, glanced at the Rogues. "Don't blindly walk out of buildings. Have a look outside first. Is there a window near the exit here?" she asked. Storm laughed at her. "Are you takin' that silly book seriously? We'll be fine, nothin' would jump all of us if they knew what was good for them!" he said. Katie walked over to Gemini and reached for the book, so Gemini handed it to her. "Well, I'm not the only one who wants to be safe." she said. As Katie flipped through the book, she found the info she was looking for. "Do look for everyone's reflections in mirrors. If no reflection is found, get away from the person." she read silently. As the rogues reached the door to the exit, Jet put down his board to open the door. "Grrr... It won't budge! Help me out, guys!" he said. Wave and Storm put down their boards to help Jet, and Katie gasped quietly as she saw their reflection, or lack thereof! She tapped Chet on the shoulder in a panic. "Th-they don't have reflections..." she whispered to him. Before Chet could check for himself, the door was open and they stepped outside. "See, no monsters out here! That book is nonsense!" Jet squawked. Chet glanced at Katie. "Uh, I think you're tired. You gotta be mistaken." he said, walking outside with the rest of the group. Katie sighed nervously as she joined them. Perhaps Chet was right, but then again, perhaps not...

Shadow and those with him had concluded that Eggman was wandering around the city, and were busy searching for him. They did not have to look long, and soon they not only found Eggman, but were surrounded by his robots! "Well, well, well! A crowd of my enemies! Kyaaa ha ha ha!! Robots, let's switch their heads to different bodies!" the mad scientist yelled. As the robots began approaching, Shadow ignored them. "Doctor! What's the matter with you? Have you truly gone insane!?" he asked. Blaze stepped next to Shadow and looked up at Eggman. "He HAS gone insane, but... That's Eggman Nega!" she realized! The doctor laughed at this revelation. "Kyaaaa ha ha ha ha!! I figured you'd figure that out, Blaze! Were you looking for that Sol Emerald I took? Well, too bad! I don't have it with me! Now, be sure to scream a lot as you die!" he bellowed. Zeke growled at Eggman Nega. "You don't scare me! I'll burn your robots to cinders! RAWR!!" Vortex turned to Crash. "Ssssee, I told you I'd need my energy! Maybe Chaosss Inferno will put a dent in thesssse fiendssss!" As they began fighting with Eggman Nega's robots, they found that not much worked on them. "Strewth! What are those psychos made of!?" Marine wondered as she watched the battle helplessly. Bucky's electricity was all that seemed to bother the robots. "Clearly, they are made with some sort of special armor... But they still run on electricity, so I can incapacitate them! Follow me, everyone!" Bucky shouted, clearing a path through the robots. Zeke stopped to blow fire on the robots Bucky stunned. "Hmmm... Seems their armor is useless when they're knocked down like that!" he said. Guard flew next to him. "You want to wreck some, too?" Zeke asked. Suddenly, Gunner's

voice was heard nearby! "Slay the dragon!" As Zeke turned towards Gunner's voice, Guard stabbed him in the back with his scythe! Bucky saw this as he had turned to provide the escaping group with cover. "Zeke, no!! Gunner, you monster!!" he screamed. Gunner had obtained a new remote, and thus regained control of Guard. Zipp flew to Bucky. "C'mon! We gotta go!" Bucky knew he was right, so he joined the rest of the group as they ran from Eggman Nega.

As the Babylon Rogues led Silver and company through Twinkle Park, they soon met up with the group they'd separated from earlier. Gemini ran over to Illusi. "You made it! But wait... Where...?" she asked. Chet frowned. "Don't tell me... Razor AND Mia are... gone!?" he said. Rainbow confirmed his fear. "I didn't see what happened to either of them, but neither of them returned when they left us..." she explained. Conan scoffed at them. "You guys are pathetic! Our group is still in one piece! Heck, it's even bigger than when we separated!" he said unsympathetically. Cream started crying. "That's not fair! There was nothing we could do!" she cried. Silver glared at Conan. "Now look what you've done! Calm down, little girl. We're all together now. Nothing will happen to us now." he said, trying to calm Cream down. Katie was silently crying as well. "My best friend... Gone... Poor Mia..." she muttered. Chet put his arm around her. "I know, Katie... I know..." he said. Katie stepped away from him. "I need to be alone a minute!" she said, running off! Illusi and Gemini both started to run after her. "Don't! That's how Mia died!" Illusi shouted. Jet took off on his board. "I'll get her back!" he said. It didn't take long for him to catch up to her. They had turned a corner, and were out of sight. "It's dangerous to be alone here!" Jet squawked, grabbing Katie! "Wait! Get away!" she yelled, struggling. "Yeah, you know, don't you? Ha ha ha... Stay still a moment, I'm very thirsty!" As Jet held her in place, she could see fangs growing from his beak! "I-I knew it! You're a vampire! Someone! HELP!! N-NOOOOOO!!!" None could hear Katie's screams as Jet muffled them with his cape. He laughed diabolically as his beak drew close to her neck. It took only a moment, and as Jet drained Katie, her screaming ceased. "Come now, darling. They're waiting for us! Hehehehehe..." Katie looked at Jet blankly. "Yes, master... We must go..."

After Shadow and the experiments got away from Eggman Nega, Anubis addressed Blaze. "You know something. You must tell us, now." he ordered. Marine jumped up and down to get the group's attention. "Let me tell this one! It'll be ripper!" she insisted. Crash frowned at her. "I think it's best we be able to understand the story." he said. Marine glanced at him a moment, as though attempting to think of a comeback. She pointed at him and gasped. "Ooooh, that's a nifty hat you got, mate! Where'd you get it?" she asked. Blaze cleared her throat and shared their story with the group. "In my home dimension, I'm the guardian of the Sol Emeralds. One day, one of them went missing. Only one. I caught the thief, but it wasn't what I expected. That Eggman Nega is not the same one from my dimension! I chased him through a portal he created using the Sol Emerald, and Marine followed me... But we were ambushed. The next thing I remember is waking up in that capsule..." she told them. Marine frowned. "Not bad, but my version's better! It has pirates!" she said. Shadow looked thoughtful. "There's more than one Eggman Nega... I wonder if the one we found is from this dimension..." he wondered. Bucky scratched his head. "You were ambushed, you say? Did you see who ambushed you?" he asked. Someone cackled loudly overhead! Tabitha was circling them on her broomstick! "It was me! I can't believe I let you two escape. But I'm not here to recapture you right now! Come, my servant! Get the Chaos Emerald!" she shouted. While everyone turned to Tabitha and prepared for battle, an energy blast came from behind them and struck Anubis, killing him and knocking away the Chaos Emerald! "Sssshoot! It wasss a disssraction!" Vortex gasped as they turned to see the Deathbringer fly over and snatch the Chaos Emerald! Tabitha laughed at the group. "All

right, my servant! Follow me now! We'll be back to take a hostage later!" Zipp started shooting at the Deathbringer, but it was too fast. Crash grabbed Zipp by the wings. "He's brainwashed by that witch, Zipp! He doesn't know what he's doing!" he said. "So?!" Zipp growled. Shadow took off after the Deathbringer. "We can't let them get away!" he yelled. The rest of the group followed him.

No one noticed Katie acting strange once she and Jet rejoined them. Chet assumed that any unusual behavior was due to exhaustion, so even he didn't question anything. As the Babylon Rogues continued to lead the group, SPOT began giving off an alarm. Cream looked at SPOT's monitor. "We're getting close! Tails must be nearby!" she said. Silver looked at SPOT. "Really? Where?" he asked. Illusi glanced around the area and called for everyone's attention. "I think we'd better leave. The Lost Ones..." He was interrupted by Lospector's voice! "The Lost Ones are right here! And you guys are out past curfew! Allow us to escort you home!" Losipher and a host of Loskel and Los Foxes emerged in front of the group! Gemini spotted familiar faces among the Lost Ones. "Look! It's Sonic and... Copter!" she said. Rainbow looked devastated to see Copter as a Lost One. "Oh, no! And that robo-dog was probably following the signal from Two, not Tails!" she cried. Losipher began approaching the group. "You won't escape this time! Your souls are mine!" he growled. Heather pointed back in the direction they came from. "We gotta run! There's too many of them!" she said. Chet began heading towards Los Sonic. "We should try to get Sonic first!" he suggested. Conan began firing Chaos Spears at the Lost Ones to cover Chet. "You're suicidal, but it's worth a try!" he shouted. Gemini backed away from the Lost Ones and tried to talk Chet out of this. "It's too dangerous! You have to get out of there!" she yelled. Illusi turned to the Babylon Rogues. "You can evade the Lost Ones. Get in there and bring them back!" he pleaded. The Rogues hopped on their boards. "You guys get moving! We'll be right behind you!" Jet said. As most of the group began to run away, Conan remained to cover the Babylon Rogues from behind. "Fools! There is no escape!" Losipher roared. Wave grabbed Chet once she reached him, but he struggled. "I can do this! Let me go!" he shouted. Conan continued to cover the Rogues as they began to escape! "Die, demons!!" he yelled. Chet continued to struggle, and Wave became fed up with it. "This will make you more obedient..." she said, leaning towards his neck! "Hey, what are you.... Aaaaaahhhhh!!!!" Conan turned towards Chet's scream as Wave bit him. "Vampires? What the..." The distraction allowed a Los Fox to approach Conan and stab him with its razor sharp tails! "Aaaaaah!! C-curses...." Conan muttered as he fell down, dead. Lospector hovered over to the Los Fox. "Good job... You've been a great recruit.... Tails!" Indeed, Tails was a Lost One as well. Losipher crossed his arms. "This is growing tiresome. We should finish them!" he muttered. Lospector grinned. "I've got just the four for the job!" he said as Sonic, Copter, and also a Los Mia approached.

As Shadow led the chase to catch the Deathbringer and Tabitha, Marine suddenly tripped and fell! "Criiiiiiiiiiiiiikeeeeeeeeeeyyyyy!!!!" she screamed as she seemingly fell through the floor! The group stopped to look for her, thus allowing Tabitha to escape. On closer inspection, they found a hole in the street where there was once a manhole cover. "Marine! Are you OK down there!?" Blaze shouted. Marine's dazed voice could be heard below. "She'll be apples, mates.... No worries.... Now someone turn on the lights, please..." she said. Bucky knelt down beside the hole. "We might as well go after her. That witch is long gone now." he grumbled. Suddenly, Marine screamed loudly, and a hurricane of bats came flying out of the hole, surrounding the group! All of them but Shadow and Bucky began screaming until the bats flew away. "A year late, but there go Rouge's cousins. The rats were scarier." Shadow remarked. The rest of the group didn't get it, but they didn't care either. "Are you still OK down there?" Zipp shouted. Marine hesitated before answering. "Strewth! You guys gotta come down and check this out!

There's a whole city down here! This adventure's getting interesting!" she said. Shadow, Bucky, Blaze, and the surviving experiments jumped into the hole and found themselves in the dark remains of the Hidden Ruins that Rainbow once called home. It didn't take long before they caught up with Marine, who was shivering a little. "It s-sure is d-dark down 'ere..." Marine muttered. It seemed somehow darker than it should have been, likely a side effect of the Nightmare Zone. "Are you sssscared, raccoon?" Vortex asked, somewhat mockingly. Marine shook her head. "No way! I'm not s-s-scared of anything! It's just cold down 'ere!" she said, obviously lying. "Anyway, I gotta figure out what spooked those bats!" she added. Crash looked confused. "Wasn't that you?" he asked. Coughing was heard nearby, so the group followed Marine, who ran ahead to investigate! They found Char the Chao hovering inside the doorway of a building! "Lousy bats!" he said between coughs. Shadow glared at him. "You're Eggman's Chao. Do you know where the real Eggman is?" he asked. Char looked over at them and nodded. "Sure. I'll lead you to him if you want... Just, don't scare the bats! They blow the dust around, and it makes me sneezy!"

The Lost Ones had managed to cut off most of Silver's groups' escape routes, but there was one path they could take. Just outside of Twinkle Park, they found an old graveyard. It appeared to be the perfect place to lose the Lost Ones. "Do we have to go in... there? It's really scary..." Cream whimpered. Gemini looked grim as she looked at the "Dos and Don'ts" book. "Don't ever, ever, EVER enter a graveyard on Halloween night. Someone in your group WILL die. I wish we had more of a choice..." she said sadly. Silver started walking into the graveyard. "Hey, the people in here are peacefully dead. I'd take them over the Lost Ones any day!" he reasoned. Heather shivered as she followed the group into the dark graveyard. "It's too dark here... Can't we get some sort of light?" she asked. Cream picked up SPOT, and the robot produced a bright light from its monitor. She pointed the light around so they could see their surroundings, but as the light passed over the Babylon Rogues, they blocked the light with their capes! Wave, who lacked a cape, flew away! "Hey, what's wrong birdies!?" Rainbow wondered. Illusi grabbed SPOT from Cream as he realized what this meant, and shone the light on the rest of the group. As it passed Katie and Chet, they bared their fangs and began hissing! "Vampires!! The Babylon Rogues are vampires, and they got Katie and Chet!!" he shouted as the group began backing away from them. Jet and Storm joined Wave in the air. "Ha ha ha! You guys passed through a hall of mirrors with us and didn't figure it out!" Storm laughed. "Now, you'll all satisfy our thirst!" Wave hissed. "Go get them, our pets!" Jet squawked. Illusi dropped SPOT and took charge of the situation. "Stand back, all of you! I'll handle this! They shouldn't even be able to take artificial sunlight!" he shouted, using his powers of illusion to shine an intense light on Katie and Chet! The two of them screeched loudly as the light disintegrated them! All that was left in a moment was dust! Illusi then tried to hit the Babylon Rogues with the light, but they were too fast, and they flew away before Illusi could hit them! "Our group's already gotten smaller... Maybe we should get out of here..." Gemini panted. Silver shook his head. "We gotta keep going. Let's hurry, so we don't tempt fate much longer!" he suggested.

Char led Shadow, Blaze, Marine, and Team GeneX through the Hidden Ruins, and soon they reached the temple-like building that once served as Rainbow's house. "Of course, Eggman took one of the biggest buildings down here as his own! By the way, I'm glad to see you alive, Shadow!" Char said, recalling delivering the messages that led to the deaths of several heroes. As they entered the building, they found Eggman seated on a sort of throne he'd placed in the entrance room. "I found some old friends, doc!" Char said. Eggman was dressed in his normal outfit, which was a good sign since he had a darker fashion sense while he was insane the previous year. "Welcome, Shadow! And of course, Dr. Stein. What brings you to my

underground empire?" he asked. Zipp pointed his gun at Eggman right away. "No funny stuff! We've had enough of that sort of thing tonight!" he warned. Marine giggled at Eggman. "There's that bushy 'stache again! They're everywhere!" she said. Blaze stepped forward to speak to Eggman. "Doctor, something very dark is happening on the surface, and Eggman Nega seems to have something to do with it. Do you know what this is all about?" she asked. Eggman stroked his moustache while he thought about how to reply. "Do I know... Well, I can show you where the plan will come to fruition. Yes, I think I can do that. As long as you don't mind visiting scary places." he said. Marine looked a bit worried. "Uh, he don't know anything! Let's go, mates!" she said nervously. Shadow crossed his arms. "The whole city is a scary place! Let's just get on with it!" he grumbled. "Where would you be taking us?" Bucky asked. Eggman grinned at them. "Oh, nowhere special. Just a graveyard! There's a shortcut in these ruins, and I can take you there!" he replied. Crash backed away, along with Marine. "Graveyard? Maybe we should just be going..." he muttered. Vortex chuckled at him. "You're sssscared, too? Give me a break!" he hissed. "Lead the way, Eggman. We can't afford not to trust you right now." Blaze said. Eggman nodded. "So true. Get ready, Char! It's time for us to go!"

Though the Babylon Rogues had appeared to have given up, it wasn't long before the group found themselves running away from them while Illusi and Gemini attempted to destroy them with magic! Silver stopped suddenly, as he'd become sick of being chased. "I'll try to hold them still! We can't just keep running all night, after all!" he said. Rainbow pulled out her gun and stood beside Cream, along with Heather, so they could protect her. "Be careful, Shiny!" she said. As Silver approached the Babylon Rogues, SPOT began beeping. Cream whimpered as she realized what it meant. "The Tails Tracker..." she said to Heather, who ran to get Silver's attention. "We have to get out of here!" she yelled. Silver groaned as his psychokinesis missed the Babylon Rogues. "I almost had them!" he shouted in frustration. Suddenly, Los Sonic appeared from behind a tombstone and ran after Silver from behind! "Look out!!!" Heather screamed, but it was too late! Los Sonic grabbed Silver and quickly snapped his neck! As Silver's body fell limply to the ground, Cream, Heather, and Rainbow screamed in horror. Realizing what had happened, Illusi turned to Los Sonic, who was quickly accompanied by Los Tails, Copter, and Mia! "I'll catch those Lost Ones! Stop the Babylon Rogues, Gemini!" he shouted, rushing to get to the Lost Ones before they could hurt anyone else! Gemini was panting in panic and exhaustion. It looked like the whole group may be dead in a moment, but she couldn't let it happen! She reached for some twigs on the ground and pointed her wand at them. Seeing her not paying attention, the Babylon Rogues began flying towards her! Gemini cast a spell. "Morphicadabra!" she said, and in a moment, the twigs became wooden stakes! Seeing this, the Rogues hit the brakes, but they were already going too fast to stop! Gemini grabbed the stakes and turned to Storm, who was closest. As he came close, she kicked him off his board and staked him in the heart! Next, Wave approached. Gemini lunged at her, knocking her over, and then pierced her heart with a stake as well! As Storm and Wave turned to dust, Jet came up behind Gemini and grabbed her! "I guess you'll have to replace them!" he said, preparing to bite her! Suddenly, he was stabbed in the back with another stake! Rainbow had grabbed one of the spares Gemini had created and left on the ground, and took out Jet! "I got your back, Wanda!" she said as Jet crumbled into dust before their eyes. Meanwhile, Illusi had caught the Lost versions of their friends in an illusion cage. "A job well done, I'd say." he grinned. Gemini looked excited. "Great! Now I can try the séance!" she cheered.

Eggman led the group through the Hidden Ruins from the seat of his Egg Mobile, which allowed him to move faster than he would on foot. It didn't take long before they reached a stairway leading out of the ruins. "The graveyard is just outside there. You'll find that some dark things

are indeed about to happen there." he said. Everyone in the group glanced at each other, and then Shadow turned to Eggman. "You go first. We're not going to blindly walk into a trap." he said bluntly. Eggman sighed. "You never trust me. All right, it's not like it'll kill me to go first." he said, flying his Egg Mobile up the steps and out of the ruins. "Well, I guess it's safe! Let's go, mates!" Marine said, running ahead of everyone. Blaze followed her. "Slow down, Marine!" she shouted. As they climbed out of the ruins, the first thing they heard was Char's apologetic voice. "I'm sorry guys. Dr. Eggman's still nuts! He threatened to feed me to some monsters if I didn't lure you to him!" he said, flying away in fear of what was going to happen! Standing in front of the entrance to the graveyard was Eggman, Tabitha, and the Deathbringer! "You... You're all on the same side!?" Bucky gasped. Tabitha cackled at them. "Yes, and I was hoping you'd stumble into the ruins while you chased me! Now, my servant, kill them!! Well, most of them!" she commanded! The Deathbringer started to head towards them, but Zipp quickly flew to the front and shot it several times, causing it to fall forward and die! "Aw, why'd it fall forward!? Now we can't ssssee who it wasss!" Vortex hissed. Tabitha glared at them in a fury. "Eye for an eye! Take this!!" she shouted, firing a magic attack towards Zipp! Crash ran in front of Zipp, intercepting the attack, but getting a hole in his head in the process! "What the!?! C-crash!!" Zipp gasped in shock. Marine ran towards Tabitha, swinging her fists. "You monster! I'll knock yer block off!!" she shouted, but she was powerless against Tabitha, who quickly knocked her out with her broom and carried her away, with Eggman following and laughing! Blaze took off after them first. "We have to save Marine!!" she shouted. Shadow followed immediately, but Team GeneX hesitated, glancing down sadly at their fallen comrade. "Come on, my friends. Let's get revenge!" Bucky ordered, leading them into the graveyard.

Sonic, Tails, Copter, and Mia had been restrained at a clearing in the graveyard. "Can't we do this elsewhere?" Heather asked nervously. Gemini shook her head. "We'll need them to get out of here alive. Besides, we need a place with a connection to the spirit world. It doesn't get much more spiritual than a graveyard, where souls are laid to rest." she reasoned. Rainbow and Heather stood close to Cream as Gemini opened the "Dos and Don'ts" book to begin the séance. She held up her wand and began the ritual. "Spirits from beyond the grave, hear our call. Let us light your way from the darkness, so that we might see you again. Sonic, Tails, Copter, Mia, rise, and return to us! Light, show the way!" As Gemini was reading from the book, light from her wand was shot to the area above the Lost Ones, and a strange portal opened above them! Faceless spirits began flying all around the portal, some going in and some coming out! A few that came out began to take shape, and those watching were devastated by who it was! Alpha, Terra, and even Xenegg emerged from the portal, and began laughing manically as they aimed their weapons at the group. "Keep that portal open, girl! All of Hell will emerge! But on the other hand, I cannot let you resurrect the one whose death had brought me peace! Alpha, Terra, let's carry them into the portal instead!" Xenegg bellowed! Illusi attempted to stop them with Wrongos, but it was useless! Rainbow instinctively started shooting at them as well, but it was pointless. "No!! Get back in there! You monster!! You had One killed by that other monster!!" Rainbow shrieked. As Xenegg reached out for Rainbow's throat, something grabbed him! "Get the hell away from her!!" It was Punchy's spirit! He wasn't alone, either. Amy, Knuckles, Rouge, Razor, Katie, Chet, and Silver emerged and began struggling with the evil spirits that had escaped! Soon, the evil spirits were pulled back into the portal, and Sonic, Tails, Copter, and Mia emerged from it! Mia glanced at her body and shook her head. "I can't! The Lost Ones have my body!" she pointed out. Gemini switched the "Dos and Don'ts" book for her own spell book. "I have to perform an exorcism before the portal closes! Hang on!" Sonic pointed into the woods. "Hold it, guys! This show's attracting some bad attention!" he told them. Looking around, Cream, Rainbow, Illusi, and Heather spotted Losipher

approaching! "I shall feast on all your souls!! Prepare to die!!!"

Blaze was leading the chase as Tabitha was flying through the graveyard carrying Marine. Shadow was close behind her, with Bucky, Vortex, and Zipp in the rear. Suddenly, Tabitha changed direction. The Lost Ones were swarming in an area of the graveyard, and Tabitha flew straight into the swarm in an effort to lose her pursuers! The group attempted to keep up the chase, but soon they found their path blocked by a group of Loskel! "Where do you think you're going, hmmm?" said Lospector, who was hovering in the air above the Loskel. Blaze quickly jumped at the Loskel and knocked their skulls off, one by one! This did not destroy them, but the skeletons did start stumbling around in search of their skulls. "What's your hurry?" Lospector asked, hovering in front of Blaze. "Get out of my way! Grrr, which way did that witch go?!" she growled, looking around the sky for Tabitha. Bucky and Shadow were also looking, but Tabitha was gone. "We lost them..." Bucky muttered. "Curssssed Lossst Onesss!!" Vortex hissed. Lospector yawned as though he was bored. "Well, while those Loskel are pulling themselves together, I'm gonna go see if Losipher's devoured the other souls in this charming place. Bye!" Shadow watched Lospector fly away. "What did he mean by that?" he wondered aloud. Bucky began chasing Lospector. "Isn't it obvious? There are others in trouble out here! We might as well check it out!" he suggested. "Wait for us, boss!" Zipp shouted, following Bucky as Vortex joined him. Blaze hesitated to follow them. "What about Marine?" she asked. Shadow didn't say anything, and simply began following Bucky. Blaze started following as well. "I guess there's not much I can do now... Darn it!" she muttered.

It wasn't long before they found the area the Lost Ones were swarming around. Gemini was busily chanting a spell while Rainbow, Illusi, SPOT, and Heather were doing their best to keep back the Lost Ones! It seemed that they were unable to do much more than slow Losipher down, though, and he was getting close to them! As Losipher began to reach out to grab Rainbow, Shadow sped into the area and smacked Losipher with a homing attack! Blaze followed up his attack with one of her own, knocking the demon backward a few steps! Meanwhile, Bucky, Vortex, and Zipp had spread out a bit and were repelling the other Lost Ones! Lospector giggled excitedly. "Hee hee hee! Oh, goody, now we got a challenge! What do ya say, Losipher?" he said. Losipher glared hatefully at Shadow and Blaze. "You impudent fools! I damn you all to Hell!!!" he shrieked, changing into one of his more demonic forms! Shadow glanced back at the others for a second. "Are you all OK? What's going on here?" he asked. The ghost of Sonic waved at Shadow from above him. "Hey, Shadow! Long time no see!" he grinned. Shadow didn't have time to question this, since Losipher was quickly preparing to attack! Suddenly, Gemini loudly wrapped up her spell. "Dark spirits!! I cast you out! The power of light shall repel you all!! Begone!!!" A brilliant light covered the entire area, spreading from Gemini's wand and covering everyone! As the light hit the Lost Ones, they screamed loudly and were tossed far into the distance! More spirits caught within the light were tossed away for a few moments, until at last the light began to fade. Everyone in the group except Zipp were rubbing their eyes, and as they adjusted to the returning darkness, they saw Mia stand up first. "That... was cool." she said. Suddenly, before anyone could react, Guard burst into the area and stabbed Mia in the back! "Mia, no!!!" Gemini screamed, devastated. Gunner emerged from the shadows behind Guard, and was laughing manically as Mia fell down! "Not... again...." she muttered as she died once more. "Now, destroy them all!!!" Gunner yelled, pressing buttons on his remote! "Chaos Whirlwind!!" Copter had climbed to his feet, and used his power to knock Gunner over! As he dropped the remote, Zipp shot at it, releasing Guard from Gunner's control! Guard shook his head a couple seconds as he regained his senses. "Grrrr... What have I done now..." he said sadly. "You've failed me for the LAST time!"

Gunner snarled as he stood up! Without delay, Gunner pulled out a gun and shot Guard in the back of the head! "You sick bastard!!" Copter shouted as Gunner made his escape. They didn't have time to chase him, however.

Sonic quickly ran around the group in a circle to get their attention. "Over here, guys! I have to tell you all something!" he said. Once he stopped moving, everyone turned to him. "This is important! Everyone listen up!" Tails announced before Sonic continued. "Thanks, Tails. Everyone, we don't have much time! While I was... out of the action... I was able to see what that witch, Tabitha, is up to! I don't really have time to explain, though. We gotta get to a place in this graveyard called the 'Tomb of Nightmares,' quick! Follow me!" he said, heading off towards the center of the graveyard. As the group quickly began following Sonic, Tails and Copter approached Gemini. "Thanks for bringing us back, Gemini. It means a lot to me." Copter said. Tails caught sight of the "Dos and Don'ts" book in Gemini's hands. "Hey, you found my book! Can I have it back?" he asked. Shadow groaned as she handed the book back to Tails. "Did you have to give that to him? He's going to be telling us how everything we do is a bad idea now..." he complained. Rainbow grinned at him. "Hey, we should've listened more last time, Shade. Besides, that book just saved their lives!" she said. Tails whimpered as he read part of the book. "Did you guys see the part about graveyards?" he asked. Cream nodded. "We know, Tails. We're all trying to be careful..." she told him. Illusi slowed down as everyone else followed Sonic. "What's that noise.... Does anyone else hear that?" he asked. Zipp slowed down as well. "Hmmm... That sounds strange... Maybe we better stop and listen..." he suggested. Vortex crossed his arms. "Try catching Ssssonic and telling him that..." he said. Illusi agreed with that suggestion, and teleported in front of Sonic. "Stop! Listen!" he said. "But we gotta hurry!" Sonic protested. The noise Illusi had heard was growing louder, however, and the whole group stopped a moment to listen to what sounded like voices.

Shadow recognized the voices as they started laughing in a taunting manner. "The ghosts of the Nightmare Zone..." he muttered, recalling how they'd managed to warn him about Nightmare Chaos the year before. White flames appeared above them, and soon began taking ghostly shapes, as they had before attacking Sonic and friends the year before! Sonic and Tails both backed away, ready to start running, and the rest of the group began to do so as well, except for Shadow. "Wait, I don't think they're here to hurt us..." he said. The ghosts giggled at the fearful group and began to sing. "We ghosts don't attack, we just try to scare. On this evil night, darkness is everywhere. A spell of the shadows will be cast very soon, as midnight approaches below the bright moon. Dark beings rise, and the nightmare may spread. The Lord of Nightmares returns from the dead. Our song of doom is our way of warning. Beware, despair, for evil is swarming. Tee hee hee hee..." The playful song of the ghosts filled the group with dread, but there wasn't much time for hesitation. Bucky pulled out a pocket watch and frowned. "They're right. Midnight is coming fast." he said. Tails flipped through his book in search of anything relevant. "Hmmm... 86 in the book says 'Do listen to warnings from ghosts! Failure to do so usually...'" Tails was interrupted as Heather pointed at the graves ahead of them. "Uh, guys... Should the ground be moving like that?" she asked nervously. Suddenly, hands began reaching up from under the ground! One hand grabbed Rainbow by the ankle as it emerged! "Eeek!! Get it off me!!" she screamed. Copter simply pulled her away, and the hand let go. "They don't have a good grip... Let's get going before they climb out!" he suggested. Sonic nodded in agreement. "Right! Follow me, everyone!" he said as he began leading the group through the graveyard as the dead began rising from their rest!

As they continued running towards their destination, the group soon found their path blocked!

The zombies had climbed out of their graves, and as a result, had surrounded them! "Aaah! We were so close!" Sonic groaned, glancing around in search of an escape route. "Got any magic that might help, Wanda?" Rainbow asked. Gemini shook her head. "Even if I tried teleporting us, the zombies are everywhere!" she said. Cream held Cheese tight. "I'm scared, Cheese..." she cried. Bucky, Vortex, and Zipp attempted to stop the zombies with their distance attacks, but they all failed. "Sssshoot! How can we get out of thisss?!" Vortex hissed as he realized his Chaos Inferno attack wasn't doing anything. "Maybe if we try burning them..." Blaze suggested. Heather gave it a try, sending a jet of flames from her hands to the zombies! They caught fire, but they didn't seem to care! The zombies were getting closer, and Tails and Gemini were frantically searching their books for anything that might help. "Vampires... Goblins... Leprechauns, even!! But this book's got nothing on zombies!!" Tails shouted. Gemini didn't seem able to find anything either, so Illusi decided to take charge of the situation. "Hopefully, this will fool them!" he said, waving his hands and creating illusions resembling everyone in the group! "Get ready to run! I'll use these illusions to distract them!" As Illusi sent the illusion of Sonic into the zombie swarm, some of them turned to chase it! More of the illusions ran around, and soon there was a way out! As Sonic led the group away from the zombies, Gemini noticed Illusi wasn't moving. "Come on! What are you doing!?" she cried. Illusi shooed her away. "I need to stay and maintain the illusions so that you all have time to escape! Go!" Realizing there wasn't much choice, Gemini obeyed. Illusi watched as the group vanished into the darkness. As he turned to his illusions, he failed to notice some undead figures approaching him from behind...

The Tomb of Nightmares was marked by a statue of Shadow Chaos. A large cauldron was set up over a fire in front of the statue, bubbling with some sort of strange brew. Each hand of the statue had someone tied to it! Tied to the left hand was Whisk, while Marine was tied to the right hand! Bucky and the experiments, led by Vortex, quickly ran over to free Whisk, while Blaze, Rainbow and Shadow ran to help Marine! "What took you guys so long?" Whisk said in a dazed voice as Vortex and Zipp helped lower her to her feet. "Yeah, that old hag made us drink some vile goop! I still wanna hurl..." Marine whined. Tails, Copter, and Gemini gazed into the cauldron. "What is that stuff?" Copter wondered. Sonic took a look as well. "That's some sort of potion for Tabitha's spell, I guess." he said. "What do you suppose that witch was planning?" Bucky wondered aloud. "Well, stick around! You'll find out!" Lospector's voice was heard from above, and as the group prepared to run for it, they found escape was impossible! Lost Ones had surrounded the tomb, with Losipher standing in front of the Shadow Chaos statue! In front of him was Tabitha and Gunner, and beside them, Eggman and Eggman Nega lowered their Egg Mobiles into the area! Sonic and Eggman both sneered at each other. "Sonic! It truly is impossible to get rid of you, isn't it!" he growled. "Same to you, Eggman!" Sonic replied. Tabitha immediately turned her attention to her freed captives. "No escaping this time! Ha!!" With a wave of her hand, Tabitha manipulated the Shadow Chaos statue, causing it to reach out and grab Whisk and Marine again! "Crimony!! This thing sure is grabby!" Marine shouted. Whisk attempted to teleport away, but she couldn't. "Aaah!! That witch cast a spell on me earlier! I can't get away!!" she yelled. Tabitha took out a familiar book and began to read a spell. "Th-the Book of Nightmare! What are you doing with that!?" Tails shouted with fear. Eggman Nega began to explain while Tabitha quietly read the spell. "Last year, after Dr. Eggman and Gunner abandoned this book, Tabitha here took it for herself. She has quite an aspiration..." he said. Losipher stepped forward to aid the explanation. "She, like us, wishes to spread darkness across the world. To have the Nightmare Zone cover everything. But at the rate it is currently expanding, it will take quite a while." he said. "Not long enough!" Sonic growled. Eggman Nega continued the explanation. "The spell we are casting will turn the entire world into the Nightmare

Zone. But, to do that, we needed some things. We spent much of the year hunting ingredients for that brew there." he said. Losipher frowned as he glanced at Whisk and Marine. "We must sacrifice two females after they have tasted that brew. Do not worry, though, we Lost Ones will take good care of their souls!" he promised. Eggman grinned devilishly. "Just the sacrifice, however, is insufficient! Only through the power of a black Chaos Emerald and a black Sol Emerald can the magic be complete!" he said, holding up the black Chaos Emerald while Eggman Nega held up a black Sol Emerald! Gunner let out a sinister chuckle. "Once the spell is complete, it will have a most pleasant side effect. It turns out that when the Nightmare Zone covers the world on Halloween night, at midnight, the Lord of Nightmares will rise! With that power, all of you freaks will be destroyed in the most gruesome way I can imagine! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!!!" As the evil plot was finished being explained, Sonic and Shadow immediately set about trying to stop it! They attacked the hands of the Shadow Chaos statue, hoping to break them and enable the captives to escape! The statue was too strong to break, and Sonic and Shadow simply bounced off of it. Copter frowned. "If only I still had my tailband..." he muttered. Gemini tried her magic. "Dispellicizam!!!" she shouted, breaking the spell Tabitha had cast on the statue and causing it to drop the captives! Eggman and Eggman Nega tossed the emeralds to Tabitha, who caught them and grinned as her spell was completed. "Freed them? No matter! You're too late!! Die, and call forth the Lord of Nightmares!!!" Before anyone could react, Tabitha fired a magic attack that struck Whisk in the chest, killing her instantly! "Whisssssk!!! NOOO!!!" Vortex screamed. Tabitha glared at Marine. "Now, take this!!!" Tabitha fired another magic attack towards Marine! "No! I won't let you!!!" shouted Rainbow, who intercepted the attack before it could hit Marine! "RAINBOW!!!!" Copter shouted, running to her side as she fell to the ground. "At least... I can see One again..." she said just before passing on. Suddenly, the brew in the cauldron began to glow, and ghosts began flying all around the area as though caught in a tornado around the cauldron! Eggman turned to the other humans. "I think this isn't going right... We'd better go...." he suggested. Gunner and Eggman Nega agreed, and the three of them quickly took off into the night. Tabitha laughed as they ran. "Cowards!! These sacrifices may just have been enough! Watch!!!" she cackled, gazing at the storm of spirits around the cauldron! "Now what do we do!?" Heather wondered amidst the chaos. "We... watch...." Sonic said tensely. Suddenly, the tornado began to calm down, and as the ghosts began flying around the area in chaotic confusion, the statue of Shadow Chaos crumbled into pieces! Tabitha glanced at the rubble, and then at the panicked ghosts, and became filled with rage. "No!! This isn't right!! The Lord of Nightmares... The spell has failed!!! Curse that colorful echidna!! She ruined everything!!! AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!" Tabitha shrieked like she'd been hit over the head with a hammer. The ghosts flying around in random directions frustrated her into throwing the emeralds at them! "A year's work, all for naught! All because of you meddling fools! Lost Ones, I command you! Kill them all!! See to it that they never trouble me again!!" Though the Lost Ones normally don't take orders from living creatures, Losipher shared Tabitha's rage. "I can't even look at these damned creatures! Kill them, my minions, while Lospector and I return to the darkness!" he commanded, stomping away angrily. Lospector grudgingly followed him. "Even I'm mad this time..." he muttered. The remaining Lost Ones immediately attacked the group, forcing them into action! Gemini took cover and began attempting to cast her exorcism spell to repel the Lost Ones, while the others attempted to fight! As SPOT fired lasers in an attempt to protect Cream, a flying skull known as a Loskull smashed into the robot, destroying it! "Oh, no, SPOT!!!" Cream cried. Tails took SPOT's place and quickly smacked away the Loskull with his tails. "Darn it! I hope I can repair him..." Tails muttered. Amidst the chaos, Blaze and Marine recovered the Sol Emerald. "Crikey, look! The emerald's color!" Marine said as she noticed the Sol Emerald return to its usual red color. "I guess whatever was done to it wore off. We have to take it back home!" Blaze said, using the emerald

to open a portal to her own dimension. "What about the others?" Marine asked worriedly. Blaze looked a bit nervous about leaving them. "I... I'm sure Sonic will take care of them..." she said. Marine looked worried, too, but took comfort in Blaze's words. "Orrright... Let's go, Blaze!" As Blaze and Marine escaped into their own dimension, Vortex attempted to attack Tabitha himself. "Sssshe-devil!! Take thissss!!" Before he could reach her, a Losohst appeared in front of him and stabbed him! "Vortex!! You'll pay for that!! Eat lead!!" Zipp yelled, shooting at Tabitha! The witch stepped aside, and before Zipp could adjust his aim, a Losoar caught him and dragged him to the ground, where a swarm of Losol surrounded and suffocated him! As things began looking worse and worse, Gemini stood up and completed the exorcism! "Begone!!!" she shouted, banishing the Lost Ones from the area with a bright light! As the light subsided, the ghosts and the Lost Ones were all gone. Tabitha, however, was not finished. "Now, YOU begone!!" she yelled, firing an attack at Gemini which pierced her heart! "Ah.... I.... failed...." she muttered, falling to the ground. Copter ran over to her body, and then glared at Tabitha. "You.... you monster!!!" he growled. Sonic jumped in front of Copter, ready to take the fight to Tabitha herself!

With only a handful of heroes left, Shadow joined Sonic to face Tabitha. Copter stood up to join them as well, but Tails stopped him. "Out of my way!" he growled. "We have to get Cream out of here! We... we need you..." Tails explained. Bucky and Heather had already started to lead Cream and Cheese away, carrying SPOT's remains as well. Copter glanced down at Gemini's body. "She was her friend... I guess she'd want me to do this..." he muttered, following Tails as they headed off in search of an exit. Tabitha faced Sonic and Shadow, not even bothering to watch the others leave. "It's no use for them to run. They will be consumed by the darkness anyway, whether by the zombies, the Lost Ones, or if I must find them myself! Spirits of evil! To me! We shall wreak a terrible vengeance upon these hedgehogs, so they will not meddle in our affairs again!!" Using her magic, Tabitha levitated the Book of Nightmare in front of her and used its dark powers to call forth a host of evil spirits, which surrounded her a moment before vanishing within her, leaving her glowing with their dark power! Shadow glanced at Sonic a moment. "You up for this?" he asked. Sonic chuckled a little. "I've been waiting for something to do since I died! I say bring it on!" Tabitha snapped her fingers and made the Book of Nightmare disappear, possibly sending it somewhere for safekeeping. Next, she jumped onto her broom and began circling the hedgehogs from the air! "Prepare to die again, Sonic! Ha ha ha ha ha!!" Tabitha cackled, tossing a large magic bolt in Sonic's direction! Sonic ran out of the way, and Shadow began running as well to make it difficult for Tabitha to hit them. "Keep running! You're running to your doom! Try this!!" she laughed, sending a magical shockwave across the floor to trip Sonic and Shadow up! The two hedgehogs jumped over it, then attempted to hit Tabitha with their homing attacks! She quickly shielded herself with magic, and retaliated by conjuring a cage of energy to trap Sonic! "No escape this time!" she yelled. Shadow gasped at the situation, then growled at Tabitha. "Not this time!! I won't let him die this time!!" As Tabitha sent a powerful magic attack through the cage towards Sonic, Shadow used Chaos Control to block the attack, and got hit by it himself! "Shadow!!!" Sonic shouted in horror, watching the charred body of his friend land beside him. Tabitha cackled malevolently at this development. "He didn't even realize that you're stuck in my trap! He sacrificed himself for nothing!" she said, preparing to finish Sonic off. As Sonic looked over Shadow's body, however, he noticed something. Shadow had grabbed the Chaos Emerald, now green rather than black, and Sonic used it to Chaos Control out of the cage! Tabitha growled angrily as her attack missed. "Where did you go!? Get back here, Sonic!! You won't escape from me!!" she yelled. Sonic laughed from behind her. "Who's escaping? You're toast, Tabitha!" he shouted. As Tabitha turned around, she found Sonic charging towards her, using the power of the Chaos Emerald to give himself strength!

"Happy Halloween, old hag!" he said as he jumped towards her! Tabitha erected a magical barrier, but with the Chaos Emerald's power, Sonic was able to break through, and knock Tabitha off of her broom! As she fell to the floor, she fired a spell towards Sonic, which hit the Chaos Emerald in his hand, turning it black again! In addition, she fired a spell at herself, and dissolved away before Sonic's eyes. Before she disappeared completely, she cackled at Sonic. "I call this round a tie! We'll meet again, Sonic the Hedgehog! Ha ha ha ha ha!!!" As Tabitha vanished, Sonic looked over the black Chaos Emerald. "I was still tapping into its power when she hit it... I hope that doesn't have any side effects..." he muttered. He then knelt down next to Shadow's body. "Thanks, pal. You saved me... I'll miss ya, I guess..." he whispered. As midnight passed, and Halloween with it, Sonic began running back towards Nightmare Square. There would be a lot of work ahead of him if he wanted to return Station Square to normal, and as he heard the howling of a wolf in the distance, he got an uneasy feeling that the next year would be harder than he was anticipating...

The End

...FOR NOW!! HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE!!!

Happy Halloween!