

# Common Sky

Syrin Kitty

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PONY FICTION VAULT



"Ah'm tellin' you, you're makin' it way too pretty. It's all form and no function."

"Oh, please darling. If she's going to be out there *all alone*, then the least I can do is make sure she looks fabulous! What if she were to meet some nice fellow along the way, hmm? She'd look dreadful without proper fashionable winter attire."

"Ah don't think it's that kinda trip, sugarcube. She's goin' up int'the mountains, not lookin' to chat up some sophisticated pony in th'big city. She's gonna need lots'a pouches t'carry all 'er stuff, you ain't got a single pouch or even a small pocket on that thing. Where's she gonna fit her telescope or her food?"

"Why, in some one-of-a-kind-designer-saddle-bags I made for her, of course."

It was early evening in the dead of winter, and the dark starry sky overhead gleamed and sparkled above. The winter solstice had just passed, and with the season came less and less sunlight, bringing darkened coldness to the entire land of Equestria. Twilight Sparkle was walking along the narrow path to Rarity's boutique, looking up at the stars, as she began to overhear the conversation between her friends.

"Ah see then. ... Gosh Rarity, y'even colour-coded the inner linin'. Is this thing gonna hold up alright?"

"Are you doubting my skills, Applejack, darling? I'll have you know that ALL of my fashionable items come with a one-hundred percent durability guarantee, *thank you very much!*"

"Geez, ah didn't mean ta' imply-"

"Imply what, exactly?"

"N-Nothin'! Nothin' at all!"

"Well then! ... It *does* look alright, doesn't it?"

"A-ah suppose it looks alright..."

Twilight giggled to herself just outside the door. Those two always seemed to rub each other the wrong way, but these days it was almost as though they bickered like an old married couple. She quickly composed herself. "Hey guys, it's Twilight!"

The door quickly opened, and Twilight was greeted by Applejack, who warmly greeted her. "Well hello there Twilight. Glad y'made it. Rarity here's just finishin' up."

"Hello there Twilight, I'll be just a moment. I just have to finish this... one... section..." Rarity continued to concentrate on the jacket she was making, magically making the final stitches to the bottom corner of fabric. She then placed her tools in a small tray to the side and finally turned around to face Twilight, looking quite accomplished with herself and beaming brightly. "There! Done! Now tell me, Twilight, is this suitably gorgeous? Functionally fashionable? This IS what you wanted, right...?" she said, with a slight tinge of fearful expectation. Twilight scrutinized the dark violet jacket closely. It was lined with a wool-like material, and had black buttons close together running down one side, crossing over to the middle to provide more insulation to the chest. It was very large, covering the neck and fore-hooves, as well as having a hood which could be pulled over top her ears and head. Immediately, her mind started looking for flaws. She wondered if the lining being exposed over the sides would make it wear improperly, or if it would absorb more moisture, or if...

"Hmm, well... it looks good... b-" She looked over to Rarity, who had an unfaltering, nervous grin, and big, gleaming eyes of expectation that only Rarity, or perhaps Pinkie Pie, could pull off. Looking back at the jacket, Twilight figured that just this once, she wouldn't look the gift-pony in the mouth. "It's... it's perfect! Thank you so much, Rarity!" Twilight laughed and smiled awkwardly, noticing the similarly-coloured saddle-bags sitting behind Rarity. "Oh, those must be the bags!"

Rarity let the tension melt away with contented sigh. "Yes, yes they are, darling. And I made sure to mix both form AND function into their design." She glared a little at Applejack, who chuckled, embarrassed, and scratched the back of her head. "... Oh my, maybe I should even start up a brand new line of outdoors adventure wear for the fashion-conscious customer? Oh, but it's already half way into the season... far, far too late to start designing. Perhaps this fall..."

Twilight examined the bags. They looked rugged enough, and had a slightly off-violet colour to their sides, with black trim running down the corners and edges. Everything Rarity had made complimented Twilight's 'natural complexion.' Applejack interrupted as Rarity trailed off into her own little world of fashion and economics. "Well, ah reckon

this'll get ya where y'need to go. It's better then anythin' ah used to use when ah was doin' outdoors stuff in m'younger days. But are y'sure y'can't just see another meteor shower in the summer, when y'don't have t'worry 'bout freezin' t'death?"

"I'll be okay AJ. Promise. Besides, this meteor shower only happens once in a *THOUSAND* years. This *will* be the first AND last time I ever see it!"

"But... how is this meteor shower any different from any other meteor shower? Say, like the one we all saw during the summer? At least then you wouldn't have a good chance freezin' t'death."

Twilight sighed. She knew Applejack probably wouldn't understand, being so worldly and pragmatic. "I'm not going to freeze to death. It's a very important meteorological event, and I want to go see it, just once, you know? These are supposed to be the brightest shooting stars out of them all, even brighter than the ones we saw during the summer. The night is darkest during the winter, too!"

"Ah well, maybe ah just don't get it. Y'just be safe, y'hear?"

"Applejack's right. You'd better be safe out there, darling. We simply couldn't stand to have anything happen to you."

Twilight giggled. It was nice having friends so concerned about her. "It's alright. You made me this awesome stuff, and I'm sure it'll keep me warm the entire time I'm up there. Thank you so much, both of you."

• • •

Twilight Sparkle had been looking forward to this meteor shower ever since she learned about it during the summer. She had thought about it quite a bit, wondering if it would be too cold to even attempt. She would need to travel two days out of town, all the way into the mountains. The tree-line was too shallow to see it properly in Ponyville, and the rest was obscured by the mountain range. She'd need to stay at least two or three nights to make it worth it, as well, which practically made it a week vacation. Despite her reservations, the compulsion to see this once-in-a-lifetime event drove her to inevitably plead Rarity to help her make the things she'd need with no time to spare. Rarity managed to finish it with Applejack's 'woodspony' expertise in record time, even with the custom fabric she needed to order.

As Twilight walked slowly home, looking up at the shimmering sky, she questioned doing this on her own, but knew none of her friends could be talked into going. Rarity and Applejack obviously had their own reservations, Fluttershy couldn't be separated from tending to the sick animals that couldn't survive the winter without her (even if she liked the idea), and Rainbow Dash, of course, said she'd feel too bored just looking at stars all the time. Even Spike said he'd much rather tend to Twilight's house while she was gone, being content with "not being cold and wet all the time." The only one left was Pinkie Pie, and Twilight figured that star-gazing and just enjoying 'calm tranquillity' wouldn't be her 'thing.' All of them had immensely enjoyed the meteor shower over the summer, of course, but this was just too 'extreme.' It wasn't too extreme for Twilight, though.

Twilight finally made it home. It was dark inside, and none of the lights were on. Spike was taking a nap, since he tended to get tired when it got dark. She smiled and walked up to him, tucking the baby dragon in, as he shuffled around a little and murmured to himself. She decided she'd better write Celestia to tell her what she was planning. She moved over to her desk, lighting the post-lamp nearby with her magic. She took out a blank piece of parchment, and her quill and ink jar from the side table.

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*Dear Princess Celestia,*

*I hope you're doing well! Everything is quiet here in Ponyville. This isn't a regular update, per-se... it's mostly to inform you that I'll be travelling out west to watch the meteor showers that you may or may not be aware of. Thus, I may not be able to make my regular updates. I hope you'll understand.*

*I need to go up into the mountains, where it'll be very cold. Unfortunately, none of my friends are willing to go with me up there for the next few nights. I really wanted to share this with them, but I don't think this is something anypony I know is up for. But... I should be more understanding, right? This is my hobby, not theirs, and it'll take a lot of time to get there and back. Sometimes doing something on your own is okay.*

*That's a good lesson to take away from this, right?*

*Your Faithful Student,  
Twilight Sparkle*

---

Twilight sighed to herself, as she began to draw a small map on the bottom of the letter, so Celestia would know where she was in case anything should happen. She kept the letter short and brisk, since her heart wasn't really into it. She let the ink dry for a moment, before rolling the letter up, and placing it beside Spike's bed quietly as not to wake him. She figured he'd send it once he woke up, as he usually did if she decided to write a letter during the middle of the night.

Content with her Royal duties fulfilled, she walked over to one of the side windows, looking out at the stars and the moon hanging overhead in the sky. The moon was waxing into a crescent moon, and the stars sparkled with beautiful radiance. The snow, which caressed every crevice of every object outside, reflected the moon and star-light perfectly, creating a soft, bright blue, almost-twilight glow to everything that it touched. She loved nights like this, where the crisp, clean air of the winter made everything look just a little sharper. The spring and summer skies always had that little bit of humidity in the air, which would obscure some of the finer detail, but in the winter, there was none. On nights like these, she could almost feel the stars and the moon reflect off of her eyes, instilling a kind of calmness in her heart. She could walk alone on nights like this and never feel scared. Seeing this familiar view gave her extra resolve to go on this journey. She could only imagine what sights awaited her in the nights to come.

• • •

"Yo, Twilight!" Rainbow Dash's voice boomed from overhead, as she swooped down and quickly landed beside Twilight. "I got it!"

It was daytime once more, and Twilight was walking up to Rarity's shop to get prepared for the trip. "Oh, thank you Rainbow Dash," replied Twilight.

Rainbow Dash handed Twilight a sheet of especially strong-stock paper. "Don't sweat it! Just make sure you watch it out there. That one day near the end is going to be a totally killer storm, and you'll be dead meat if you're outside!"

Twilight looked it over closely. It was, of course, the 'seven day schedule' from the Weather Service in Cloudsdale. All of the days looked bright and clear, although a major storm was being scheduled for later in the week. "Thanks," said Twilight appreciatively, smiling. "This is a major help. Now I'll know when it's safe to come home."

"So, you're sure you wanna go do this? This is really dangerous, you know, for an *egghead* like you. And not in the good way."

"Yes, I'm sure I want to go," Twilight said, rolling her eyes. She was getting tired of answering that particular question every single time. The only one who didn't was Pinkie Pie, who just bounced up and down and promised to bake her tons of stuff. Twilight was half certain that Pinkie would just load her up with sweets on her way out of town - to "always be prepared" - and she'd have to subsist on candy for those five or six days she'd be gone.

"Fine fine, I'm sure I'M not going to change your mind. Anyways, they were gonna have another storm in the middle there, but I had them move it back. They owed me a favour anyways," said Rainbow Dash, folding her arms and smiling triumphantly.

"Thanks, Dash. Now, come inside and help, okay?" said Twilight, giggling at her bravado.

• • •

It was only an hour or so later that Twilight was able to leave, completely suited up in Rarity's coat and bags. She was already outside, since the jacket was way too warm to stand being inside anywhere for very long. Everypony was waiting for her to set down the main road out of town, admiring the fine handiwork of her jacket and bags.

"Oh darling, it looks amazing on you! I'm DEFINITELY going to expand my business to include kind of attire for 'adventurers' such as yourself. When you get back, you MUST model for me. You will, wont you? Pretty please?" Rarity asked pleadingly, with her hooves together.

"Um... let me think about it when I get back, okay? That isn't a 'no,' of course. After all, I do owe you one for all this."

"Oh of course. Silly me, you're all worried about this trip," replied Rarity in a kind of chiding voice.

"Yeah, y'take care of yourself now, y'hear?" warned Applejack.

"Oh, um... Twilight will be okay though, right...?" said a flustered Fluttershy, almost hiding behind Applejack.

"Don't y'worry now Fluttershy, ah'm sure Twilight'll be just fine. She's a big filly, she can take care of herself. She's just gotta be extra careful to not get hurt."

"Oh, but... what if she does get hurt out there, wont she be all alone?" Fluttershy seemed to get even more worried, motioning towards her violet friend.

"I'm... not that worried, guys. Seriously," Twilight replied, shaking her head in mild defeat.

"Yeah, guys," said Rainbow Dash, "It'll be good weather most of the time she's gone. It's not THAT dangerous. She's got that big jacket and everything!" Rainbow Dash finished.

Twilight then felt a huge weight suddenly press into her back, nearly making her legs buckle. "What the...?!" She then turned her head and saw Pinkie Pie bouncing up and down. Pinkie had loaded her down with a huge, ginormous pink bag full of candy and individually-wrapped cupcakes, right on cue. "Pinkie... Pie... I can't carry... all of this!"

"Sure ya can! If you don't, you wont have enough candy to throw an amazing party without me around with the first random pony you meet! How can you have a party without candy?!" replied Pinkie Pie, continuing to bounce up and down, with a look of glee on her face.

"Pinkie Pie! Please... this is very generous... but can you please... just put some in my bags? This is really too much," Twilight pleaded.

"Oh, okay! I wasn't actually going to make you carry all that candy though, that'd just be silly! You thought I was being for real? Silly Twilight." Pinkie Pie continued bouncing, the pink bag of candy continuing to press into Twilight's spine.

"Pinkie-!"

"Oh, right!" She finally took the weight off of Twilight, who sighed in relief.

"You can fill up the spare space in my bags, okay?" continued Twilight, smiling nervously.

"Okie-dokie!" Pinkie then quickly shoved a hoof-ful of candy into both sides, and zipped them up tightly. "Remember, this is ONLY enough candy for a party of TWO. If it's a



party of THREE, give ol' Pinkie Pie a call! Oh, wait, that would make it a party of four, wouldn't it? Then you'd need even MORE candy!"

Applejack sighed, and finally interjected. "Pinkie Pie... ah think Twilight really oughta get goin'."

"Right!" said Pinkie, bouncing her away to be alongside the other ponies. "Have a super-duper awesome time, Twilight!"

Twilight smiled at all of them. Even though they weren't coming with her, she could still feel all of their love and concern for her. That alone was enough to alleviate some of her regret. "Thank you, all of you. I'll be back in about six days. If I don't return, then I just want you to know that I've enjoyed all the time I've spent with all of you, and that I've left my will in an envelope under my mattress."

All of them gasped in disbelief, moving towards her quickly. Twilight waved her hoof and giggled. "I'm kidding, guys. KIDDING. Oh Celestia, you're all more wound up than I am. Just make sure Spike does his chores around the house for me, okay?" She then turned and started walking, waving in their direction. "See you all in a week!"

Everypony said their goodbyes and so-longs to her, and Twilight turned and started to head up the main road. The weather looked good, and the tension inside of her finally started to build up. She couldn't believe she was actually doing it, but she was, and that fact alone was making her more excited than anything else in the world.

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The path was snow-covered, and the sky overcast. It was a bleak kind of grey that populated most of the winter. The Pegasus ponies tended to let these overcast conditions happen more often during the cold season, since it wasn't really necessary to keep clouds in a particular formation for crop growth. The weather schedule that Rainbow Dash had given her said they would clear it up the next day, around the same time Twilight would arrive at her destination. Perfect timing, thought Twilight, as she continued on her journey towards the mountain range. It had been quite a few hours since she had left Ponyville. Snow covered the ground where grass had once grown, and the empty branches of trees contrasted themselves against the pale grey sky. Aside from the occasional sign-post along the path, it seemed that life itself had gone into hibernation. It was so calm and quiet, unlike the summer, and she couldn't hear a single animal in the bushes or a single draft of wind moving a branch.

She was approaching the point where she would need to turn in for the night, since the sun set very early. She had set out kind of late to begin with, but only to make sure she'd be able to get there without straining herself and being too exhausted to see the stars. With nothing to occupy her thoughts, Twilight's mind roamed to various subjects, as it usually did when she was alone and didn't have a book in front of her. She thought of her destination, as to whether or not it'd be suitable despite Rainbow Dash's insistence that it would be. She thought about Princess Celestia, about her one and only encounter with Nightmare Moon, and her friends. She'd repeat the rationalization of why they didn't come in her head, and keep her thoughts moving. Now she was thinking of some random spells she had read in one of her obscure books, and after that, remembering how a random colt had embarrassed himself at the last "Pinkie-Party" by accidentally slamming into the punch bowl and sending it flying towards Rarity. Then she remembered some of the wild parties Celestia tried to coerce her into going to while she lived in Canterlot. Twilight figured now that it was her refusal to make friends and be in social settings that had landed her in Ponyville in the first place. Her mind drifted to a cafe in Canterlot she missed going to, and talking to one or two of the other 'intellectuals' she could stand being around.

Through all this, Twilight knew that if somepony could read her thoughts, they'd swear she was more disorganized and random than Pinkie Pie, and that was saying something. She spent so much time re-organizing her library simply to keep herself sane, but it was basically a front for how disorganized the rest of her was. Twilight's brain could never slow down or stop thinking, even for a second. The only thing that really calmed her down was star-gazing, especially if it was the kind of astronomy that didn't involve fiddling around with telescopes too much.

"There," Twilight said aloud, stopping for a moment to clear her head. The path weaving up into the mountain range came into view, and she decided that she would set up camp at the tree line on the side of the road. "I'm right on schedule. I'll be able to finish this tomorrow." The familiar fields of Ponyville had been replaced with an forest that surrounded and arched over the main road. She veered off the path, and sat down on a patch of relatively flat, snow-covered terrain, looking around herself to make sure it'd work well enough for her tent.

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Night descended, and the overcast clouds brought a very light snowfall with them, covering the ground with a soft white powder. Twilight was in her tent on the side of the

road, reading a book, naturally. It was a large tent, way bigger than was necessary for just one pony. She munched on some dried apple slices that Applejack had given to her, flipping the pages idly. Nothing really caught her eye, even after flipping through random pages to see if anything jumped out at her. Bored with it, she flopped onto her back. For a few moments, she attempted to think nothing, which was a futile endeavour, to be sure. The lamp beside her filled the tent with light which flickered and danced on the ceiling. there wasn't a sound to be heard. Her eyes casually darted around the tent, admiring the crevices and corners. She shifted, grumbling. She felt agitated.

'Ah-ha,' Twilight thought to herself, after a few moments. 'Being alone! I've been so enthralled with my friends, being dragged on their crazy adventures, that I've barely had a moment to think by myself.' It was true that there always seemed to be fires to put out in Ponyville. It was so unlike her time in the library in Canterlot, where she was free to study almost entirely on her own, with the occasional help of her 'Research Assistant' Spike, of course. Now that she was alone, doing something on her own again, she didn't know how to feel. She knew she didn't feel lonely. Or did she? She knew she'd be back putting out those fires with her friends in no time, even though a tinge of disappointment in not being able to share this awesome event with her friends. Ugh, there was that regret again.

"None of them would find it interesting... sometimes you have to do things on your own, right?" said Twilight into the warm air in the tent, and the darkness of the night outside. She sighed and turned onto her side. She was determined to enjoy this to the fullest extent possible. Maybe Celestia could appreciate it more than her friends, and she could talk about it with her afterwards? Another sigh left her mouth. Before she knew it, her mind started bouncing around again. Twilight turned over again, and magically pulled a blanket over her. "I better get some sleep... that usually fixes things when I'm like this," she said to herself. She then swiftly placed the book back in her saddle-bags, and turned off the lamp. She couldn't sleep that easily, of course, but it didn't take too long before she was finally wisped into her dreams.

• • •

The path to the lookout spot was serene and covered in fresh powder snow from the night before. Stone walls jutted up from both sides of her, stretching to the sky, weaving back and forth through the mountain range itself. She had finally reached the exit of the path, which led out to a truly spectacular view on the edge of a sheer cliff. There was a very dense, stretching pine forest which spanned out below, spreading out far and wide, opening into a field in the far distance. The drop off the cliff was fenced off by what

looked like a very old, unmaintained fence that had been installed ages ago. To her left was a path downwards, continuing to lead onwards into Equestria, and to her right, up the side of the cliff, was a straight, wide, sloped path, that looked even less maintained than the fence. She magically pulled out the map from her bag to double-check, and sure enough, it was up the right path she needed to go. She took in the view, Celestia's sun hanging lower in the sky, with a kind of simple, elegant brightness in the winter air which was unseen during the spring and summer months. It looked almost reserved and demure in contrast to the light blue shades which enclosed the rest of the sky. The air was as sharp as it looked, and bit into her lungs quite hard. 'Only half an hour around this bend before I'll be at the most desirable spot,' she thought to herself. She increased her pace, the anticipation making her excited. "This is gonna be so, freaking, cool!" she then said aloud with a wide grin.

It wasn't very long before the path led to a bare area, up against a sheer side of a cliff-wall which blocked the way forward. It almost looked perfectly chiseled out of the side of the mountain, like somepony had been trying to make a mountain pass but then decided to stop right then and there for some reason. It looked out onto the forest and the flatlands, giving a perfect view which stretched all the way to the horizon. Twilight sat down, and shuffled the bags off of her back. "Right then," she said, closing her eyes and focusing her attention. Her horn began to glow with a familiar violet light, and her gear began moving out of her bag, unfolding, and expanding itself around her. Her tent puffed out into a more tent-like shape, the support spokes assembling and propping the structure up, while her blanket and all of her smaller things flew inside all at once. Pegs then stuck into the ground, holding the tethers of the tent firmly down. After only a minute, Twilight's camp was set up. She looked around, pleased with herself, and decided to crawl into the tent and get a bit warmer. It was going to be only a couple of hours before the main event started, and she decided she would read a book in preparation.

• • •

Twilight anxiously awaited the coming of the night as Celestia's sun began to drop below the horizon slowly but surely. Like clockwork, the night and Luna's moon began to rise into the sky, creating a twilight above her. The stars began to sparkle and shimmer, and Twilight could almost make out the tiny streaks of light beginning to show up on the changing horizon. She giggled with glee and hunched forward slightly in giddy anticipation. It was so, so early in the evening and she could already see them! In a short while, as Celestia's sun finally bid farewell for another day entirely, the meteor shower began in earnest. Multitudes of meteors entered the atmosphere, entirely at random, lighting up the night sky with their brilliant displays of incandescence. The largest ones

fought the moon for attention, like tears falling from the sky, creating a beautiful fireworks show on their way down. The moon hovered, unwavering, to the right of the shower, thankfully not so bright as to drown out any of the meteorites or stars. The air was clean, clear and crisp, seemingly magnifying the entire scene before Twilight eyes. The symphony of fire dazzled and amazed her as she looked up in awe at the night sky, taking it all in. She had never seen a more beautiful and enchanting night such as this. Twilight lowered her head and rested it on her hooves, breathing gently. She felt so calm. It felt like this was the perfect time and place for her. It was completely worth it, and she couldn't imagine why she ever questioned coming out here. Well, except for her friends...

Suddenly, Twilight heard an audible, although muted thump outside her tent. At first she thought it had been a snow shelf that had fallen from above, but then heard the familiar sound of crunching snow, as if somepony was walking through it. She said nothing at first, as a dark silhouette came into view, and began to look out into the forest and night sky, imposing themselves against the view of the horizon. The figure stood out there - obviously another pony - for a few moments, before Twilight spoke up.

"Um... hello?" Twilight said cautiously at the dark figure.

Two gleaming, teal-blue eyes peered through the darkness and seemed to light up. A particularly bright meteor began to be set ablaze in the atmosphere, and the bright fireball illuminated the other very pony subtly, showing off the dark blue hair flowing from their mane. The moon and the stars seemed to glow brighter in their presence, reflecting off of the other pony's coat and highlighting them perfectly. Twilight immediately recognized who it was, even if they had only met once before. It was Princess Luna.

"O-oh! P-Princess Luna!" Twilight immediately stood up, getting her face stuck on the tent momentarily. "H-how nice to see you here!" she continued, after untangling herself.

Luna looked startled and lowered her head. "I'm terribly sorry. I didn't realize this spot was taken. I'm sorry to disturb you..." replied Luna, almost immediately took off, apparently feeling herself unwanted by default. Twilight called out to her before she could get very far.

"Wait, Princess! It's me, Twilight Sparkle."

Luna wasn't very far off the ground before she stopped, and landed softly again, folding her wings away. "Oh... Twilight Sparkle. My sister speaks so highly and frequently of

you." Twilight blushed a bit, even though Luna couldn't see it. "I... was looking to enjoy the meteor shower tonight. I understand if this spot is already claimed." Luna seemed uneasy and almost afraid, which threw Twilight off quite a bit. She had only really known Luna as the hubris-prone, confident-to-a-fault Nightmare Moon.

"N-no, not at all! There's more than enough space up here for us to share, I promise!" Twilight eyes then popped open, realizing that she hadn't even properly curtsied, and she bowed her head. "I'm very terribly sorry, Princess. I never paid my proper respects."

Luna seemed visibly flustered, waving her hoof frantically. "No, no, it's okay. I never wished to be a bother. You needn't use such formalities with me..."

"A-are you sure? I-I mean... you're a Princess, and-"

"It's quite alright," replied Luna, still looking at the ground, glancing up at Twilight occasionally.

Twilight smiled warmly. "Okay then. Would you like to join me tonight, Princess Luna? I promise you're not unwelcome at all. I'd love to have you here with me tonight!"

Luna smiled very slightly, feeling touched by Twilight's kindness, even after everything that had happened between them, and slowly moved towards the tent. "T-thank you for your hospitality, Twilight Sparkle."

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It had been an hour after Luna had arrived. The two mares sat beside each other in Twilight's tent, legs folded underneath them as they looked out into the brilliant night. The meteor shower had only intensified as time passed, the bright fireballs continued to shoot down through the sky as if they really were falling stars. Twilight felt a little flustered being so physically close to a living immortal alicorn goddess at first, the but the display above them was enough to calm her down a little bit.

"Thank you for sharing your space with me, Miss Twilight Sparkle," said Luna, suddenly and quietly.

"O-oh, it's no problem at all! The honour is all mine!" Twilight replied, grinning wider than she should, and nervously giggling out of the suddenness of Luna's praise. Luna's breath filled the air with steam around her, the coldness eating up and crystallizing the

humidity. "I made sure to get a large tent, so I could store all of my things inside. It'd be really inconvenient if something blew off the side of the cliff, right? Plus, if anypony wanted to come with me, I'd have enough space for them, too! Or if I found anything really interesting on the way here I wanted to take back with me! That kind of thing!" Twilight looked to the side, grimacing a bit. The little voice in the back of her head told her she was talking too much for her own good.

"I understand," Luna said plainly, continuing to look out into her night.

Twilight said nothing for a few moments, thinking of what to say or do next. "Oh! Would you, um, like some apple slices? My friend Applejack gave me some!" She magically moved the bag over to Luna, offering. "'Best apples in Equestria,' as she always says!"

"Why yes, thank you. It was quite a journey here," Luna said happily, taking one with her hoof. "Applejack... that would be the farmer-labourer pony that you're with often, yes?"

"Yes, that's right. She's very dependable, you know, once you get past her must-do-everything attitude."

"I see. My sister has spoken about her."

"And this coat I'm wearing was made by Rarity. She's the fashion diva, with gemstones as her cutie mark."

"I see. It looks like it would keep you very warm."

"Y-yeah, it does," replied Twilight. Twilight continued to think of things to say, feeling awkward with the pace of the conversation. Luna wasn't wearing anything, and had only brought a small bag with her, crested with Luna's royal emblem and lined with silver fabric. Wasn't she cold? The night continued to light up randomly, casting ethereal shadows upon the pair of them. Twilight looked around her, when noticed the small telescope beside her. "Oh! And this was a gift from my parents, for being accepted into the Royal Academy. I've kept it with me ever since."

"Oh? A telescope?" said Luna, visibly interested.

"Yeah! I've been an amateur astronomer ever since I was a young filly. Aside from learning about magic - and I suppose studying friendship, now - astronomy has always been one of my favourite things to do."

"Amateur... astronomer?"

"Whenever it's late and I'm tired of reading books or learning spells, I usually just go upstairs onto my balcony and look out at the stars. I find it fun and relaxing," replied Twilight, smiling brightly. Finally, a subject Luna would like!

"Ponies look up at the night sky for fun now?" replied Luna, her eyes growing a bit wider.

"Oh, yes, lots of ponies do. Amateur astronomy is a pretty big hobby for lots of ponies out there these days. It's even taught in some schools growing up! Books have been written about the night sky by famous authors... the moon is even a symbol of romance in some fiction novels!"

"I-I see... so... some ponies out there look at the night, for personal enjoyment?" Luna lowered her head a bit, looking over at Twilight out of the corner of her eye.

"Of course they do," Twilight said happily, getting completely caught up in the moment. "A lot of ponies love stargazing. Many of them stay up sometimes just to do it!"

"I see. You're here because you're one of these 'amateur astronomers,' too?"

"Well... yeah! I came all the way out here just to get the perfect view for this amazing meteor shower," replied Twilight, still grinning to herself, gazing over the hail of light that was bringing her endless entertainment. "Once in a thousand years? Of course I couldn't resist! The night sky just makes me feel so... calm. It's like nothing else. Lots of other ponies feel that way, too."

Luna looked back up at her moon and stars, hesitating, before finally replying. "I'm glad," she said. She sounded happy, but with a tinge of melancholy hidden behind her voice as well. A small gust of wind came by and blew her mane away from the side of her face, making it sparkle and shimmer as if it was the sky itself. Twilight looked closely at Luna, trying in vain to read her. She had her head lowered, with a quivering smile on her face, and Twilight wasn't sure if she had offended her or made her happy. Twilight wasn't thinking terribly straight, what with all the anxiety rushing through her brain. Even in all her years under Celestia's tutelage, she had never been so close as to spend this kind of intimate time with an alicorn, just talking like this.



With a nervous grin and a soft voice, Twilight prodded a little. "I-I didn't say anything to offend you, did I, your highness?"

"Oh, no... you didn't offend me in the slightest," Luna replied, almost frantically. She composed herself and smiled at Twilight, which gave Twilight a slight feeling of relief. It was, of course, followed by an awkward pause, which Twilight attempted to break as fast as possible.

"W-would, um, you like some food? It must have been a long trip, right?" stuttered out Twilight. Oh, how she wished she could stop being such a timid little filly. All she could really think about was the last time they had seen each other, and how her and the others had essentially ripped Luna apart with the Elements of Harmony. She couldn't help but feel that there was some kind of bad blood remaining between them, even if Luna seemed to not pay it a bit of attention.

"It is quite alright, you've offered me food already. I have enough packed for myself, I promise," replied Luna, smiling softly.

"Oh. Right. Haha." Twilight looked off to the side, grimacing a bit. Now she was just making herself look like an idiot.

"But... if... if you're okay with it, I would not mind having another one of those apple slices. I don't get to taste such... simplified forms of food in the castle."

"Oh! Of course, go right ahead!"

Luna magically raised another one into the air. "I must ask, however... you seemed very over-packed for just one pony. Were you expecting someone else?"

"In case anyone decided at the last minute to come with me, yeah." Twilight looked down, lost in thought, but then snapped back to attention and smiled. "Sorry. I was hoping to share this with my friends, but none wanted to brave the cold to come out here. I'm glad you're here, though. This is one of the best things that's ever happened for me! I was convinced I wouldn't be able to share this with anypony, but then you arrived!" Twilight smiled sweetly at Luna. "And I'm having great time with you, Princess."

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A single tear rolled down Luna's cheek, although Twilight couldn't see through the moonlit darkness. Luna had never heard such sweet words about her night, the thing she put so much of her heart and soul into every time the sun set. She was so shocked that she couldn't say a thing, and she just turned her head the other way. What was this feeling in her chest? Sadness? Relief? Happiness? A torrent of emotion was about to burst out of her, and she could feel it.

"... Princess, are you okay?" asked Twilight. Luna responded quickly, attempting to save face.

"I'm fine... really," replied Luna, shaking her head. "I promise you. And... thank you, for having me here. I'm... I'm... having fun." The word 'fun' left her lips before she could process it, not knowing what that word really meant anymore. It was at that moment a very large fireball entered the sky and shot across it, from over their heads all the way to the horizon, and a thought occurred to Luna.

'Somepony... appreciates my night,' Luna started thinking to herself. At first it was small, but slowly, a great sense of joy overcame Luna, replacing all other emotions, as the brightness of the meteorite intensified in the sky, illuminating both of them for what seemed like an eternity. Her heart began to flutter a little, and she started to smile. 'Somepony... likes... my night...!'

"I'm glad you are. I am too," responded Twilight, seemingly oblivious to Luna's emotional state. But then Twilight just sweetly smiled again, causing Luna to melt a little. She decided just to enjoy the feelings she was experiencing, without thinking about it too hard.

"Thank you, Miss Twilight Sparkle. And please... you can call me Luna." Luna smiled brightly back at Twilight. It was so very fleeting, but for the first time in longer than Luna could remember, she had hope in heart that perhaps, just this once, she could make her very first friend.

"Luna, Luna, Luna," said a macabre voice through the darkness. Luna walked down a long, brick-laden hallway, lit up only by her horn and the phosphorescent-like properties of her mane. She had no idea how she had gotten here. She could only feel the bone-cold dampness of the ground on her hooves and throughout the hair on her body. It felt like a dark cellar or a dungeon. "You know that this world isn't a place for ponies such as us. Didn't you learn anything from our little 'vacation,' little one? We are one and the same, and yet, you've learned nothing, NOTHING from me. You really think this happiness and joy will persist? Pah. You're just as weak now as you were then."

Luna looked upon a big oval mirror in front of her, bolted against the wall of what appeared to be an abrupt dead-end to the corridor. She remembered where she was now. She had seen this scene playing out more times that she could remember, hearing that voice torture her for over a thousand years. Looking into the mirror, Luna could see the typical, forever unchanging reflection of her doppelganger staring back at her, with a smirk on her face not unlike a malevolent tyrant displaying the most exquisite schadenfreude. It was Nightmare Moon.

"Nightmare..." Luna started, looking down and sighing, stamping her hoof down. "Thing's have changed. The Elements of Harmony suppressed you, and as soon as you went away, everything improved. Once I was allowed to come back home, I was happier. I don't have to listen to you anymore. I'm even trying to make friends now."

Nightmare Moon rolled her eyes and laughed. "Oh you silly little filly, still holding onto those dreams you've caressed and kept alive for so many centuries. You will always be alone. No mere mortal can compare to the power we hold. In the end, we are RULERS."

"RULERS don't have to be EVIL."

"Tell that to our sister. Oh, you've forgotten, haven't you? How she mercilessly suppressed us because we wanted equal say over the affairs of the world - equal rule over the subjects of Equestria."

"With you threatening destruction, how did you expect her to react? She even apologized to us."

"Is that how you rationalize it now?" replied Nightmare Moon, laughing to herself. "You pulled the trigger, and you could have easily ended it. Oh yes, it's so easy to blame the

big-bad Nightmare Moon for everything, since everyone always just ASSUMES that sweet little Luna could NEVER do something as EVIL as that. Oh," Nightmare continued, bringing a hoof to her mouth in a faux-attempt to hide her amusement, "I wonder how your 'friend' Twilight would feel if she knew that you, and not I, were the one who wanted to plunge everypony in Equestria into eternal darkness. How you didn't care if they DIED?"

Luna's hoof instinctively raised up and smashed the mirror in anger, distorting and fracturing the face of Nightmare Moon. Luna's face contorted in pain and she began to sob, as a small trickle of blood ran down her fore-hoof and dripped onto the floor. "We'll see how long it takes before you come running back to me. You always do, in the end. Always looking for me to punish whoever has hurt you. I'd be GLAD to do it again," she continued, giggling in her menacing way. Luna just pounded on the broken mirror as glass fell frantically to the floor, crying out in pain. Nightmare Moon's shrill laugh rung in Luna's ears as she fell to the floor, the blood dripping from her hoof and mixing with the tiny shards of glass.

"It's not my fault, it's not my fault, I just... I just... wanted..."

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Luna awoke with a start, her eyes popping wide open, with the unfamiliar surroundings around her snapping back into place in her vision. She was shivering ever so slightly, despite being perfectly warm. She was still in Twilight Sparkle's tent on the edge of the cliff, and she could see her sister's sun shine through its fabric. She was actually glad it was daytime for once, since feeling her sister's presence always made her feel safer. She refocused her eyes on her surroundings, noticing that Twilight wasn't in the tent with her. After looking around, images of the dream popped into her mind, and she quickly looked at her hoof - there were no injuries, of course. She continued to breathe deeply, and slumped down into the large sleeping bag the two of them had shared. It was a dream. It was always just a dream. It had been a long time since she had reacted so violently to one. After returning to Equestria, the Elements of Harmony had suppressed the villain, thus silencing the dream-invasions of Nightmare Moon for quite a while, but as Luna's desires for companionship and friendship began to come back, so had she. Nightmare Moon fed on happiness and hope, and Luna had been so hopeful for change since returning, yet she still remained practically anonymous wherever she went.

Luna got up slowly, shaking her head. She shrugged off the sleeping bag, and stretched her wings out as wide as possible in the relatively-cramped space. She then magically

gripped the zipper on the door, opened it slowly, and stepped outside, her hooves crunching the day-old snow beneath them. She looked around, her eyes adjusting to the bright light, but couldn't see Twilight anywhere. "Miss Sparkle?" called out Luna.

"I'm over here, your hig- uh, Luna!" replied Twilight from the side of the tent. Luna stepped outside fully and looked around the corner of the tent, finding Twilight moving all sorts of things around with her magic, cooking what appeared to be powdered eggs over a small, dual-burner gas stove. She was concentrating very intensely on the precise measurements for making a perfect meal. "Good morning! I'm just cooking us breakfast. I'll be with you in a moment."

"Oh... thank you, Miss Sparkle."

"It's no problem at all! I brought extras after all," said Twilight as she turned and smiled at Luna, quickly snapping back to her cooking as something nearly tipped over due to her distraction.

"I... I see. Thank you very much," replied Luna as she smiled back, walking closer to Twilight. The sun shone bright in the sky, spreading her sister's love and warmth over the sleeping, natural landscape, with a bright, baby-blue tone caressing it on its journey across the sky. It must have been mid-day by now as the gentle winds of the mountain passed behind them. "However, I... did bring my own food. You don't have to go through such expense and effort on my account ."

"Of course I don't have to, I just want to! It's not very often I get to cook for others. I just hope it tastes alright, y- Luna," replied Twilight, catching herself again.

Luna sat down beside Twilight and watched her continue to mix and stir things. She had no idea what she was cooking. She had never actually seen food prepared in front of her before - it was very fascinating to her. "May I ask what you're making, and how?"

"I'm making scrambled eggs and rye toast. It's actually more like an omelet at this point, really. I mix powdered eggs, some dried vegetables. I then use the snow from around here for water to rehydrate the eggs. After I cook them, I put some rye bread on the pan to lightly toast them. Does that sound okay to you?" happily explained Twilight, as she continued to concentrate.

"I've... I've never had them before, I don't believe."

"Oh! Well, there's first time for everything, right?" replied Twilight, visibly nervous now.

"B-But, I'm perfectly willing to try them," continued Luna, frantically.

"O-Okay then!"

The pair of them just sat there, not speaking for a moment, as the sizzling of the eggs filled the air with the delicious smell of green onions. The awkwardness of the night before had returned. Neither of them seemed to be able to get over their fear for each other, and Luna started to feel like she was being a burden, or overstaying her welcome, or something along those lines.

"M-Miss Sparkle?"

"Yes, Luna?" replied Twilight, still a bit nervous.

"If you'd like the time to yourself, I can depart after breakfast. I understand if you do." Luna looked to the side, feeling the sadness in her heart slowly creep up into her thoughts.

"N-No, of course not! Don't be silly!" Twilight said, as she split the omelet with a spatula and served it onto two plates. She then quickly placed the frying pan back down and put two pieces of toast on. Twilight, essentially done with cooking, turned to Luna. "If you'd like to stay, then you're more than welcome to! To be honest, if you weren't here, I'd be getting really lonely right about now. I mean, unless you have some royal duties to attend to."

"I don't... but are you sure?"

"Definitely. I just hope I'm not being too annoying, talking all the time about random things. I do that a lot. If I'm talking too much, please tell me, so I can stop talking too much, okay? Haha." Twilight looked to the side, hiding her face. Luna noticed she did that a lot.

"O-okay, I can do that. You just seem... a little uncomfortable, is all."

"No... no. I just need to relax a bit, I guess," replied Twilight, sighing and laughing to herself.

"I need to do that as well, I think. I'm very sorry," said Luna, lowering her eyes. Twilight was being so hospitable to her, out of pure kindness. Why did she always assume the worst from everypony? A brief vision of her dream then flashed before her eyes, and then she remembered, as she always did whenever she reached out to anypony. She was still fighting off Nightmare Moon's emotional poison. She wondered sometimes if she'd always be in that demon's shadow, and grimaced. Luna raised her eyes again to find Twilight Sparkle staring into hers. The pair of them said nothing, as Luna felt her heart begin to quiet down. They simply stared, like they were admiring each other in tandem. Luna felt a calm overtake her, and her anxiety begin to ebb away ever so slightly. There was a connection, and she could feel it. She didn't know what it meant, but one thing was certain to her: neither of them needed to be afraid.

Twilight smelled something burning and quickly snapped back into reality, frantically flipping the toast on the pan. Thankfully, they were just well toasted and not burnt. She sighed happily. "Well, breakfast is served, I suppose!" She moved the toast onto the plates, turned off the burners, and then magically hoofed one of the plates to Luna.

"Thank you very much, Miss Sparkle," said Luna, appreciative and smiling.

"No problem at all, your h- I mean, Luna. And please, just call me 'Twilight,' if I'm allowed to be so informal with you," replied Twilight, a little happier than she had been before. Luna didn't know what she was feeling, but her respect for the purple unicorn had grown again. The pair of them just smiled at each other and giggled. For a moment, Luna could swear that she even felt a little bit safer in Twilight's presence. From what, she couldn't tell.

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Twilight flipped through a few pages of a book on "Ancient Astronomy," nestled under the sleeping bag, with a cup of hot chocolate beside her. The temperature was rapidly dropping, but Twilight hadn't been able to take her jacket off since she got there regardless. She read a passage on the meteor shower, perturbed by the scant amount of details that existed. Being a once-in-a-thousand-years occurrence, very little could be said or even hypothesized about. Most of the passage contained speculation on the event, when it had originally started, and so on. She liked re-reading over things like this to solidify them in her mind.

Twilight sighed, closing her book and looking curiously over at Luna. She was starting to get used to having the alicorn so close to her, which allowed her to relax quite a bit. At

least she knew now that Luna was just as scared as her, but wasn't terribly sure how she had picked up on that. Luna was reading her own book as well. It was a smaller, gold-encrusted book, that seemed to be very, very old. Twilight curiously looked at the cover, which had a title in a type-set she couldn't decipher. It looked Equestrian, but not entirely. "Hey, Luna, what are you reading?"

"Oh," she raised her head, and turned the book on its side, "it's a very old book of poems. It's written in Ancient Equestrian. Not many ponies can read that anymore."

"Ahhh," Twilight said, trying very hard to decipher what it meant. As far as she could tell, the book's title was 'Plenty Rose-Water,' which made no sense. "Gah, I have such a hard time remembering how to spell things in plain-old modern Equestrian. What's its title?"

"'A Rose-Filled Ocean.' It's a collection of romantic poems. Kind of a, how do they say... 'cheesy' title, I know, but it's quite good. At least... I think so," replied Luna, shyly.

"Oh, okay. Sounds interesting," said Twilight. She had never really read many works of fiction, or poetry. It was always scientific or magical research, since she didn't know how she could take anything away from a work of fiction that she couldn't just take away from life experience or, of course, studious research.

"What book are you reading, Twilight?"

"Oh, this? This is a book on ancient meteorological events. I used it to calculate the best possible viewing location for this meteor shower, as long as it wasn't too far away from Ponyville, of course."

"I see," replied Luna, eyeing the book carefully. She seemed to be very intrigued by it, although Twilight didn't understand why. "W-would you mind if I... took a look through it, with you?"

"Of course I wouldn't mind!" replied Twilight happily, although still slightly perplexed. Luna closed her own book and put it aside, and the two moved closer together, almost snuggled up against each other. Twilight placed the book in front of them, and automatically turned to the main index in the front. "What would you like to see?"

Luna looked over all of the subjects in the book. Recorded meteor showers, meteor impacts and associated meteorological events were the top categories. There was also



listing of Summer and Winter constellations and their categories, as well sections on both the sun and the moon. The last one, of course, caught her eye.

"People have written about the moon?"

"Of course! It's the brightest object in the night sky, so tons of ponies have written all about it," said Twilight, as she began to flip the book to that section. On the page itself, there was a large, beautifully illustrated picture of the moon on the heading, featuring all of its physical imperfections. It then began to list all of its properties, such as its luminosity, its waning/waxing cycles, and so on.

"O-oh wow, this is all so overwhelming," said Luna, reading the pages over closely. Luna seemed to be taken aback by all the information. Twilight just grinned, thinking that maybe she had finally piqued Luna's interests. "I didn't think ponies out there took it so seriously. I didn't even know many of these things... this, for instance," she continued, pointing at a sentence with her hoof. "'A symbol for romance'? What's meant by that?"

"Well, as far as I can remember, a moon-lit evening has always been considered one of the most romantic things in the world. Ponies romanticize and write books with moonlit romance scenes all the time."

"I-I never knew," said Luna, smiling softly to herself.

"You never knew what the moon symbolizes to most ponies?" she said, almost aghast at how little Luna knew of her own creation. "But, don't other ponies tell you about these things? There's no way I can be the only one."

"You have to understand, Twilight," replied Luna. "Not many ponies talk to me about such things. They're always so afraid to do anything except bow before me and try to please me. They don't ask about my night, and if I ask them of their opinion, they just give me a belittling response of, 'oh yes, it's simply marvellous' every time."

"... really? Why wont anypony be honest with you?"

"I suppose that they're scared of me, due to my... history," replied Luna, the smile from her face fading.

Twilight noticed she had hit a sore spot. If there was anything she disliked more, it was hearing about another pony being belittled and forgotten about. She immediately sat

upright, puffing out her chest as if to show her courage. "Well, I-I'm not scared of you at all, Luna! I think you're nice and I will never lie to you about your night! I swear it!" Twilight looked at Luna, and the pair's eyes locked again, for one of those little-eternity moments. She mentally kicked herself for having an outburst like that, yet, she couldn't look away. Luna's eyes began to glisten with tears, and Twilight's heart felt calm once more as she stared into those large, blue eyes. Luna just smiled, and in that instant, Twilight felt a rush of heat throughout her body, flushing her cheeks.

"Twilight... thank you, very much. T-that means a lot to me," said Luna, shyly looking off to the side, with a small smile on her face.

"O-o-of course! S-sorry, I didn't mean to get carried away!" Twilight took a few seconds to snap out of it, but then quickly turned the pages to the section on meteor showers. Her heart was starting to pound, but she pushed those feelings aside for the moment. The pair of them continued to read Twilight's book, talk and even laugh as the day drew on to a close and Celestia's sun began to dip below the horizon.

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Luna felt a lot of different emotions begin to rush through her brain, not quite knowing how to process them all, but the word 'happy' seemed to fit her in that particular moment. She could barely contain her smiles as the evening approached, and she continued to talk with the purple unicorn who had dispelled the one thing that had made her so miserable, so withdrawn and so lonely for her entire existence. Twilight loved her night, and the urge to just wanted to hug Twilight began to become unbearable, although Luna still felt far too shy to display such a form of affection. Luna just enjoyed the sensation, the feeling of being happy and appreciated by somepony.

"Thank you so much for your hospitality, Twilight. You've been so generous with me, especially with me imposing on you so greatly," said Luna, as the pair of them sat together inside the tent.

"Please, y- Luna. You've thanked me more than enough," replied Twilight, smiling

"I know. I just simply like saying 'thank you' again," said Luna, smiling shyly again.

"Well, you're very welcome, then," said Twilight, smiling happily.

Luna loved that smile of hers. It was so genuine and sweet, unlike the other ponies back in the castle. It wasn't one of those fake smiles the ponies of the royal court would put on to please her, even though it wasn't expected - or wanted - of them. She could tell that when Twilight smiled, it was honest. The two of them had finally begun to get comfortable in each-others presence, after all the awkwardness that had transpired. Luna craved the informality that existed between them. She didn't question it, nor did she want to, although one question in the back of her mind continued to gnaw at her. Did Twilight Sparkle want to be her friend? That, she couldn't tell.

"Twilight, may I ask you something?"

"Of course!"

"What do you and your companions do in Ponyville?"

"What do we do? Well, Applejack, helps run her family's apple farm just on the outside of town, of course. Pinkie Pie works with Mr and Ms Cake at Sugarcube Corner as their 'Party Director,' setting up parties for anypony who makes a request. Fluttershy-"

"Sorry, I don't mean to cut you off," interjected Luna, "I meant, specifically... what do you all do together? As... friends?"

"Oh! Well, that's... hard to explain. We do all sorts of things. If we're not putting out fires or preventing Ponyville from being destroyed, of course," said Twilight, sighing. "But to answer your question, I would say... well, for instance, two of my friends, Fluttershy and Rarity, usually go to the spa together, just to talk and hang out. Pinkie Pie usually hosts parties for us, and we all get together to just dance, eat sickeningly-sweet food, and have fun. Rainbow Dash and Pinkie Pie hang out sometimes too, pulling crazy pranks on everypony. Just a whole lot of random stuff, really."

"So all of you get together to... 'hang out,' as they say? Just to enjoy each others company?" Luna listened intently, finding all of this fascinating.

"Yeah! There's really no rhyme or reason to it."

The thought of just 'hanging out' intrigued and confused Luna. The only ones who spent any significant amount of time in her presence were the royal guards or her sister, Celestia. She didn't understand what other ponies did in those situations, even though at most royal events, she could see ponies who were obviously familiar to each other talking

amongst themselves. She had always assumed those conversations were business-like or somehow necessary, as the concept of 'pleasant conversation' escaped her. Luna raised her head and said, suddenly and forcefully, "And how would one go about arranging such a time as to 'hang out' with other ponies? Is scheduling required?"

"N-not usually," replied Twilight, taken aback by her directness. "Most of the time somepony just shows up, and if you're free, then you do something together. If not, then you simply say, 'some other time,' and move on."

"But if they're free, they do something together. As friends."

"Y-yes. That's usually how it goes."

"I see. I would li-" Luna caught herself and the words became a giant lump in her throat, like an entire apple had been caught there. She coughed and lowered her head, a wave of anxiety crashing into her out of nowhere, completely breaking the small tide of confidence she'd had. 'I would like to 'hang out' with you sometime, Twilight,' she thought to herself, attempting to force herself to say it. She tried as hard as she could to make the words escape her lips, but she couldn't do it, no matter how much she strained. She was too afraid. "I-I wo-

"You would...?" said Twilight, in a subtly worried tone.

"... n-nevermind. It's quite alright," said Luna, trying to hide her face. "I'm... going to go for a walk. To stretch my wings and legs." She could feel tears coming on, and she didn't want Twilight to see herself in such a state. Why was she such a coward? Why couldn't she do what was necessary? Why was she so STU- no, she wouldn't think like that. She wouldn't. She couldn't.

"Luna."

"I'll be back... before dark, I promise."

"Luna."

"I-I'm sorry-"

"LUNA!" Luna turned her head to Twilight, who was standing up and had an exasperated look on her face. Luna had never heard anyone raise their voice to her like that. She just

stared at Twilight, the tears not moving from the rims of her eyes. Twilight's expression lightened a bit, and she sighed, sitting back down. "I'm sorry for raising my voice at you, Luna, but it's okay. I might be a bit oblivious to somepony's feelings most of the time, but I'm not completely blind. I could tell what you were going to say. If... you'd like to come to Ponyville, and visit me sometimes, that would be perfectly fine. We can even do some star-gazing together!" Luna couldn't say anything. She just stood there, her head down, unable to believe what she was hearing. Twilight continued, in a warm voice. "You don't have to be afraid, you know. I'm just a simple unicorn pony. I've just been so worried that I haven't been doing what you've wanted, but we're both a little afraid of each other, aren't we?"

After a few moments, Luna finally replied, her lips finally responding to her commands. "I... I... suppose so."

"So let's both relax, okay? After all, the meteor shower is about to start. I'd be so disappointed if I missed seeing the beginning of the night with you. How about I make us both some hot chocolate, while there's still some light outside?"

Luna slumped back down finally, trying to calm herself down. "Is... is it really alright if I visit you? If we... 'hang out' together?"

"Yes," answered Twilight, simply and directly. Twilight's words completely silenced the anxious thoughts in Luna's mind. "I'm going to go make that hot chocolate. If there's anything else you want heated up, just tell me, okay?"

"O-Okay," Luna said softly and quietly, as she sat down. She watched the purple unicorn open the door to the tent, step outside and close it back up behind her. Luna slid herself under the sleeping bag again, breathing deeply. She looked up at the ceiling of the tent, and saw the sun's light slowly fade from the outside world. The happiness in her heart had grown too immense for even tears of joy. She couldn't believe it, but she had done it. She had finally proven Nightmare wrong. Somepony actually wanted to be around her. She had a friend. She didn't have to be alone anymore. She didn't have to feel lonely anymore, and in a single instant, those thousand years alone simmered into nothing, as the purest, happiest euphoria filled Luna's heart.

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Twilight was beaming as she set up her portable stove again. She couldn't believe it! She had an astronomy partner now, and it was none other than Princess Luna herself!

Twilight giggled as quietly as she could, heating up the milk in a small, tall pot. She had two insulated mugs laid out to the side filled with 'Pinkie Pie's Super-Deluxe-Ultimate Hot Chocolate Mix (Marshmallow Edition).' Twilight stirred the milk, and continued to think of all the fun times she could have with Luna back home in Ponyville star-gazing. It still seemed very odd to Twilight how Luna knew next to nothing about her own creation. Twilight wondered if it was that Luna had never designed her night in a scientific manner, and she was more of an artist, like a painter, or a sculptor. Twilight came to the conclusion that it made the most logical sense. But had Luna really never heard of amateur astronomy? Hadn't she noticed the telescopes around the royal castle itself, after coming back to Equestria? Twilight mused upon this, until she could see the milk start to steam. She poured the milk into the hot chocolate mix, the marshmallows adding a pink hue to the surface of the drink itself: a Pinkie Pie trademark. She stirred the drinks and then magically gripped them, moving over to the tent's entrance as they hovered in the air. "Luna, could you open the door for me? My... horn's a bit full at the moment," she said, giggling at her own pun.

"Oh, certainly." The door fell open instantaneously, and Twilight set the mugs down beside Luna.

"Just a second, I'm going to go and put everything else away for the night." Twilight then packed up the stove and her supplies, and magically hovered them into the back of the tent, setting them down out of the way. She then walked in and sat down, snuggling under the sleeping bag. She turned off the lantern inside the tent, and smiled over at Luna. "There, now we can relax."

The night finally arrived, and with it, a display which challenged the moon itself directly with a display of bright brilliance. The hail of light had returned, and it looked like a silent firestorm had descended upon the night sky. It was unlike anything Twilight had ever seen, as the clearest images of fireballs streaking against the dark-blue sky burned themselves into her retina. It was definitely more intense than the night before. She took in the entire display, as if the sky was a giant rolling wave. As the meteorites began to hit their peak, suddenly something caught Twilight's eye just right of the cliff face, like a soft change in hue upon the pallet of the night sky.

"N-no way!" she said, dashing outside of the tent. She ran close to the cliffs edge, but safe enough away from it. Her head craned to the north, and her hopes were confirmed. It was the start of an Aurora Borealis forming on the horizon, skimming across the night sky, growing larger and larger until it swept across half of the sky. Not a single sound could be heard, except for the soft, subtle noise of the frozen breeze blowing through

Twilight's ears. Twilight's eyes were firmly locked, staring up into the heavens, and she could feel her cheek become damp and hot as the intensity of it all hit her. She broke out of her trance-like state, and brought a hoof to her face, to feel if she was actually crying. She was The feeling that a clear winter night always brought her had been amplified to a point where she was unable to do anything except take it all in, her mind completely clear of all thoughts, as she simply, for once, just felt. This was, by far, the best thing she had ever seen. She was gazing upon the perfect night.

"Twilight?" Twilight turned to Luna, who was walking towards her, eyeing her curiously only a few steps away. "Are you okay?"

"Oh... oh, I'm fine," she said, smiling and looking back up at the sky, almost losing herself once more. "I'm just... overwhelmed. It's so beautiful."

Luna looked across her creation, her eyes reflecting the sky itself. "...it is?" she said to herself, barely audible.

Twilight noticed herself shivering. The temperature had plummeted way below what it had been last night. Her jacket insulated most of her body, but the cold air still found ways to her unprotected skin. "I'm actually really cold, c-come to think of it." Twilight sat down, folding her arms together and pulling her hooves inside the sleeves. It was the warmest jacket she had ever worn, yet the night was still sending a chill through her body. The warm glow of fire and the waves of soft light dancing across the sky had taken her mind off of it almost entirely. That is, until she felt a warm weight press against her side. Twilight looked to the side. Luna had pressed herself up against her. Twilight pushed back into her, trying to conserve heat. Luna then magically grabbed a blanket from the tent, unfolded it and placed it over the pair of them in swift, precise motions. "T-thanks Luna, this should keep me w-warmer," said Twilight, shivering.

"It was no problem," replied Luna, simply.

"I can't b-believe you made all of t-this, Luna," continued Twilight, her teeth chattering. "I-It's so beautiful. I can't believe my eyes. You have to be the most a-amazing a-artist in all of Equestria."

Luna snuggled against Twilight, closing her eyes, and began speaking softly as she smiled. "I made this as a journal of my feelings and emotions, so long ago. I came out here thinking nobody remembered or cared, just to see it once more, as a reminder of who I was back then. I never thought I'd ever share it with anypony. I never thought

anypony would ever see it again. I'm so glad that I can share it with you, Twilight. With somepony who understands..."

"Thank you so much for sharing this with me, Luna. I am truly, eternally grateful. I absolutely mean that," replied Twilight, obliviously entranced by the sights above.

Luna said nothing for a few short moments, before she raised her head, and pressed her neck against Twilight's, wrapping the blanket tighter around them. Twilight could feel Luna's warm breath against her muzzle, and smelled the sweetness of her hair. Twilight instantly stopped shivering.

"You're... so wonderful, Twilight. You're simply... wonderful."

With those words, like a tiny explosion in her mind, Twilight finally 'Got It,' and everything snapped into place all at once. In a flash of empathy, Twilight finally took in the full effect of the things Luna had been saying and doing this entire time. Luna was awkward, scared, timid, but obviously interested in her. She wanted to hang out and be friends, as if it was the only thing that mattered. A kind of disturbed, muted grin came across her face, as all the scenes that had transpired between them in the last day finally fell into place and made complete sense. Luna nuzzled in closer to her, as Twilight's thoughts turned over on themselves faster than ever before. 'Oh Celestia,' she thought to herself, 'L-Luna... is falling... in... I-love...' She turned her head, looking at the very contented alicorn beside her, and Luna looked back, staring back into Twilight eyes. Twilight saw the stars perfectly reflect off of Luna's eyes, her mane refracting and amplifying the light of the meteors, the moon, the stars and the Aurora Borealis itself, like a blanket made of the sky itself. Twilight was speechless, and no matter how much she knew she should've been, couldn't feel anxious anymore. Luna was the night itself, the one thing that had brought such peace to Twilight's heart for the entirety of her life, and right now, she was snuggled up to her and staring into her soul. As far as Twilight could tell, she looked just as beautiful as the sky above them.



The breeze blew past Luna's ears as she enjoyed Twilight's warmth against her. Her eyes were closed, focusing intently on this feeling of closeness that was so new and terrifying to her. She didn't know if she was doing the right thing, or if she was being too affectionate or forward. Luna didn't know what being somepony's 'friend' was like, or how she was supposed to act. Luna had dreamt about this moment for so long, and couldn't pass up the opportunity, no matter if wrecked everything else. Sharing this beautiful night she had created with somepony was the only thing that she had hoped for in her long life. In this moment, she was content with just this. Under the sea of stars, with streaks of fire and waves of light challenging the daytime in pure brilliance, Luna was finally at peace. Her dream had come true. Nightmare Moon was wrong.

"Ahem," spoke a familiar, dark voice. Luna's eyes shot wide open and she stepped back, looking around. She was in that familiar, damp, dark corridor again, with that same oval mirror in front of her. It was another dream. "Welcome back, my dear Luna," spoke Nightmare Moon, as she stood in the reflection, with an disappointed look on her face and something in her eyes that looked almost afraid. "Having fun with your new 'friend'?"

"Stay away from me, Nightmare Moon. I did it. I proved you wrong, completely wrong. Twilight wants to be my friend. Twilight wants to spend time with me. She loves my night," said Luna, defensively, stepping backwards. "I don't need to be afraid anymore. I don't need to be alone anymore. Go away."

"Luna," said Nightmare Moon, in a deadpan tone. Luna looked up into Nightmare Moon's icy-blue eyes, which shot directly into her soul. "Do you know what the pain of having your heart broken in half feels like?" Luna was taken aback by the question. It was true, she had never experienced heartbreak. She had only ever experienced longing, and loneliness. "Oh, it's quite alright. Neither do I. Do you want to find out? I've heard it's the most exquisite pain there is," continued Nightmare, craning her neck downwards to look at Luna in the eye. "It would be a wonderful, *painful* new emotion to add to our repertoire, don't you think? You could do *so much* with it."

Luna looked at the ground, shaking her head. How had she made somepony so evil? "Nightmare... I'm going to be Twilight's friend. She won't hurt me, I know she won't. She'll never betray me like that. Big sister told me she never betrays her friends."

Nightmare Moon looked indignant, scoffing at the smaller mare. "So you're really willing to play roulette, willing to give our heart to the first random pony - another mare, no less - that you meet. You're certainly braver than I am. Or perhaps you're just stupid."

"'Our' heart?" replied Luna, scoffing at her. "I thought you didn't want any part of that 'mushy stuff.' I thought that wasn't your 'thing.'"

"You know *very well* what I mean, you foal! Don't play stupid with me! If *you* are hurt, *I* am hurt. No power in all of Equestria could stop the destruction if you were to get your heart broken by your first love. The world itself would shatter under your hoof!"

Luna audibly gasped at the words 'first love,' but sharpened her gaze none the less, refusing to show an inch of weakness in front of her. "I'm not like that anymore. I won't do those horrible things. I'll never hurt Twilight, even if she ends up hurting me. NEVER! I'd never forgive myself for hurting somepony so wonderful. I won't. I just won't!"

"Do you mean that?"

"Yes."

"Do you *REALLY MEAN THAT?!*" yelled Nightmare Moon, forcibly, filling the entire corridor with her booming voice.

"*YES!!*," screamed Luna back, with all the force she could muster, countering Nightmare's voice with echoing reverberation that could have moved the walls themselves given half a chance.

"You can *never* trust somepony completely! If- no, *when* you get hurt, I will NOT be there to pick up the pieces of your heart! I will only be there to ensure that you can do what you've always wanted to, which is to rule Equestria and its subjects. It's always been your one, true desire!"

"That's not what I want anymore! I don't want to rule anything or anypony!" said Luna, looking her demon straight in the eye. She got into an aggressive stance, her fear for Nightmare beginning to melt away. She was getting so close to her one, real dream. She would not mess this up because she was afraid of herself anymore. No more fear, ever again. "You've corrupted me, told me lies, and made me afraid of ever reaching out to anypony ever since I came back! You were hoping to *USE ME, AGAIN*, wanting me to

snap and give in to your evilness! Never again!" Luna moved towards the mirror, Nightmare Moon looking visibly shocked and stepping away from the determined mare. "I'm going to be Twilight Sparkle's friend! That's my dream! That's what I want! And you'll never take her away from me!"

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Luna awoke suddenly, and she felt so very cold. The howling wind chilled her to the very bone, and she found it hard to bear. She raised herself off the ground, trying to look around, seeing nothing but a white haze in front of her. A blast of frigid air assaulted her flanks, nearly pushing her over, forcing her legs to dig into the snow for support. The giant storm, the one that had been scheduled had started early, and not a speck of the proud, beautiful vista they had shared the night before could be seen. The only visible thing was the snow, being whipped up, around and into everything. Luna was freezing, but she paid no attention to it. She was used to this kind of cold. She looked back at the tent, her ears and mane flapping in the violently. The door was open and snow was pouring in, the wind nearly tearing its supports from the ground. The pair of them had fallen asleep outside from the night before, entirely forgetting to go back inside and close it up. Luna finally came to her senses, her eyes widening. Where was Twilight? She looked beside her, and could see the purple unicorn, shivering and covered in a thin layer of snow, the violet colour of her jacket barely visible through the white powder. How could she sleep through something like this? Luna lowered her head and nudged Twilight with her muzzle. She didn't move. She was only shivering, with her eyes half-open.

"Twilight?!" yelled Luna, trying to make sure Twilight could hear her through the intense background noise. "Are you okay?!" Twilight just kept shivering. "Can you move?!" yelled Luna again. Twilight slowly shook her head, and tried mouthing something to her, as if it was the hardest thing in the world to do. Luna realized, at that moment, that Twilight was freezing to death. Luna knew what hypothermia could do to a young mare, and if that she didn't act at that exact moment, Twilight would die. Without waiting another moment, Luna lowered her body and nuzzled her head underneath Twilight, the cold, damp snow covering her face. Eventually she wiggled her away underneath, balancing Twilight's body on her neck, and then her back, spreading her wings as wide as she could to support the mare. She turned towards the entrance of the tent and began walking slowly, every step towards the tent becoming a chore. The thick snow seemed to suck in her hooves further the closer she got. Finally, she made it, stepping inside of the partially-filled tent, placing Twilight down on top of the sleeping bag. The cold air tore into the tent as if it were a wind-trap, and with great effort, Luna closed the tent door, the elements still pounding against it like a ravenous beast trying to get in.

"L-l-l..." sputtered out Twilight, who was still shivering.

"Twilight?!" exclaimed Luna, lowering her ear to Twilight's mouth. "Please, tell me what to do Twilight. Please tell me how to help you. I'll do anything!"

Twilight's teeth continued to chatter. Her body was stone-cold and the snow still stuck to every part of her. She attempted, as hard as she could, to give instructions to the anxious alicorn standing over her. "H-h-h... hot... b-bottles... i-i-in b-bag..."

"Hot bottles? Hot water bottles?" replied Luna, reflecting what Twilight was saying to make sure she understood. Twilight nodded her head. Luna magically pulled Twilight's saddlebags over towards her. She opened them, and rummaged through them as quickly as she could, throwing things to the floor, eventually finding two hot water bottles near the very bottom of the bag. She pulled them out, showing Twilight. "These? What do I use for water?"

Twilight nodded again. Twilight started mouthing something again, her breathing getting more laboured. "U-u-... use... s-snow..."

"Use... snow? But... snow is- oh, heat up the snow!" exclaimed Luna, the adrenaline beginning to pump through her. She knew how to heat up water with her magic alone, and snow was no different. She unscrewed the cap on the water bottle, and grabbed a lump of snow that had accumulated in on the tent floor, magically heating up the crystallized water and pouring it into the bottle. She focused intensely on the task at hoof, repeating this process as quickly as she could until the bottle was completely full. She then tightened the cap, and undid the top buttons of Twilight's jacket, placing it on her chest and closing up the jacket again. Luna repeated this process with the other one. Once she was done, she looked around her. It must have been a half a foot of snow covering the tent floor.

"I'm going to move all of this snow, okay, Twilight? I'll need to open the door for just a moment, but I'm going to expel it so I can warm you up," said Luna comfortingly, bending down to talk into Twilight's ear. Twilight nodded and closed her eyes, still shivering.

Luna sat down and concentrated, her horn growing brighter and brighter. One by one, all the particles of water, snow and debris collect into the air as a large mass, hovering silently around her head. Luna then quickly opened the door, and just as the wind was

about to rush in from the outside, Luna created a counter-wind which expelled all of the snow in a giant wave. Her mane flapped in front of her face and the feathers of her wing were blown out of shape. After she was sure it was all gone, she closed the tent again quickly, and sighed deeply. She looked at Twilight again, who was laying on her side, her eyes still half-open and her hooves out in front of her listlessly.

"I-Is there anything I can do now, Twilight?"

Twilight only nodded very slowly, and sputtered out, "C-cov-vers..."

Luna silently understood, and nudging the other mare over, opening the sleeping bag with her mouth and then nudging her back under it. She tucked Twilight in, bringing the fabric right to her neck and covering all of her body, and then pulled the jacket's hood over her head and ears. She stood beside Twilight, her ear near Twilight's mouth again, waiting for her next order. "Is there anything else at all? Anything I can do?"

"P-p... p-please... hold m-me..." Tears came to Twilight's eyes as she shivered, terrified. Luna immediately slid herself between the covers of the sleeping bag, and pulled in Twilight with her hooves as close as was possible, trying to sooth the purple unicorn. Luna was shocked to feel how cold Twilight had gotten, her hooves and every other bit of exposed flesh chilled to the bone. The fierceness of the wind seemed to intensify against the side of the tent. Luna had done what she could, but the knowledge that she was on her own scared her. She was terrified that she was too late to save Twilight, and held her tightly as she could. Tears formed in Luna's eyes, as she pulled a thick, wool blanket out from her own bags behind her, and placing it gently over their heads, trying to keep every single ounce of heat inside. It didn't take very long before Luna was outright crying. She felt responsible for everything, despite it not being her fault. She felt like she had hurt her one and only friend. If it hadn't been for her, she wouldn't have fallen asleep outside, and be half-dead as she was. If it hadn't been for her, Twilight would have never gotten hurt. If she hadn't been so selfish. If she-

"T-thank y-you, L-L-Lun-..." said Twilight, her eyes still closed and her voice barely audible, as she trailed off.

Luna just kept holding her, whispering into her ear. "Save your energy, Twilight. Please. Don't thank me until you're better again, and until everything is okay." Twilight didn't argue, and just nodded slowly. She had no energy to. The mares embraced each other for survival, with the strongest blizzard Equestria had ever seen roaring overhead, slamming against the cliff-side they were now trapped on, completely alone.

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Night had fallen once again. The wind remained strong, but not to the gale-force level it had been earlier. Twilight was sitting up now, after hours of being unable to move, huddled with a blanket over her. Luna was sitting beside her, focusing intently on a spell. Suddenly, a tiny ball of energy emerged in front of the pair of them, growing rapidly until it began emitting a soft, pure-white glow which seemed to warm the air around it.

"There," said Luna. "This should help. It's a spell I learned a long time ago. It's pure magical energy, unlike your stove, which would probably burn the tent down. Here..." She took Twilight's hooves and raised them, placing them into the small ball of energy, which hovered off the ground near their chests. "It won't burn you. You can even put your hooves directly into it."

"I-It's warm," said Twilight, in a subtly amazed voice, running her hooves through the wisp in front of her.

"I... I've used it to help me stay warm in the past, whenever I've been cold," replied Luna.

Twilight couldn't think terribly well. She held her hooves in the ball of light in front of her. Luna was doing something off to the side, but she was too exhausted to pay much attention to it. She breathed deeply, staring at the light. She had nearly died, doing something so unbelievably absent minded. How had she fallen asleep outside? Why hadn't the strong winds woken her up before she was nearly freezing to death? Oh Celestia, Applejack would never let her hear the end of this.

"Here you go, Twilight," said Luna, suddenly. Twilight snapped out of her trance, looking up at the alicorn, who had a mug hovering in front of her. "I prepared that hot chocolate mix you'd brought with you. Please, drink this. You haven't eaten or had anything to drink since last night. It'll warm you up." Twilight tried to pick up the mug with her magic, but couldn't, no matter how hard she tried. She squinted, but was unable to produce even a spark. "Twilight, please don't strain yourself," continued Luna, concerned. Twilight then just reached out, taking it into her hooves.

"T-thank you," replied Twilight, drearily. "H-how did you get the water? Didn't you put all the snow outside?"

"Oh... I teleported some in from outside, and heated it up. Didn't you notice?"

Twilight just shook her head. She was more out of it than she thought. Hadn't only a few seconds passed? "N-no, not really. Thank you, though."

"It's alright. You've already thanked me," said Luna, smiling softly. "Can I do anything else?"

"No... I don't think there's anything else. We just need to wait out the storm for now, I think."

"Okay," replied Luna. She sat down beside Twilight, and looked at the warm glow of the wisp in front of them. Nothing was said for a short while, as a slightly jittery Twilight continued to sip on the drink Luna had made for her. It made her feel immediately better, and reminded her of Pinkie Pie.

Twilight couldn't think of anything else at the moment. Her mind was completely clear, even with Luna sitting beside her. For quite a while, she just admired the handiwork of the warm ball of energy in front of her, as waves of energy rippled across it as if it were both a liquid and a gas at the same time. It was similar to other spells she had seen, but this one was... different, almost organic in a way. Twilight tried to strike up a conversation, to get her mind going again and to try to think about something other than her near-death experience.

"What's this spell, Luna? I've never seen anything like it before. It's very nice, and warm," spoke Twilight, suddenly.

"This spell... is one I came up with a long, long time ago," replied Luna, gently prodding it with her hoof. "I made it to keep me warm, when-" She paused for a second, lowering her head. "-when I... was imprisoned... on the moon."

Twilight looked at it with a kind of fascination, almost feeling the higher-functioning of her brain return piece by piece. It was warm, but it couldn't have kept her very warm on the moon of all places. "But... isn't it even colder than it is here? How did you survive?" Twilight then frantically waved her hoof, realizing how oblivious the question had been. "S-sorry, you don't have to answer that. That was so, so very insensitive of me." Open mouth, insert hoof.

"N-no. No. It's... it's alright. I promise," replied Luna, laying down and folding her legs underneath her. "You get used to it. The cold, that is. Eventually you just stop feeling it."

A normal pony in those circumstances would have died, of course, but, I'm not a... normal... pony. I just wanted to feel some warmth when I was up there... so I made this."

Twilight nodded, still feeling like she was going way past Luna's comfort zone. She attempted to break up the tone of the conversation. "T-that explains why you don't need a jacket, I guess." 'Oh Celestia, just tape my mouth shut, please,' she thought immediately afterwards.

"Yes, that's right," Luna said smiling sweetly up at Twilight. "I know you probably think it's a difficult subject for me, but don't worry. I... I don't get to share things like this with anypony. It's nice... to talk about it, finally." Twilight just nodded, trying not to embarrass herself again. "... this might not be the right time, but I just wanted to say that last night meant more to me than you can imagine."

Twilight could imagine quite a bit. She sipped her hot chocolate again, the warmth spreading throughout her body. She felt more and more normal as time went on, which was comforting. "It's okay, Luna. I saw one of those most beautiful things I had ever seen in my life last night. Maybe even the most beautiful thing. I honestly believe that everything that happened today was a small price to pay, really," Twilight said, smiling. "Thank you for making something so beautiful."

Luna blushed and looked away, smiling and giggling. "You know that... I did nearly kill you, yes?" replied Luna, playfully.

"Labour of love, I suppose," said Twilight. She instantly regretted dropping the 'L'-word in there, and cringed.

"I suppose that makes two of us," replied Luna, happily.

Twilight blushed and her eyes went wide. "N-no, I didn't mean it like that!"

"L-like what, Twilight?" said Luna, just as startled as Twilight.

"O-oh, nothing. I'm just being weird. Must be the cold getting to my brain, haha." Twilight just sighed at herself. What HAD she meant, anyhow? There was no helping her at this point. Twilight couldn't tell why she was being so defensive towards Luna, either. Aside from one or two things, Luna hadn't done much of anything to suggest that romantic love existed. She just as friendly and anxious as Twilight herself the entire time. Why was she getting so afraid? She looked over at Luna, who was still eyeing her



curiously since that outburst. Images of how beautiful Luna had looked the previous night entered her mind, with the sky itself reflected in every fibre of her being. Twilight remembered how calm she had been simply staring into her eyes, like she was sitting beside the sky itself, just by looking at the other mare. She knew she should have been feeling anxious around Luna at this point, especially with the notion of her loving her bouncing around in her head, but she didn't. Now she was wondering if SHE was the love-sick one. Oh Celestia.

"Twilight...?"

"Oh, sorry. I was just lost in thought," she replied, still very lost despite her reassurance. Twilight couldn't help but think that the awkwardness between the two of them had gotten to the point she felt like she was honestly worried she was hurting Luna, and there was nothing she'd hate more. Maybe it had been that she had nearly died, so everything else seemed like a walk in the park. Twilight felt compelled to speak. "Luna... how do you feel about me?"

Luna looked at her curiously. "W-what do you mean?"

"Like... what do you think about me? Do you like me?"

Luna just blushed and averted her gaze. "I-It's embarrassing to say, and I don't know if you feel the same way, s-so it's okay. I'd rather give it time."

Twilight could feel the anticipation start to build up in her mind and her heart. Was she... hopeful? "It'd mean a lot to me, Luna. I promise I won't judge you. It's just that I don't know how you think of me, and, well... I don't know why it's important, it just to me. "

Luna blushed and looked to the side, away from Twilight. "I-I don't know if I can say."

"Please, I promise I won't be upset."

"I-I can't."

"Please?"

Luna breathed deeply, her lip quivering, as she blurted out, "I think that you're a very wonderful pony and I want to be your friend and hang out with you." Luna sat back up,

looking into Twilight's eyes as she spoke. "I want to spend time with you, and see things with you, and go on adventures with you, just like you do with any of your friends in Ponyville. I-I w-want-" Luna lowered her voice, folding her ears back. "... nevermind. I-I'm sorry. I-I've probably... made you uneasy..."

Twilight's mouth stood slightly agape for a few seconds, before coming to her senses. Now she was feeling relief in a certain way, but also a tinge of disappointment. But why disappointment? The rollercoaster of emotions confused her to no end, but there was no time for that. "N-no, there's nothing to be sorry about at all!" Twilight replied hastily. "You want to be my friend?" Luna simply nodded, continuing to look away. It didn't make sense to Twilight at all. Why would Luna be so affectionate to her, if she just viewed her as a friend? Why was she so open and trusting? It boggled Twilight's mind, but it didn't take her very long before she answered that question on her own, images of the night before entering her mind again. That connection was more real and deep than she had ever felt. It's why she felt so calm just looking at Luna, just knowing that somepony understood her love of the night sky...

Twilight looked up at the ceiling of the tent. She finally understood. She remembered how she had read the passages in the book which spoke of Nightmare Moon, how nobody had appreciated her, or her night, and how the jealousy had corrupted her. At the end of it all, however, she just wanted to be appreciated, to have a friend. Luna was so afraid of scaring Twilight off, because Twilight had been the only pony in the world to tell Luna that her heart and her soul - the night she had so lovingly created - were beautiful beyond her wildest dreams. Twilight felt that she had been so stupid, so oblivious, like she had always been. "Luna," she began. "I over-think things sometimes. Well, okay, I over-think pretty much everything all the time. But I think I understand you, now."

Luna just looked at her, confused. "Y-you do?"

"I spent so much of my life avoiding friendship with anypony, because I thought it was a drag and that they'd get in the way of doing what I wanted to do. I eventually learned what having friends was like, and I knew then that I'd never trade them for the anything in the world." Luna just nodded again, listening silently. "I always had ponies coming up to me and asking to hang out, but never did anything with them. You've always wanted friendship, but never had it. Friendship means everything to you. It means the world to you. I didn't understand, until now," continued Twilight. "Luna, I'd love to be your friend. I'd love to spend time with you, if you can put up with how absent-minded I am most of the time."

Luna's eyes grew wide, tears beginning to fill them. "Really?" she said, with so much hope and happiness in her voice.

"Really," replied Twilight, smiling wider, with a silly grin on her face.

Luna instantly tackled Twilight and wrapped her forelegs around Twilight's neck, her wings unfurling, hugging her as tight as she could and giggling happily. Tears of joy fell from her face and onto Twilight's jacket, as she snuggled against the other mare. "Oh, thank you Twilight! Thank you so much! Thank you thank you thank you!" Twilight hugged the other mare back, smiling. She felt just as excited as Luna, although she didn't really know why, but didn't much care for a reason, either. They had found a connection between them, the likes of which Twilight had never felt before. She didn't know what it was or what it meant. Luna began sobbing, whispering 'thank you' into Twilight's ear repeatedly. Twilight just held her as closely as possible, almost able to feel Luna's pain lift from her heart. Twilight was happy, in that moment, that she had made such a close friend. Maybe she wasn't so bad at this 'friendship' thing after all.

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"Twilight?! Sister?! Where are you two?!" said a voice, bellowing from outside. Dawn had broken and light flooded the walls of the tent. Luna and Twilight both awoke with a start, the pair of them embracing each other closely under the cover of the sleeping bag. Both of them instantly knew whose voice that was. It was Princess Celestia herself.

Luna instantly got up, shook off the sleeping bag and opened the tent door. A small bit of snow poured in from the two-foot high swell that had formed at the entrance. The storm had passed, and the sun shone brightly, low on the horizon. "Big sister?!" Luna yelled out into the blinding light.

"Oh thank heavens, are you alright?! Is Twilight Sparkle with you?"

"W-we're both okay! She's with me!" replied Luna. Her eyes tried to focus on what was outside, always taking a bit longer adjusting to the brightness of the day. After a few seconds, she could see Princess Celestia standing on the cliff side. Her mane was waving in the wind as it usually did, as her regular two royal pegasus guards at her side stood watch. Luna also noticed a familiar golden carriage parked precariously on the cliff-side. Twilight slowly got up, feeling exceptionally sore this morning, as Luna galloped out to

meet her sister, the snow providing no hindrance to her. Upon reaching her, she nuzzled her sister's neck affectionately. "I'm so glad to see you, big sister!"

Celestia bent her head down and nuzzled her little sister back in a loving embrace. "And I am as well. I'm so glad you're alright. The Pegasi weather crew informed me last night that the storm had ended up getting much bigger than they had initially planned, and was nearly beyond their control. I would have come sooner, but the winds prevented us from coming all the way out here. Are you two okay?"

A groggy Twilight emerged from the tent, stepping out into the crisp morning air which burned her eyes. It was, thankfully, nowhere near as cold as the night before, with the rays of sunlight hitting her face and warming her up. "We're okay, your highness."

Celestia's eyes widened as she looked at the state Twilight was in. "Dear heavens Twilight Sparkle, you look like a mess! What happened here?"

Twilight's hair was completely messy, tangled and unkempt, she had giant black rings under her half-opened eyes, and she was hunched over in pain with a blanket covering her shoulders. "O-oh, do I really look that bad?" replied Twilight, laughing pitifully at herself.

"Well, let's get you two home safe and sound," said Celestia, the guards departing from her sides.

Twilight sighed happily, walking towards her wonderful mentor and Luna. "O-okay. If you could drop me off at home, that'd be gre-"

Luna stepped in front of Celestia, abruptly cutting Twilight off before she could finish. With a determined look on her face, Luna began speaking very sternly. "Sister, I want Twilight taken to the castle and looked at by the royal physician IMMEDIATELY! She was seriously hurt and I want to make sure there's absolutely nothing wrong!"

Celestia was taken aback for a moment, before speaking to Twilight. "Is this true, Twilight Sparkle? Were you really hurt?"

"Well... I did kinda almost, uhm, freeze to death," she replied, grinning sheepishly.

"It's settled then. Twilight, you'll accompany us to the castle and be looked at by the attending royal physician. Until they say you are fit to leave, you'll be under their direct care."

"Bu-"

"No 'buts'," replied Celestia, in an authoritative, caring tone.

Twilight lowered her head a bit, her sheepish grin widening. "O-okay, your highness. But we still need to get all my thing's pack-" Twilight looked behind her, and noticed that the royal guards had somehow managed to pack up the entire campsite, only finishing on rolling up the tent. How had they packed up things so fast without magic?

"We're done here, my lady," spoke one of the stallions, briskly.

"Let's go home, Twilight," said Luna, smiling brightly as she stood beside her taller sister. Twilight could feel her muscles become more sore as all of the stress finally released. They were safe now. Everything was going to be okay.

"Y-yeah, let's get out of here."

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"Luna really is an artist, isn't she?"

Twilight and Princess Celestia were walking down a hallway of the royal castle. Only a couple of days had passed since they had left the cliff-side vista. Twilight had fully recovered with good nights sleep, and the doctor gave her a bill of good health. The sunlight peered in through the windows, illuminating the beautifully crafted stone walls. These hallways were familiar to Twilight. It had been so long since she had last been here, when before it had practically been her home.

"Yeah, she really is. I've never seen something so beautiful in my life. N-not to say your sun isn't very beautiful, of course!"

Celestia smiled warmly. "No, no, I completely understand, Twilight. My artistic skills are nothing compared to that of my sister. I felt the same way the first time I saw Luna's creations fill the night sky. She's only gotten better and better over time, like a painter perfecting their technique. There's really nothing quite like it."

"Y-yeah, definitely!" replied Twilight, smiling.

"I'm glad you two had fun together out there, even if it did get very dangerous. Did you learn anything on your trip?"

"Oh yes. I learned something very important about friendship, naturally. I learned that even when you have your heart set on something, that if your friends are really worried about you, that you should listen to them more closely, even if you think they just sound like worry-warts."

Celestia smiled warmly. "Very good, Twilight Sparkle. Don't ever forget that your friends are always looking out for you. That's what having friends is all about, after all."

Twilight smiled to herself, remembering how everypony back home in Ponyville was so worried about her, and how she should have listened. She felt so stupid now, having brushed off all of their concerns all at once, just so she could go without feeling guilty. She also remembered Luna, and how she had been there for her when she needed it most, saving her life and nursing her back to health. That reminded her of something important. "Oh, Princess..."

"Yes, Twilight Sparkle?"

"Is it alright if Luna came to visit me in Ponyville? Regularly, that is."

Celestia's eyes lit up, as if she was intensely excited at the prospect herself. "Why certainly! It is, of course, up to my sister, but I would have no problems with her regularly visiting Ponyville at all."

Twilight smiled, "That's good. Her and I talked a lot about doing astronomy together when we got back. I promise that I'll try my best not to get her into any more dangerous situations, okay?"

"I'm certain you wont," replied Celestia, smiling. She then quickly lowered her head to face Twilight, as if to talk a little more privately. "She's so very sweet and loyal as can be, as long as you treat her with kindness and love. She's a very... 'passionate' mare, as you can probably tell - maybe even a little intense at times - but she's so wonderful and caring."

Twilight was a little confused at why Celestia was telling her this, and just nodded. "I... I understand..."

"I'm just so worried about her. She hasn't made a single friend since she came back to Equestria. I just want her to be happy, and to enjoy life, after everything that's happened," said Celestia, looking down at the ground, with obvious concern for her little sister written across her face and demeanour. "I have complete faith in you, Twilight. She's just so fragile. Please promise you'll take care of her?"

Twilight nodded solemnly. She had never seen Celestia so worried about anything, which shocked her just a little. "I'll be sure to take good care of her, Princess."

"Good. I hope you two have many wonderful times together," replied Celestia, smiling softly. The pair of them continued walking, discussing various subjects and catching up on all the little things that couldn't be fit into their letters to each other.

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"Are you sure they'll like me?"

"I'm positively sure. They're very friendly. You'll see."

"I'm just so scared... I'm afraid I'll upset them, because of last time..."

"You wont upset anypony, Luna. I promise. Everything will be okay."

"O-okay, Twilight. I trust you."

"Here she comes now!" exclaimed Applejack, who pointed up at the sky with her hoof. The golden carriage began to descend from the sky over the main road, where it usually landed. Everypony was anxiously waiting for Twilight to return after Celestia had written them, telling them what had happened on the mountain. The carriage finally landed and the royal pegasi guards came to a halt, the snowfall crunching under their hooves.

The door swung open and Twilight stepped out outside, smiling. "Hey girls, did you miss me?" The entire group of her friends huddled around her, all of them voicing their intense concern. She felt overwhelmed and embarrassed. What an idiot she had been.

"Twi', when ah told ya t'stay home because ah was worried about y'freezin' t'death, ah didn't mean that t'be taken as a challenge."

"I know, AJ. I'm really sorry. I should have listened."

"Ah heck, all's well that ends well, right? Ah'm just glad yer back home."

"Yeah, you egghead! Don't scare us like that again!"

"We were so worried about you, Twilight... I feel just awful not going with you..."

"I feel just dreadful that my jacket didn't keep you warm enough. I really ought to have made something much better for you, darling. Can you ever forgive me?"

"Did ya get to see the stars? Did ya did ya did ya? Huh huh huh?"

"G-girls, please," said Twilight, exasperated but happy none the less. "It's okay. I'm perfectly fine. We'll all talk about what happened when I get a chance to settle in, okay?" The five other mares just nodded and smiled. It was good to be home. "However, I must to introduce somepony first. Luna, you can come out now," said Twilight, calling into the carriage. After a few seconds of hesitation, Luna finally appeared, stepping down and smiling meekly, looking at the ground.

"H-Hello, everypony. It's nice to meet you, under better circumstances this time." The five of them all stood there with their mouths agape for a moment, before all bowing to Luna in succession. Luna waved her hoof, embarrassed. "N-no, it's okay, you don't have to do that. I promise. Y-you don't have to be so formal." One by one, they all got up and approached Luna, still somewhat weary of the royal alicorn. It didn't take long, however, until they were all giving their introductions. Luna smiled, shaking hooves with everypony in the group.

"Come by Sweet Apple Acres whenever you'd like, yer highness. We've got the finest apples in all of Equestria!"

"You should also visit Sugarcube Corner, too! I'll throw an awesome party for you, Luna!"

"If you'd prefer some more... refined and elegant tastes, you can come by my boutique at your leisure, my lady. We could chat and have tea, and it'd be simply wonderful!"



"Or if you'd like an aerial tour of Ponyville, Cloudsdale or wherever, just come find me! I'm always around!"

"Or if you'd like to come by and see the animal hospital I run, I'd love to have you over! I mean, if that's okay... if you'd like to..."

Luna looked confused, taking in their hospitality and friendliness. She couldn't believe how open they were all being with her. "I-I can try to visit you all, although it might take me some time."

"Weeee! Awesome! I'm definitely throwing a party for you, then!" exclaimed Pinkie, bouncing up and down in glee.

"A-a party?"

"Yeah! How else are we gonna celebrate Princess Luna visiting Ponyville! It'll be so super-awesome-amazing that everypony will want to come to it just to meet you!"

Luna smiled nervously, finding it difficult to take it all in. She glanced over at Twilight in an oddly confused but distinctly happy way. Twilight decided that she'd better give Luna a bit of reprieve from everyone's prodding, so she could get used to it. "Okay girls, you can all swarm Luna once I get home. I've got to see what Spike has been up to," said Twilight, smiling. Luna was going to love it in Ponyville, if this was any indication.

"Oh, him? He didn't even bother to show up to meet you here because he let Sweetie Bell and her friends make a complete mess of your library, AGAIN," replied Rarity, sighing heavily.

"Oh geez, I better go rescue him then," laughed Twilight.

Everypony began walking back to town, as the royal guards took off with the carriage up into the sky. Luna was beaming as they walked into town, trotting along beside Twilight as the others continued on a few paces ahead. She leaned her head against Twilight's neck and nuzzled against her softly as they walked together, which made Twilight blush. Twilight didn't mind, though. Every time she looked at Luna, that beautiful vista of dusk entered her mind. She could only hope that Luna enjoyed Ponyville, and that they could be the best of friends as time went on. She couldn't wait to show Luna the intricacies of the night sky she had so lovingly created.

Luna was overjoyed and terrified. Her long, immortal life had taken a sharp turn in a direction she didn't understand. Half of her was convinced that it was too good to be true, the other half uncaring and willing to throw caution to the wind. She could only hope that Twilight and her friends accepted her, and learned to forgive her for all the things she had done to them as Nightmare Moon.

Despite these fears and reservations, the pair of them knew something for certain. That bond they felt between them would only get stronger. There was something intrinsic and wonderful about it. They were brought together by a common sky, together forever in that simple, lonely darkness of the brilliant night that they had shared.

"O-oh my."

"It's very beautiful, isn't it?"

"Y-yes it is... I never imagined..."

Twilight and Luna were standing on the deck of the Ponyville Library. It was the middle of spring, and Winter Wrap Up had long past. The grass was growing and the flowers were blooming, adding a beautiful green hue to the world as Luna's moon shone brightly overhead in the dead of night. The temperature was warm and the air was muggy, but the sky remained crystal clear. The pair of them were looking through Twilight's largest telescope, which she had just set up the night before.

"Things are so much clearer with a bigger lens, don't you think?" asked Twilight.

"Definitely," replied Luna, her eye glued to the eyepiece, the telescope pointed low on the horizon. "What's this star called?"

"It's called Antares. It's a part of the constellation called Scorpio," said Twilight, looking at one of her books. Luna took her face away from the eyepiece finally, looking up at the sky itself. She stared in the direction of red star, the brightest one in the constellation, that continued to flicker different shades of red visible even to the naked eye.

"Does it always do that? I mean, how it shifts in colour constantly," asked Luna.

"As far as I know, it always has, since the very beginning. It's how most astronomers find Scorpio in the sky."

Luna continued to stare at intensely and curiously. She had never noticed it before, even in all of her time changing and perfecting the night sky so long ago. In the relatively short amount of time she had began doing astronomy with Twilight, she had started realizing that there was so much she didn't know about her own creation.

"Oh! There's something really interesting I want to show you before you go tonight!" Twilight began moving the telescope's orientation with her hooves, pointing it higher into the horizon. She fiddled with the viewfinder on the side, attempting to point it at a precise location. She then looked through the eyepiece, and then adjusted the telescope

again. "A-ha, found it!" she exclaimed. "Although... it might be a little too dark to see on this particular telescope."

"Oh, let me see," replied Luna, trading places with Twilight. She looked through it again, squinting, trying to figure out what exactly she was seeing. "It's very... fuzzy."

"Yeah... I'm sorry, I wanted to show you something I remember seeing back in the big observatory in Canterlot. Unfortunately this telescope just isn't big enough to see it clearly. It'd need to be a lot brighter for this particular telescope to pick it up."

"What is it, exactly?" asked Luna, curiously.

"Well... nopony really knows. There's a few theories floating around, but as far as anypony can tell, it's sort of like a gigantic cluster of stars, very, very far away. They call it 'Andromeda.'"

"Andromeda..." Luna looked out into the night sky again, trying to see if she could spot it with her naked eye. She could only see the same fuzzy outline out of the corner of her eye that she had seen in the telescope. Oh, how she wished she could see it. It was just then when a thought occurred to her.

"T-Twilight."

"Yes, Luna?"

"If I... if I made it brighter, could we see it with this telescope?" asked Luna, turning towards her.

"W-well," replied Twilight, taken aback by Luna's question. She had never imagined Luna could do something like that, but it did, of course, make complete sense. "... well, yes, theoretically you could make it brighter, and then we'd be able to see it from here. Are you sure you can do that, though?"

"I haven't done it in a very long time, but... I made all of this, right? I can't imagine it'd be too difficult."

Twilight smiled. "Alright then. Give it a try, if you'd like. I can't wait to see what happens!"

Luna returned the unicorn's smile, then looked back to the night sky. She focused on where she had seen Andromeda, and closed her eyes, picturing it in her mind's eye. Her horn began to glow with an odd type of brightness, as if it were moonlight itself. She didn't know what it looked like specifically, but she didn't need to. She only needed to command it to be brighter, and it would accommodate her desires. Suddenly, there was a large flash of energy from her horn, which shot up directly at Andromeda, lighting up the entire sky like a phosphorescent lake. The energy rippled across the sky, the stars gleaming and pulsating with waves of brilliant, pure light that could be seen through the entire sky. Luna opened her eyes finally, and the sight she saw nearly knocked her to the floor. A large, bright disk had appeared in the sky. It sparkled and filled the vista of the night, as if it was a cloud of innumerable stars, hovering in the abyss. It was so bright, so beautiful, and dwarfed everything else, short of the moon itself. There was not a sound to be heard from anywhere around them. They said nothing, only gasping and covering their mouths with their hooves in unison. The image of Andromeda burned itself into Luna's retina. Had she really made this all on her own? Twilight walked towards Luna and sat beside her, the two mares staring in awe at the galaxy, trying to take in everything.

"... a trillion stars," said Luna suddenly, after a few moments.

"W-what?"

A tear ran down Luna's cheek. She had never imagined that her night held such wonders. It was beyond her wildest dreams. "There's a trillion stars... I can see them all gleaming and shining. Every individual one. I... I made... all of that...?"

Twilight wasn't sure what to say. She looked at Luna, who was simply staring at her creation in a kind of wonder that Twilight had never seen in any pony before. Her mane glowed with the same soft hue as the stars above them, her eyes reflecting and absorbing the light of Andromeda. Twilight couldn't help but admire her once more.

"I made... all... of it?" repeated Luna.

"You made the entire night sky, Luna. All of this is you," replied Twilight, still in a state of mild shock. "It was seeing things like this as a young filly that made me fall in love with your night. I couldn't imagine anything else so beautiful."

Luna responded by resting her head against Twilight's, continuing to look up at the beautiful galaxy whose light displaced the entirety of the sky. Twilight leaned back against her in kind. "Thank you, Twilight," she said finally.

"There's no need to thank me. I didn't do anything."

"You've shown me who I am."

Twilight blushed. "I just showed you what was already there."

Luna smiled, nuzzling Twilight's neck with her muzzle, enjoying the warmth and Twilight's scent. It was one of her most favourite things to do in the world. There was nowhere else she felt this safe. "I would have never known myself if it weren't for you."

"I just wanted to show you what you've made, so you'd know how beautiful it is. That's all."

"And that's why you're wonderful, Twilight." Luna broke from the loving embrace, looking at Twilight, smiling and giggling to herself. Luna looked almost euphoric. Twilight loved seeing her so happy and calm. "I need to go home now, before it gets too late. Celestia and I are having some sister-time tomorrow. She even booked the whole evening off for me."

"I completely understand. I hope you two have great fun!"

"We will," said Luna, smiling sweetly again. She embraced the unicorn in a hug, and held her for as long as possible. Twilight returned it, smiling just as brightly. Luna then took a step back, a blush forming on her cheeks. "I had a wonderful time tonight, Twilight."

"I did too. The last few months have been wonderful. Would you like to do this again in a few days from now, on Thursday? Weather permitting, of course," replied Twilight.

"I'd love to!" exclaimed Luna, her eyes lighting up. She blushed even harder, looking up at Twilight in a slightly coy way. "Oh, and... Twilight...?"

Before Twilight could even utter a single syllable in response, Luna leaned in closer to the other mare. Twilight blushed bright red, her heart skipping a beat, as she felt Luna lay a soft, gentle, sweet kiss directly on her cheek. She then brought her lips to Twilight's ear and whispered, "Goodnight." Luna stepped back, smiling, and extended her wings,

stretching them as wide as she could, and began flapping them, ascending off the viewing deck of the Ponyville Library. She looked tenderly at Twilight for a few moments, before launching herself high into the air in the direction of Canterlot, blending in and disappearing into the bright, starry night sky. Twilight could only sit there, stunned for a few moments, before coming back to her senses. Her heart was nearly leaping through her chest, its heartbeat pounding through her ears, having just been kissed for the first time in her life. But it took only one look back up at the night sky they had just shared, like so many times before, to make Twilight calm once more. She sighed, feeling that pure elation that she only felt when she was with the Princess of the Night - the night itself, personified. Twilight spoke softly into the heavens, closing her eyes, as if it were a private conversation only between her and Luna. And it was.

"I love you too, Luna."