

Big Macintosh was not a pony of many words, and he liked it that way. He was the silent type. Mares loved a good, quiet stallion, especially if he was big and strong and very very good at mathematics. Math led to good jobs; and even though he wasn't exactly interested in a professorship at the Canterlot Royal Academy of Sciences, he still wrote several papers for them. There was even a movie about him: Good Colt Hunting. However, he had to admit that the directors had taken quite a lot of liberties with the events of his life, not the least of which was the fact that he did not, in fact, have the four kissing circles of Le Cart's Theorem as his cutie mark. The green apple on his flank attested to that.

Most importantly, there was no Coltifornian girl, and there was never going to be. He'd had enough of Coltifornians during his undergraduate life, thank you very much. Valley Mare had spoiled them for him; she had been so incredibly gorgeous, utterly brainless, and she had the most terrifyingly thick accent. Every other word she spoke was either "like", "um" or "whatever". She had nearly driven him nuts for the year they had been dating whenever she simply opened her mouth.

Finally, he had not decided to work at Wheeler Laboratories. New Yoke City was not his kind of place. Manehattan wasn't any better. Instead of working in a high-class laboratory with a high-rise office, Big Macintosh worked an apple farm and did mathematics in his spare time. As he whiled away his time, tending to Sweet Apple Acres, the world of higher thought had come to believe that he was the greatest mind in all of modern Equestria; he had already won the Field's Medal, and had been nominated for yet another: an unprecedented feat. Younger graduate students often came to the farm, requesting to study under him; he never refused. He only asked that they help tend to the farm. The students never lasted long.

Big Mac's life was filled with predictability and order. It was the kind of life a mathematician could really enjoy; one filled with the very patterns that he so often teased out of the seeming chaos. Truth from the void, his graduate adviser had called it; the order of all things that could be described only by the most abstract of languages. It was exactly this element of a structured life that he loved most; yet it was a deviation from his structured life that had caused him to meet with the one mare that had captured his heart in the most surprising of ways.

He had been on a sales trip to Canterlot, selling apples at Equestria's World's Fair in the evenings and attending the Annual Summit of Equestrian Mathematicians during the day. It was his yearly getaway from Sweet Apple Acres; a sort of vacation kindly granted by Granny Smith and Applejack. Big Macintosh greatly appreciated it, enjoying the week long event to full advantage every year. This particular day, since nothing interesting was happening at the summit (arguing with several indignant ponies over the validity of the solution to Fermat's Last Theorem was not how Big Mac wanted to spend his day; Mr. Wheels was absolutely right in his book), he decided to go on the tour of Canterlot Castle. He'd never been before, and it would certainly be more interesting than minding his apple stall in the summer heat.

He had seen pillars of alabaster and marble carved into some of the most beautiful leaf adorned shapes. Doric columns the tour guide had said? The high flying castle architecture amazed him; ponies had built this with no knowledge of vector physics? How resourceful they must have been! And the brilliant tapestries! The gardens! All of it was so incredibly wonderful that he simply didn't know what to say.

Yet, that was not the most beautiful thing he had seen that day. The most beautiful thing

he had seen that day was a mare. Not just any mare either. The Moon Princess herself, Luna of the Night Sky. Though, to be entirely fair, he had heard her first; she had seen him before he saw her. Sadly, she hadn't sounded exactly happy to see him.

"My stars, Celestia! That young stallion is gadding about with his fetlocks unshorn!" At that moment Big Mac had first looked at his fetlocks. He had admitted at the time that they were *a little* hairier than most, but he was an apple farmer and a mathematician. Keeping his fetlocks neat wasn't exactly anywhere near the top of his list of priorities. It was at that moment that he decided, noble or not, that he would give whoever she was a good piece of his mind. All that changed when he first saw her.

Time seemed to freeze, and his breath caught in his chest. There, on Celestia's left, was Luna. The small, blue alicorn's face was wide in shock, her hair covering one of her eyes, and her hoof drawn upwards in a pose of confusion and surprise. Her wings were raised in the natural pegasus warding motion, and she looked almost ready to rear. Yet despite how reviled she seemed, he couldn't help but feel that strange attraction; maybe it was her adorable monocle that she was wearing *over* her hair rather than *on* the eye that was hidden by her hair. Maybe it was some kind of joke Celestia was playing on her; Celestia was rumored to be quite the prankster after all. All of these details, and more, Big Macintosh drank in over the eternity of that instant; he knew of no technique, no strategy, no way of discerning truth, whether mathematical or philosophical, that could definitively prove what he knew then: he was decidedly, completely, and whole-heartedly in love with Luna. It was particularly strange, he noted, that he have this reaction now. He certainly hadn't felt this way when she had shown up on Nightmare Night. At least, not exactly this way; maybe it was why he had kept comparing her to Valley? Speaking of Nightmare Night he had a thank you to deliver.

The next thing Luna said, however, was enough to break him out of his Cupid-and-nostalgia given reverie with just as much shock as Luna seemed to be going through at that moment.

"Have him arrested, before he incites the castle's mares to a riotous lust!" she shouted. Celestia was visibly facehoofing and slowly shaking her head. The guards present were uncomfortably looking about, unsure of exactly what to do.

"Can we arrest somepony just for having hairy hooves?" one of them muttered to a nearby colleague. His colleague could only shrug.

"Luna?" Celestia said. "It is not against the law for a pony to go about with hooves that are a little hairier than most. And we need to talk about social trends for the last millenium. Again. Heaven knows that Nightmare Night incident was bad enough."

That had been two years ago. Two long years of yearning, and visiting the castle again and again during his week-long vacations had yielded nothing. He hadn't seen her since. Several letters from Sweet Apple Acres had tried to make their way through the Equestrian Postal Service to Luna, but she had never replied. She probably got letters like his all the time, he consoled himself; he was sure that she held nothing against him for that day...mostly sure.

For two years he had kept up with her: read about her in the news, listened to gossip, studied how to be a good gentlecolt from Rarity...all of it for Luna. For a few months, Rarity and AJ had tried to dig the identity of "the lucky filly" out of him; they had failed utterly. He still got weekly lessons from Rarity, though Applejack shook her head every time he went.

“Look, all Ah’m sayin’ is that you don’t hafta worry! You’re one of Equestria’s finest gentlecolts, and a genius to boot! Now what foal of a filly wouldn’t want that?” Applejack had said. “Just be honest. That’s all a filly should want and ask from a stallion; if’n it don’t work out, it don’t work out. Least, that’s what Ah think.” She had nodded sagely at that point; Big Macintosh snorted.

“You’re just sayin’ that ‘cause Ah told you that when you wanted to meet that handsome stallion with the hourglass cutie mark,” he had retorted. Applejack had only blushed deep red at that point; the retort she had stammered out was completely unintelligible. “Least Ah know that mah sister speaks Equestrian.” He’d had to avoid a playful hoof jab, but it was worth it.

This year, he was yet again wandering the halls of Canterlot Castle. The tour guides had gotten so used to seeing Big Macintosh every year that they kindly let him wander around wherever he wished; wherever, that is, the guards did not obstruct his passage. As he wandered about aimlessly, he toyed around with a generalized conic in the quaternions whose shadow was being mapped into the three dimensional plane consisting of the real plane and imaginary plane where the mapping was distinctly...

He had become so lost in his reverie that he didn’t notice where his hooves were taking him. The thing that brought him back to reality was the sudden appearance of a pair of wings barring passage. Backing up immediately, he took a moment to glance around and find out where he was. It was one of the side stairways to the private floors of Canterlot Castle; wherein the Royal Sisters and their staff resided.

“Lost Big Mac?” one of the guards asked him. “It’s not like you to wander around here.” He looked a little concerned, but did not budge from his position.

“Nope,” Big Mac responded. He turned, about to make his way slowly back down the stairs. He paused for a moment, turning around to face them. Something was different. “Captain Draught? What are you doin’ here? Ah thought you were in charge of protectin’ the Princess’ quarters, not necessarily guardin’ the place yourself.”

“What, can’t a colt do some of his own hard work? I never expected to hear that from you,” Draught retorted. Big Mac had to admit, Draught was a right about that; he was a farmer first and a mathematician second after all.

“Well, can’t fault a colt for being an upstandin’ citizen and a good leader,” Big Macintosh replied, smiling. “Did you see somethin’ embarassin’ again? Or did ya annoy Princess Celestia?” Draught coughed. “Gotcha didn’t Ah?”

Draught smiled back. “Oh you got me good Big Mac. Can’t slip anything by you can I? Guess that’s why you’re the genius.” He paused a moment and pawed at the floor a little awkwardly. “Dew Drop, I never told Big Mac anything. Ok?” The other guardpony nodded, flicking her mane out of her eyes afterwards and sniggering slightly. “Anyways, I saw Luna pranking Celestia. After something like that, I like to stay out of their way for awhile. They’re a little embarrassed whenever they walk by, so I try to spare them the awkward moments.”

“Ya sure you got that right? Ain’t it usually the other way round?” Big Macintosh asked. Draught had been one of the first ponies to discover that Big Mac was smitten with Luna; it didn’t surprise him. Many stallions were infatuated with the princesses; Big Mac just happened to be one of the nicest of the bunch.

“Nope. This time it was Luna. With her sock puppet named Mr. Buttons,” Draught replied. He nodded his head to confirm the truth of his statement.

Big Macintosh was confused. Luna played with sock puppets? His Luna? Sock puppets? It wasn't exactly the kind of hobby he normally pictured a filly having, but then again, Luna wasn't exactly a normal filly. The word "filly" didn't even fit; she was at *least* several hundred times his age.

Captain Draught nodded again. "Oh, I've never told you have I? Princess Luna has a fascination with socks. Loves them to death. She's been buying a quad of socks every day just to see if she can get one of those golden tickets; apparently Mr. Fetlocks' factory has an entire wing dedicated to making socks, and she wants to see it."

Big Macintosh was floored. Luna loved socks? He'd already known about her pet abacus, and being a mathematician that had only made her more attractive, but socks? Fashionable socks? He had never ever pictured her as a sock lover. His mental Fantasy Luna shattered, to be replaced with a very, very down to earth and pony-like Luna. Of course Luna wasn't the perfect image that had only existed in his mind; she was a pony, complex and impossible to reconstruct exactly with all of her variegated perfections and imperfections. Yet, somehow, the thought made him fall even further for her rather than less. He could win the heart of a pony; he couldn't even begin to convince himself that he deserved perfection. Then again, he reasoned, he thought she was perfect and that was really all that mattered wasn't it? At that moment, a flash of hope shot through his mind; it was wonderfully simple, elegant, and most importantly romantic. "Has she found one of them golden tickets yet?"

Captain Draught grinned. "No Big Mac, I don't think she has. I'm certain I would have been the one of the first ponies in Canterlot Castle to know." He paused for a moment. "Three of the tickets have already been found. If you want socks, Hoity Toity's is going to be sold out by this hour; but I hear that there's a store on the corner of Fifth and Saddlewood. Almost nopony knows about it. Called Eleanor's Accessories. Good luck."

Big Macintosh only nodded in thanks before hurrying off. He had someplace he needed to be.

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"Hello and welcome to Eleanor's Accessories, how may I help you?" droned the mauve mare behind the desk. She continued flipping through the newspaper with her magic as Big Macintosh looked around the small store. Nopony seemed interested in buying any of it; mainly because a lot of it consisted of rather...strange looking objects and artifacts. It was the kind of place you expected to fill up more towards the evening; or when teenage colts and fillies left school so they could come and be rebellious. "The tattoo artist is out to lunch, but feel free to browse our hip and happening wares," the mare droned, flipping another page disinterestedly.

Big Macintosh looked for shoes. Socks were usually kept near shoes. After wandering up and down the aisles and peering through shelves for awhile, he gave up looking himself. It was time to ask the greeter for assistance; there certainly didn't seem to be anypony else in the store. Modern music of some unknown genre played over the store speakers; it was something with some oomph and thump to it. Was this dance music? If so, why were such vulgar and disingenuous lyrics accompanying it? Did ponies really dance to other ponies *complaining*? Even though he was only in his mid twenties, Big Macintosh suddenly felt very, very old. Would Luna even like somepony who was as behind the times as he was? He shook his head clear of such thoughts; it didn't matter. He was just looking to buy some socks so he could look for the

ticket for the mare he loved.

As he approached the desk where the customer service representative continued to flip through the newspaper (he could swear she'd flipped the same page back and forth at least seven times now), he noticed the sound of gum. Bubblegum. She was blowing bubblegum? What was this, a contemporary movie? Was he supposed to fall in love with her rebellious, yet quirkily adorable attitude? He snorted; he'd been to one too many of Rarity's Feminine Film Fridays (she had insisted that it would help his chances with mares; considering which mare he happened to be in love with, he needed all the help he could get). He just needed to get in, get the socks, and get out.

He cleared his throat. The bubblegum popping continued. Another throat clearing. Another flip of the page. Her callous behavior was beginning to wear on his nerves.

"Scuse me ma'am?" he asked, keeping all but the barest hint of annoyance out of his throat. The mare looked at him over her newspaper, chewing her gum with her mouth open. Her mouth stayed open, and the gum dropped. She was drinking in his...his...size. Big Macintosh smiled, half to himself, half to calm the poor mare. Very few ponies could help but be awed when meeting him for the first time; he dwarfed most ponies simply by standing on the other side of the street.

She seemed to snap out of it a moment later, returning to her sullen look from earlier. Maybe it was the yoke? He braced himself for a "farm yokel" joke; they happened far too often. He couldn't get away from them even at the summit; some ponies just couldn't resist a cheap jibe. "Is there something you need? Maybe a new...accessory to go along with the yoke?" she asked. Somehow, she managed to drone while still sounding slightly awed by his size. He wasn't sure how she managed it, but she had.

"Ah'm lookin' for a few socks. The Fetlocks' kind. With them golden tickets?" he asked. His eyes followed the floating pack of gum as she took out another piece, unwrapped it, and slowly put it in her mouth before she started chewing again; all the while, she was staring at him intently, her eyes following the curve of his yoke. At least, he hoped it was the yoke.

"We don't have many. Just a few, on the rack by the...bedtime bridles," she replied, pointing her hoof at the shelf in question. He thanked her, and hurriedly marched towards the shelf which was mercifully kept out of her sight by a rack of black and pink dresses. He peered over the packages of Fantabulous Socks. They came in all different colors and shapes, all claiming incredibly high thread count, and all of which guaranteed comfort or bits back. Nothing about them looked particularly fashionable. Maybe he'd never understand fashion. Or mares. Still, Big Macintosh gathered up all of the socks, stuffing them in one of the baskets he'd picked up by the desk. The mare at the desk only stared at him more intensely as he approached the desk and set the saddlebag on the desk; did he have an apple pie stain or something?

"That all?" she asked, eyeing both the bag and him. Or was it him and the bag? He couldn't tell at this point; but he did know that the sooner he got away from this store and its creepy cashier, the better.

"Eeyup," he responded. She reached for the saddlebag with her hooves, but as she did so, she suddenly lost her balance and brushed Big Macintosh across his chest before recovering and giggling a little.

"Sorry about that," she said as she rang up his socks. "I'm just such a klutz sometimes."

As she passed the last package over the scanner, she swished her tail. It wasn't an angry swish...more a – oh no. One of THESE mares. This was the exact trick that Valley Mare had used to start dating him; well he was much older and wiser now, and he wasn't falling for that same trick again. He was going to buy his socks, and leave, and that would be that. "That'll be 20 bits even," she said, passing him the bag of socks. Big Macintosh sighed in relief. At least she wasn't so infatuated with him that she would try giving him a few quads of socks for free; that conversation would have just been awkward.

"Thank you ma'am," he said as he walked out of the store. He could *feel* her staring at his backside as he left; something about the entire experience felt distinctly unnerving and he didn't like it. He just had to make it back to his apple stall in time for the dinner rush, and then he'd have time to open the socks later. Still, maybe just one package, right now. Sitting down on a nearby bench, he opened one of the packages of socks. Nothing. It was truly disappointing. Maybe another? And another? And another?

One last package of socks. Big Mac, one of the finest mathematicians in the world, snorted at his own foolishness. Probability dictated that he had a better chance of getting hit by a cart than finding one of the golden tickets; the difference in magnitude was like comparing the weight of a whale to a sugarcube. He stuffed the last quad of socks in his saddlebags in disgust. What would Granny Smith say about his wastefulness? He didn't need that many quads of socks after all; and all for a mare that he would, very likely, never have a chance with. Maybe he'd be better off going back to Eleanor's Accessories and giving that mare with the newspaper and bubblegum a chance.

His gaze wandered around the street; it was getting closer to the evening, and several couples were already wandering around the streets of Canterlot. One couple slowly kissed each other several times underneath the eaves of a carefully groomed, decorative tree; another walked down the street, window shopping while nuzzling and whispering sweet nothings. Laying his head on his hooves, he couldn't help but feel jealous. The thought of going back to see the mare with the newspaper re-entered his mind, but he shooed it away. What on earth was going on with him? It was like he was in Ponyville High all over again. Here he was, moping while the sun was setting and –

The sun was setting. He wasn't tending to his apple stall at the World's Fair. Big Macintosh leapt to his hooves, and galloped towards Canterlot Public Park. Several ponies moved out of his way as he thundered down the high rise streets and expensive stores. After what seemed like an eternity of running, he saw the grand emerald canopy of the park before him. At the gold and silver gates was an incredibly long line to enter the park; families and foals, couples, groups of friends, and lone stragglers all waited impatiently. The guards gave him a cursory nod as he galloped past the line, shouting "Ah'm a vendor!"; he could hear a couple of them try the same line to get into the fair faster. From the sound of squabbling it clearly hadn't worked; Big Macintosh was a highly recognizable pony after all.

There it was! The Apple Family Apple Stall! Even if he had almost certainly failed Princess Luna, he could at least make up for it by ensuring that he was around to sell his family's treats. The World's Fair was one of the more profitable events that Sweet Apple Acres took part in, and he wouldn't be doing right by his family if he simply spent the night languishing on a bench somewhere in the middle of Canterlot. Princess Luna wasn't just some mare, but

she wasn't family. He had responsibilities after all.

That particular night at the Fair was short of spectacular. Big Macintosh could not get Luna and the unopened package of socks off of his mind. It didn't help matters that romantically involved ponies kept lining up in front of his stall. He was glad to see the customers, but every one of them reminded him of the hopelessness of his own situation. "Oh to live forever with love unrequited, to suffer the bittersweet and sorrowful pangs o' desire until the end o' mah days," he muttered to himself. He blinked at himself: quoting Charlie Baudlyre could only mean that he was feeling rather lonely tonight. No doubt it was all the romance in the air.

Later that night, as he walked back to his hotel, his thoughts turned once again to the golden tickets and the last package of socks he had purchased. He'd wasted the day today, he thought. Besides, the Equestrian Society of Mathematicians had paid for his fancy room at the Waldorf Equestria; he should at least be gracious enough to actually show up at the summit. Maybe deliver the speech they had wanted for years? Yet, the niggling thought that trying at all was better than not trying kept popping up like some ubiquitous, but obvious, statement about the time of day.

As he closed the door to his room, he decided. He'd open the last package of socks. Who he was doing it for and why he was doing it didn't matter; he'd already bought them, he might as well open them. He flopped down on the bed, seizing the cellophane tab in his teeth. If there was no ticket, it was no great loss; he'd have a brand new quad of high quality socks. If there was a ticket...well, he'd figure it out then.

He tore the tab. After a few nudges of the nose, he saw it. A glint of gold. The perfect gift for the perfect mare.

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Luna awoke to find a small envelope lying on the nightstand next to her bed, beside her daily package of socks. The light from Celestia's sun burned bright over the top of her curtains, but they acted as a wonderful alarm clock. It was the summer, after all; the day lasted longer than the night, so it only made sense for her to not sleep the day away. As she got to her hooves, she decided to wait a moment on the socks themselves; it wasn't every day that she got a letter after all.

As she levitated the envelope towards her, she thought to herself, "When have I ever gotten a letter? It had better not be another one of Celly's pranks. I might just have to get a little...vindictive...if it is." She giggled as she recalled the last prank she pulled on Celestia.

Celestia, almost universally, yawned whenever she woke up; whenever she yawned she had a tendency to try to be polite and yawn into her right hoof. This particular morning, she'd woken up and yawned. Into a sock. In her shock, she flung it off of her hoof with her magic immediately, throwing it across the room to the farthest corner, where it landed with a loud *flump*. As she glared the corner something about her room seemed...wrong. She closed her eyes, shook her head, and opened her eyes again. To find her bedroom entirely covered in socks. All of them from Luna's private collection. Socks were draped over the sofa, they littered the floor, there was a layer of them on Celestia's bed, and Celestia's nightcap had been replaced with what was probably a sock. She levitated it off her head only to find...Mr. Buttons.

Celestia's scream of "LUUUUUUUUNNNAAAAAAA!!!!" had resonated from the very heights of the Tower of the Setting Sun in the farthest east of the castle to the Tower of the

Waning Moon in the farthest west of the castle. Luna had only sniggered to herself quietly as she drifted off to sleep. Celestia wouldn't hurt her favorite sock puppet.

Luna slowly opened the envelope, taking care to stuff it underneath her blankets as she opened it the rest of the way. A bit of movement caught her eye from the doorway, and she smiled.

"Celly?" she called, "I'm on to you. I know this envelope is one of your pranks!" She turned to face the doorway, levitating her key weapon out from his drawer next to her bed. "Come on out Celly! I know you're there!" she said again, advancing the sock puppet forwards until it was almost around the corner. Then, without warning, Mr. Buttons flew around the corner at Celestia's head height. She felt it hit...air? Was Celly ducking? She cantered around the corner to find Captain Draught standing at attention, though he kept an eye on the still floating sock puppet that Celestia was so deeply frightened of.

"Is there something I can help you with milady?" Draught asked calmly. His posture was stiff, and formal; not like his usual, more relaxed self. He had, after all, seen things that most news organizations and gossip columns would have given their fore legs for; things that would embarrassing the Royal Pony Sisters for the next ten thousand years. Like Mr. Buttons. And the incident in the garden involving Luna's "number one fan". Luna realized that he had been the one behind the envelope. Seizing it with her magic, she levitated it, and its contents out into the hallway...only to gasp as she stared at one of Wooly Fetlocks' legendary golden tickets. A piece of paper fluttered to the floor. Luna didn't notice.

"Wha-wha-wha?" Luna gasped. "What is the meaning of this?!" The ticket danced in front of Draught's face; he remained utterly impassive. "Did Celly pull some strings? Where did this come from?" Draught didn't speak. "As your Princess, I **demand** that you answer!" Luna cringed inwardly as she commanded him to speak; she hated pulling rank on anypony as much as, if not more than, Celestia did. Still, if Celestia had finally given in to her overprotective instincts that was something they needed to talk about. Preferably now. Almost certainly now.

"A secret admirer sends his regards," Captain Draught said quietly. Luna's eyes screwed her eyes up in suspicion.

"It wouldn't happen to be Celly would it?" she asked pointedly. "Or you acting on behalf of Celly?"

Draught sighed. "Milady, permission to speak freely?"

Luna blinked. He usually only asked for that when either Celestia or herself had done or said something that he found, according to his common sense, to be utterly stupid. He had never been wrong before either; it was no wonder, after all, that the Royal Sisters entrusted him with their most personal secrets by proximity. "Permission granted."

"If you would just read the letter that came with it all would become clear," he said, pointing at the paper. Luna blushed, levitating the letter with her magic. What she read was the shocked her more than anything else that had happened ever since her return.

*To my dearest Luna,
I hope that you enjoy the gift.
Thank you.*

From a Secret Admirer

Captain Draught smirked at Luna's face as she stared at the letter for a full minute

before asking, "Is this real? No fan this time?"

Draught shook his head, "Milady, I know the pony who sent you this. Under pain of loss of friendship, I have sworn not to reveal the pony's identity. So I'll just have to keep you in the dark, won't I?"

"It's not you is it?" Luna continued, eyeing Draught carefully. Draught frowned.

"Milady, I am not the pony in question. I can swear that I am speaking the honest truth when I say that the pony in question is, very and truly, madly in love with you." Luna fainted. "That didn't go as well as Mac expected," Draught muttered as he carefully lifted the Moon Princess back onto her bed. As he pulled the covers over her, her eyes fluttered open. "Well, looks like I went to all the trouble of putting you to bed for nothing," he commented as she clambered out of bed for the second time in under ten minutes.

"I...I can't accept this pony's gift," she said, radiating stubbornness and shock in waves. "Whoever this pony is deserves the ticket; she, or he, is giving up the chance of a lifetime for my happiness. Who knows when Mr. Fetlocks will let more ponies into the factory? I can't let this pony give that away." She paused, tears in her eyes. "I just can't. But...Draught? When you meet with her...or him...would you deliver a message for me?"

Draught nodded. He knew that Luna often felt lonely but...this lonely? Then again, her only real friend was her older sister, and they only saw each other for about an hour or so a day (if that), mostly to eat or discuss affairs of state. Outside of Celestia her closest friend was probably...him, and he spent most of his time telling other ponies to stand stoically next to her bedroom door.

Luna swallowed deeply, carefully placing the ticket back in the envelope, and storing the letter away in her nightstand's drawer. "Tell this pony that they should go on the tour; if I get a golden ticket, I will meet them there. Then we'll...we'll see where things go." Luna watched as Captain Draught took the envelope and gently stored it in one of the compartments of his armor before turning to Luna, nodding, and then saluting.

"I'll see to it that the pony gets the message, Princess," Draught said before descending the stairs. How was he going to explain this to Big Macintosh? How would he take it? Draught didn't know, but he knew that Big Mac probably would not be very happy.

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Big Macintosh was ecstatic. "Didja hear that?" he whooped, "She wants to meet with me! Ah can't believe mah luck!" He danced in place for a little bit before realizing exactly where he was and who was in the room with him. Draught didn't know what to say to a fully grown stallion when he was dancing, especially when that stallion happened to be about twice his size.

"She still needs to find one of the tickets," Draught replied. Big Macintosh's head remained in the clouds, despite Draught's feeble attempts to drag it back down to the ground where earth pony heads belonged.

"She wants to meet with me! That's all that matters!" the stallion replied. He calmed down long enough to step onto the balcony and watch as the evening star began to shine in the night sky, and the moon began to rise. It's gentle light touched its face, and he could feel a cool breeze flow across his face and tickling his fore legs. "Ah'm comin' Luna."

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Author's Notes

-Added a few lines to the scene where Big Mac sees Luna in order to bring it in line with the latest interlude. Hopefully I won't have to pull any more reintegrations. Edited 11.14.2011 (14th of November that is).