

A Simple Little Party

By [Chris](#)

It was the night of the Grand Galloping Gala, the first since Princess Luna's return. Celestia looked around the halls, nickering in frustration. What she saw didn't displease her--at least, not any more than the prospect of being in the middle of yet another insufferable Gala displeased her inherently. No, what bothered her was what she *didn't* see: her sister. Leaning down, she whispered to Twilight, "I've got some business to attend to. Handle the greetings for me while I'm gone." Twilight tried to hide her sadness, but didn't do a very good job. Celestia sighed; it was becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the disappointment and frustration radiating from her protegee. And the Princess couldn't very well tell her that she too would love nothing better than to abscond to a private chamber somewhere and chat in peace, could she? "I'll be back in just a minute, I promise." Celestia knew that wouldn't be enough to mollify Twilight, but it would have to do. Leaving the purple unicorn to manage the impossibly long line of nobles by herself, Celestia set off in search of her sister.

It didn't take long to locate the younger Princess. Celestia found her in the royal observatory, peering through the massive primary telescope and muttering to herself as her horn glowed with magic. Quiet so as not to disturb her, Celestia crept up behind her sister.

"Just a little more to the right...no no, too far...Ah! Perfect!" Luna consulted a weighty-looking tome spread out before her, then rechecked the telescope. "Ah yes, that's much better. It wouldn't do to have Rigel .022 degrees out of position now, would it? And on the night of the Gala, no less!"

"Speaking of the Gala, were you planning to come downstairs at some point?"

Luna stiffened but, to her credit, managed to contain the histrionics with which she often reacted to such surprises. As she turned around, Celestia continued, "After all, we're hosting the event at extra-late this year just to show off your night. Why don't you come down and enjoy the party with me?"

Luna snorted derisively. "Enjoy the party? Don't you mean, 'Stand around and shake hooves with self-important nobles for eight hours straight?' I'd much rather just work on my stars, thank you very much."

Celestia glanced up at the night sky. Luna did have a point: the Gala *was* deathly dull, and tweaking the stars had always brought the younger alicorn pleasure. Tonight's sky was a testament to both her eye for detail and her artistic skill. With a sigh, Celestia nuzzled her little sister. "I just want you to be happy, Luna. I--"

"I *am* happy!" Luna interrupted. "Celly, don't worry so much, alright? I'd rather work on my night than waste my time hobnobbing with a bunch of ponies who's names I don't even know. Is that so hard to understand?"

Celestia smiled. "My most recent pupil felt that way until I personally ordered her to go make some friends. I dare say she was a bit put off at first, but it seems to have worked out for her."

"You mean the Element of Magic? It always has struck me as a bit odd that you'd chose a pony who hated other ponies to gather the Elements together. How did you know she would manage?"

Celestia's smile grew broader. "Why, I knew it would work because I knew she *didn't* hate other ponies. She just didn't realize it herself." Celestia gently tousled Luna's mane with her hoof. "And likewise, I know that *you* would be a lot happier if you got out and socialized a little more."

Luna rolled her eyes. "Arg, you're worse than mother ever was. Look, I can be social, but that doesn't mean I want to go to your stupid party!"

Celestia tapped her hoof to her chin thoughtfully. "I suppose it is a rather stupid party, isn't it? Alright Luna, I'll make you a deal: you don't have to go down and make an appearance at the Gala, but in exchange you have to do two things for me. First off, you're going to throw a party next week. A *real* party, not the overstuffed nonsense that's going on downstairs."

"A *small* party," Luna interjected, "And only ponies I already know."

Celestia nodded. "Of course. I've already got a few ideas for your guest list. Now, as for the second condition..."

The ballroom was a wreck. Collapsed columns and broken statues were strewn about, and by the looks of it a stampede of wild animals had tracked dirt and debris everywhere. The floors, walls, and even ceiling were covered with sticky globs of cake. Celestia and Luna stood in the doorway, a look of shock on the latter's face. Without turning to face her sister, Luna exclaimed, "I have to clean all this? By myself?!"

By way of answer, Celestia levitated a frilly maid outfit and feather duster in front of her sister. "And don't forget your work clothes!"

Luna glared daggers at the older alicorn. "You *knew* this was going to happen, didn't you? Somehow, you *knew*."

Celestia laughed lightly. "Why, I have no idea what you're talking about!" As her sister's glare deepened, Celestia began helping her into the uniform. "Oh, don't give me that look. A deal's a deal, after all."

Luna stared hopelessly at the ballroom. "Well, at least things can't get any worse..."

It was a bright, beautiful day in the town of Ponyville. As the mid-morning's light shown through the windows of the local library, the purple unicorn sleeping inside stretched and yawned, slowly opening her bleary eyes. Smiling, she muttered, "Good morning, sun," and rose from her bed. Hearing the trilling of songbirds outside, she walked to the window and quietly eased it open. Looking out, her smile widened as she saw two brilliantly colored birds chirping happily to one another. "Good morning, birds," she whispered, not wanting to disturb them.

An ear-shattering belch echoed through the room behind her. Startled, the birds took off, chirping something which Twilight was fairly certain was unprintable. Her face souring, she didn't bother to turn around as he grumbled, "Morning, Spike."

Spike, for his part, lay slumped over the edge of his basket, clutching a scroll in one claw as he recovered from his rude awakening. "Man, I hate getting waked up by these letters. Doesn't the Princess ever sleep?"

"*Woken*, not *waked*," chided Twilight as she trotted over to her young assistant. "And since she needs to get up in time to raise the sun each morning, I think it's safe to say she's something of an early riser." She nudged the baby dragon into an upright position with her snout. "Well, are you going to read the note to me or not?"

Spike glared at her (he really wasn't a morning reptile), but unrolled the scroll and cleared his throat. "My most faithful student, Twilight Sparkle," he read, "I am very pleased with the progress

3

you've made in your studies since I assigned you to Ponyville. The letters you send me show that you and your friends have made great strides in understanding the Magic of Friendship."

Twilight blushed as Spike continued, "I'm writing to ask you to apply this understanding to

somepony very dear to me. Since her return, Princess Luna has been highly reclusive, more interested in studying and fiddling with her night sky than in spending time in the company of other ponies.” Spike looked up from the scroll. “Gee, who does *that* remind me of...”

“Just read the note, Spike.”

“Okay, okay! Ahem...So I’m writing to ask you and your friends if you would be willing to attend a party which my sister has agreed to organize. I was thinking just you, her, Spike, and the other Elements of Harmony. It’s been ten centuries since she last hosted a party, give or take a decade, so I’m hoping that you’ll be willing to give her a little advice and support. Also, we’ll be using your home as the location for the event. I was going to ask your permission, but then I remembered that the library is public property--so technically, it’s *my* library!”

Twilight was already hyperventilating by the time Spike finished that paragraph. “Oh my gosh, SPIKE! Princess Luna’s coming to town! And she’s going to throw a party! And I have to help!”

A voice from behind Twilight murmured, “Yes, that’s the gist of it.”

Twilight turned around, now in full-on panic mode. “PRINCESS LUNA!” she cried, and promptly fainted.

“P.S.,” continued Spike, looking nervously from the purple alicorn who’d just flown in through the open window to the unconscious Twilight, “I was thinking this afternoon, before she has to raise the moon. My sister should arrive in Ponyville about 10 minutes after you receive this note.”

Luna blushed. “There was a strong tailwind the whole way.” Delicately nudging Twilight, she asked Spike, “So...what do we do now?”

Spike crumpled up the scroll and threw it away before leading Luna downstairs. “How about we get some breakfast while we wait for Twi to come around? We’ve got your choice of cold cereal, cold pizza, or amethyst.”

When Twilight came to, she was alone in her room. Rising unsteadily to her hooves, she tried to piece together what had just happened. Luna was throwing a party here, today, and she--

Twilight gulped as her memory returned. And the Princess had been *here*.

“Oh no!” she cried to herself, “When I fainted in front of Luna, she probably took it as an insult! She probably flew straight back to Canterlot to tell Celestia what a terrible host I am! I’ll bet they’re both on their way here right now to throw me in a dungeon, or banish me, or--”

“Or throw you in a dungeon in the place where they banish you! That’s what you were going to say, right?”

Twilight looked out her second story window at the pink earth pony cheerily smiling in at her. Having grown used to her friend’s antics over the last year, she did not waste time being flabbergasted. Instead, she asked the obvious question: “Pinkie, this window in twelve feet off the ground. How did you get up here?”

“Oh, that’s easy!” replied Pinkie Pie, as she stepped inside. “I was playing Spider-Mare!” Twilight finally noticed that Pinkie was covered head to hoof with tree sap. As she stepped inside, she left a trail of sticky yellow goop behind her. “I can climb walls and...well, that’s about it, but I’m really good at it!”

Twilight shook her head. “That’s...great, Pinkie. Really, really...great. But Princess Luna is

4

here, so I need you to--”

“Oh, speaking of the Princess, she asked if she could have a talk with you once you came to.”

Twilight jumped, then turned to face Spike. The latter stood in the doorway, munching on a bowl of purple gemstones. “Oh, and she says the Toasted Oats are stale.”

Twilight looked blankly at Spike. "You've been feeding the Princess stale breakfast cereal?" Spike shrugged. "She hadn't eaten yet. Anyway, we need to get working on party plans. She was thinking--"

"A PARTY?!" cried Pinkie, "Where?"

"No, Pinkie!" screamed Twilight, "Please, don't--" but the pink pony had already sprinted downstairs. Twilight glared at Spike, then the two of them bolted after her.

As they entered the main room, they were greeted by the sight of a very confused Luna being bombarded by Pinkie's stream-of-consciousness rambling. Twilight hurriedly shoved a hoof in Pinkie's mouth, briefly wondering what a "Soyuz Spacecraft" was, and what it had to do with Luna or parties. "Please forgive my frien-er, acquaintance!!" Twilight apologized, averting her eyes from the Princess. "This is Pinkie, and she's a bit excitable."

Luna giggled at Twilight's obvious discomfort. "Please Ms. Sparkle, I'm not offended. And if I'm not mistaken, this is the Ms. Pie who bears the Element of Laughter, is she not? In light of the debt I owe her, I would be remiss if I were unwilling to forgive her her exuberance."

Pinkie pulled Twilight's hoof out of her mouth with an audible *plop*. "Thanks, Lu-lu! Now that we've had our introductions, let's get to party planning!"

"Lu-lu?" The Princess arched an eye at her new nickname, while Twilight facehoofed. "Um, yes. Yes, party planning. Now, Celly asked me to put together a small event, just for you three and the other Elements, so I--"

"-Need all the help you can get, if you're gonna be ready by this afternoon!" finished Pinkie. "Never fear, you have the best party planner in Equestria working with you now! Twilight!" she brought her face within an inch of the unicorn's face. "You and Spike take charge of the venue! This library needs to be ready to host within five hours!" Twilight glanced at the Princess, then gulped and nodded. "Lu-lu, you and I are going to visit the other guests! Rule number one of good parties is knowing how to delegate! We'll visit each of the other ponies and you can ask them to do something different. You already picked Twi for location, but we need ponies in charge of food, and entertainment, and music, and costumes, and since you're planning the party, you should help all of them out a little bit!"

Luna shook her head. "It seems that parties have become much more elaborate affairs since the last time I had to organize one. And what will you be doing, Ms. Pie?"

Pinkie laughed. "Ooh, I like it when you call me that! It makes me feel super-duper grown-up and responsible! I'll be your PA--your Party Assistant! I'll go everywhere with you today, and help you with anything you have trouble with! Now c'mon, everypony--we've got a party to prepare! Get your hooves in here!" Twilight, Luna, and Spike all hesitantly put their respective appendages atop Pinkie's hoof. "Party on three! One, two, three--"

The other three mumbled "Party," as they lifted their hooves in the air. They then all lowered their hooves again in unison. Spike tried to yank his hand free by main force, while Twilight's horn began to glow, her magic fighting a losing battle against the pull of Pinkie's hoof. Luna peered intensely at Pinkie, who returned her gaze with an open smile.

Finally, the Princess spoke. "Ms. Pie...are you covered in tree sap?"

Luna and Pinkie left Twilight's library about half an hour later, Twilight having managed to convince Pinkie that her present stickiness would be a liability to her PA duties and that a brief bath would be in her best interests. Luna wasn't sure it was wise to leave Twilight alone to deal with her share of the preparations (the unicorn had been muttering something to herself about rearranging the books by height and color to look more festive. Luna wasn't sure what the warning signs of obsessive-compulsive

behavior were, but that seemed a likely candidate), but Pinkie had insisted. “It’s your party, so you’ve gotta help with everything!” Eventually, the two had taken off to find the other ponies.

Pinkie produced a notepad and pair of reading glasses from somewhere in her mane, and consulted them as she led Luna down the streets. Luna blushed and did her best not to notice the stares of everypony as she walked past. Even in a town as near to Canterlot as Ponyville was, a visit from one of the Princesses was major news.

“Alright, first we should go check on Dashie! She’s easier to find while she’s still asleep. In faaaact...” Pinkie gestured towards a low-floating cloud. Hanging over the side was a rainbow-striped tail. “I’ll bet that’s her now! Well, either it’s her or rainbows have started getting a lot smaller. And hairier.”

Luna nodded. “Alright. So, what should I do?”

“Go wake her up and invite her to the party, of course! Then ask her to take care of one of those things we talked about. Help her get started, and then we can go on to the next pony!”

“Well, alright then...” Luna flapped up to the cloud. Landing atop it, she beheld a light-blue pegasus, her coloration and cutie mark leaving no doubt that she was the Element of Loyalty. Luna looked back down to Pinkie, who gave her a thumbs-up. The effect, coming from a creature without any digits, was deeply unsettling.

Experimentally, Luna cleared her throat. “Um, Ms. Dash...”

Dash groaned, then hunkered down deeper into the clouds. “Go ‘way,” she grunted, without opening her eyes. “Still sleeping.”

Luna looked about nervously, unsure what the protocol for such a situation was. Finally, she elected to continue. “Yes, well, I won’t keep you long. I just wanted to inform you that I’ll be hosting a party at the residence of Twilight Sparkle at three hours past noon, and would be grateful for your attendance.”

There was no answer save soft snoring.

Dejected, Luna flew down to Pinkie. “I’m not sure that went very well,” the Princess admitted. “She seemed very...tired.”

Pinkie was unruffled by the news. “Aw, that’s Dashie for ya! She’s such a sleepy-weepy sometimes, you’d think she stays up all night!” Pinkie’s brow furrowed. “Hey, you haven’t been hanging out with Dashie every night, have you Lu-lu?”

“Wha...no! No, I haven’t even seen Ms. Dash in almost a year!”

Pinkie shrugged. “Oh. Okay then! Anyway, just go tape this to her flank! She’ll see it when she gets up.” She quickly scrawled a note on one of the pages of her notebook and tore it off, hoofing it to the Princess. It read:

Party at three! You’re in charge of jokes and entertainment! Twilight’s place!
-Pinkie Pie!

Luna looked from the note to Pinkie. “Unless the rules of punctuation have radically changed during my absence, I believe it is unnecessary to end every sentence or word fragment with an

exclamation mark.”

Pinkie giggled and tousled the hair of the second most powerful creature on the planet. “Oh Lu-lu! You’re so silly!”

Muttering, “The things I do for Celly...” under her breath, Luna flew up and affixed the note to Dash’s side. Flapping back down, she asked, “What should we do next?”

Consulting her notepad, Pinkie declared, “Next stop is Fluttershy’s cottage. C’mon, I’ll show you

the way!” And before Luna could object, she was being forcibly dragged down the street towards the outskirts of town.

Fluttershy saw Luna and Pinkie before they saw her. At least, that was the conclusion Luna came to, since they found Fluttershy cowering beneath the small footbridge that led over the stream and to her house. Pinkie put a hoof on Luna’s shoulder. “Fluttershy can be just a *teensy* bit of a nervous nelly, Lu-lu,” she explained. “Wait here, and I’ll calm her down!” Leaving Luna behind, Pinkie hopped under the bridge and engaged in an animated conversation with the shy pegasus. Luna couldn’t hear most of it, and for that she was grateful. Pinkie’s ‘exuberance’ was becoming progressively more taxing to handle as the day went on.

Presently, Fluttershy came out onto the path with Pinkie at her side. The former dropped into an embarrassed curtsy, and muttered something which might have been, “Greetings, your highness.” It was hard to tell, as her decibel level couldn’t have broken double digits.

“It is my pleasure to meet you, Element of Kindness. I assure you that I have not forgotten you in the year since last we met.” Although Luna meant to reassure Fluttershy, it was obvious her words only made the poor pony even more frightened. Seeing Pinkie give her a head roll which translated to something along the lines of ‘Go on, get to the good part--the PARTY!’ Luna launched into the same greeting she’d given Rainbow Dash.

Again, Fluttershy muttered something totally inaudible. Guessing it was probably some variation on ‘Thank you, I’ll be sure to be there,’ Luna looked over Fluttershy to Pinkie. “So, on to the next pony, then?”

Pinkie shook her head emphatically. “Nuh-uh! We gotta ask Fluttershy to help, remember?”

“...Right. Ms. Shy, would you be so kind as to provide the, um...” Luna wracked her brain for the duties yet unfilled, “...ah, *music* for our party?”

Fluttershy this time spoke at quite some length. Sadly, her words were drowned out by the deafening roar of nothing whatsoever, leaving Luna without any clue what had been said.

Thoroughly frustrated with being unable to understand the pegasus in front of her, Luna snorted, “Fine. Great. Ms. Pie, let’s go--the sooner we finish planning this party, the sooner I can go home to Canterlot.”

Pinkie blinked. “But Lu-lu, you didn’t pick!”

“Arg...pick *what*?”

“Which of the performing groups you want Fluttershy to bring. Weren’t you listening?”

Her frustration nearly boiling over, Luna snapped, “Either. Both. Whatever!” Fluttershy’s only response was to Eep quietly and retreat back under the bridge.

Pinkie whistled thoughtfully. “*Both* of ‘em, eh? Well Lu-lu, it’s your party. But you can’t say Fluttershy didn’t warn you.”

Under most circumstances, Luna would have taken the hint. At the moment, however, she was not at her best. It was almost noon and she was still awake, the bowlful of stale oats she’d eaten

7

was not co-operating with her stomach, every aspect of planning this supposedly small, simple party had been met with unforeseen difficulty, and the one thing she was *not* about to do was go continue a dialogue with the conversational equivalent of a tree stump. Instead, she growled a few words most of the ponies at court wouldn’t even admit to knowing, then asked, “Where next?”

Pinkie checked her notepad again. “Closest place is Applejack’s farm. C’mon, I’ll show you the way!” And with that, the pink pony went prancing down the dirt road, a disgruntled purple alicorn

trailing behind.

By the time they reached Sweet Apple Acres, Luna had had time to cool down a bit. Sure, this party was turning out to be much more frustrating than she had hoped, but it was still orders of magnitude more enjoyable than attending the Gala would have been. Only two more ponies, and then the party itself, and then Luna could go home. She was just a few chapters into Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roaming Empire*, a fascinating examination of the collapse of the Dragon King's mobile castle and the subsequent scattering of that race across the globe. Luna had missed a lot of history in her thousand year absence--why, she didn't even know that the gibbons had their own publishing company in the first place!--and she took great pleasure in filling in those gaps in her knowledge. The smile returned to her face as she imagined getting back to Canterlot in time to raise the moon, then settling back into her pegasus-down sofa with a half-glass of red rock-salt to enjoy a good read...

Luna was startled out of her reverie by the sound of something heavy crashing to the ground inside the barn. Whatever had fallen, it must have been one of a great many, for the noise was quickly followed by an absolute cacophony. From the sound of it, one would guess that an entire herd of buffalo had leapt off of the barn loft while wearing suits of medieval plate armour. A young filly's voice groaned, "Oh no, not again..."

Another young voice chimed in, clearly panicking. "I can still fix it! Scoot, Sweetie, we just need to--"

"NO!" came a third voice, clearly that of an adult. "No more helping! Y'all have 'helped' me half to death already!"

There was a pause. Then came the sound of three young ponies bursting into sobbing wails. Luna pressed her ears against her skull, the noise nearly unbearable even from outside.

"Aw, girls...don't start that...no really, *please* stop...look, just come 'eer..." Luna and Pinkie observed as Applejack led three red-eyed fillies out of the barn. She pointed to a high rocky cliff far off in the distance, barely visible from the low rise on which the barn sat.

"Now, if'n y'all want to help, they say that there's a magic plant called the Beneviolet that grows up on yonder mountain. Maybe y'all could go fetch that for me?" The three girls looked uncertain. "Well, ya don't have to," shrugged Applejack, before nonchalantly adding, "I just thought it might be a way for y'all to earn yer cutie marks..."

The three perked up at that. "CUTIE MARK CRUSADER BENEVIOLET BENEFACTORS, YAY!" they cried, plastering Luna's ears back once more. Then they took off in the direction of the mountain, towards town. As they disappeared down the road, Luna could hear the one of them call to the other two, "How about we make it a race? First one there gets their cutie mark!" Then they were gone amidst a chorus of cheers.

As Applejack sighed with relief, Pinkie and Luna approached. "Isn't it dangerous to be sending those three off alone?" asked Luna. "The mountains are at least two weeks distant, and

8

those youth didn't seem very...capable." She wasn't sure what she'd expected the Element of Honesty to be like, but this certainly wasn't it.

Applejack chuckled as she watched the three run off. "Nah, they'll get bored and find somethin' else to do before they make it to the other side of town, never mind those mount-Oh! Princess Luna!" she cried, finally noticing who it was she was addressing. She quickly dropped into a bow. "Beggin' yer pardon, yer majesty. I didn't realize who it was I was speakin' to."

"Please, there's no need for that. Rise, I pray you."

Applejack picked herself up and smiled weakly. "As you please, yer highness."

Luna smiled. "Please, call me-"

"Lu-lu!" chimed in Pinkie, "Don't forget about the arty-pay!"

"-Anything but that," she sullenly finished. "Yes, thank you Ms. Pie, I'd completely forgotten our purpose here today."

Pinkie beamed, the Princess's sarcasm utterly wasted on her. "Aw, that's okay! That's why I'm here, after all!"

"I don't mean to interrupt, but what's an 'arty-pay?' Izzat one of them fancy frou-frou picture gallery things?" AJ had never been much of a student in school. She could barely speak modern Boarish, let alone Pig Latin.

Luna cleared her throat. "I wish to inform you that I'll be hosting a party at the residence of Twilight Sparkle at three hours past noon, and would be grateful for your attendance. In addition, I would be indebted if you could assist in providing the..." Luna briefly debated whether she should ask this pony to provide food or attire, those being the remaining needs Ms. Pie had told her needed to be filled. Then she looked at the grime-spattered and weather-beaten cowboy hat AJ wore, and the seemingly endless fields of sumptuous-looking apples stretched before her. "...catering. Yes, definitely the catering."

Applejack nodded, then caught herself and shook her head. "I'd love to help, yer highness, but there's a bit of a situation in the barn just at the moment." A second squad of buffalo knights chose this moment to mount a search and rescue mission for their fallen comrades. The ground shook with repeated impacts, and the barn swayed dangerously. "Matter of fact, I better get in there right away. But if y'all can get some pies in the oven, I'll bring 'em over. Pinkie'll know what to do." So saying, Applejack dashed into the barn.

"Oh, baking!" cried Pinkie. "I *love* baking!" Luna followed the hyperactive pony into the Apple family's home. Although Luna entered the house only a couple steps behind Pinkie, the latter had already taken two dozen premade pies from the ice box and set them on the counter. "Okay Lu-lu! We just need to wait for the oven to pre-heat, and then we can start baking! If we can fit four pies in the oven at once, it shouldn't take more than a couple hours..."

Luna blanched at the thought of spending two hours trapped in an enclosed area with Pinkie. Working quickly, she wove a spell over the frozen pies, her horn aglow with magical energies. With an audible *poof*, each of the desserts spread before her was instantly cooked to golden-brown perfection.

"There. Baking's done," Luna hastily said. "Now, let's go on to the final Element, and then we can be finished with all this until the party itself."

Pinkie smiled brightly. "Okie-dokie-lokie! Last up: Rarity!"

9

Luna had hoped that their last stop would be brief. After all, how much costuming can a party possibly require? They'd simply ask the Element of Generosity for some party hats or somesuch, and then they'd be finished, right? Then maybe she could spend a few hours in one of the Ponyville library's backrooms, taking some much-needed time to de-stress before the party.

Any such hopes were quickly dashed upon meeting the proprietor of Carousel Boutique.

Luna walked through the front door uncertainly. Spying the white unicorn she sought, she began, "Greetings, Ms. Rarity. I am-"

"Princess Luna!" Rarity cried, dropping into an elegant courtesy before rising with ill-concealed excitement. "Oh, you must have seen my fashion spread in *Modern Bridles*! Welcome, welcome to

Carousel Boutique! Tell me, what can this humble designer do for you today?"

Luna smiled. Ms. Rarity seemed respectful but unafraid—a rare combination in ponies today, she had discovered. "As it happens, I will be hosting a small party for the Elements this afternoon, yourself included, and I—"

Rarity gasped. "Say no more, Princess! It's obvious that you're in desperate need of my fashion assistance! Hold all my calls!" she cried to nopony in particular, "RARITY is at work!"

"Oh no, please don't trouble yourself too mu-URK!" Luna was grabbed by a pair of deceptively strong hooves and pulled behind a dressing curtain. Pinkie, who had done her best to stay quiet to this point (after all, Lu-lu seemed to have everything under control) grabbed a chair and a tub of popcorn out of thin air and made herself comfortable.

"Oh boy," she giggled to herself, "I love playing dress-up!"

Several hours later, Luna emerged from behind the curtain. Her body and spirit had both been trampled mercilessly under the fashionista's hooves. Still, she clung to that stubborn spark of dignity that comes of being a goddess living among mortals. She may have had her ribs crushed, her waist corseted, and muscles she didn't even know she had stretched beyond endurance, but she was still Princess Luna.

Then she caught a look at herself in the mirror, and that stubborn spark of dignity threw up its hands and unconditionally surrendered in the face of what she saw therein.

Although she had gotten a taste of modern fashions by observing the petitioners who came before the royal court each day, Luna hadn't really appreciated the sheer ridiculousness of present-day formal garb until now. Her middle was crushed down as thin as a wasp's waist, leaving her chest and flank ballooning out on either side. Her hair was at least as tall again as she was, and done up in some sort of elaborate curls with (if the strain on her neck was any indication) at least thirty pounds of hair product. In place of the understated silver crown that she and her sister both preferred, there rested atop her hair a massive gold and velvet monstrosity. And every single inch of her was covered in the gaudiest, most garish jewels imaginable.

Luna facehoofed, then glared in disgust at her leg. She had been too distracted by her inability to breathe to notice earlier, but Rarity had put a pair of knee-length pink frilly stockings on her front hooves. "I *hate* socks," she grumbled. "What am I, a filly?"

Rarity tisked at her. "Socks are very 'in' this year, my dear Princess. They say, 'I'm young, I'm fun, I'm—'"

"I'm turning eleven hundred and two in September!" Luna snapped. "And I'm only that young because ponies didn't keep a yearly calendar before then! I look like I'm going to prom!"

Rarity looked over the top of her glasses at the Princess. "Trust us, darling. We *are* a

10

professional, after all."

Had she been in a better mood, Luna might have laughed at the thought of another pony using the royal "we" to address her. Instead, she glared down at her tormentor. "Get these...*things* off of me. *Now.*"

Rarity blanched, but stood firm. "I-I'm sorry, your highness, but I learned a valuable lesson not long ago about not letting your artistic vision be compromised. Perhaps Twilight mentioned it in one of her letters...?"

"Besides, there's no time!" cried Pinkie Pie, throwing away her now-empty tub of popcorn. "The party starts in five minutes!"

"Five minutes? Oh dear!" cried Rarity. "I haven't even begun to prepare! Go on without me, I'll

meet you two there!”

“You heard the pony, Lu-lu! Let’s go!” Before Luna could protest, she was being dragged along once more, to what she could only hope would be her last duty on what had heretofore been an increasingly miserable day...

By the time Luna and Pinkie reached Twilight’s library, Applejack and Fluttershy had already arrived. AJ was setting up her pies (*Why did we need twenty-four pies, anyway?* wondered Luna. *There’s only going to be myself, the six Elements, and a baby dragon, right?*), along with several types of apple-based refreshments she’d brought, while Twilight and Fluttershy argued. Or, more accurately, while Twilight yelled and panicked and Fluttershy cringed and tried to hide beneath her own wings.

“...You just *can’t* bring the bird chorus *and* the rabbit drumline! I’ve allotted exactly 2.08 square yards of floorspace for the performance groups, and that’s enough room for the birds’ stand or the rabbits’ equipment, but not *both!*”

Fluttershy whimpered.

“Do you have any idea what Princess Luna is going to do to us if this party doesn’t go *exactly right?* Do you have any idea what will happen if the slightest thing is out of place? *Do you have any idea how much trouble we could be in if every little detail doesn’t go precisely as she desires?!*”

“Do you?” interjected Luna, stepping between the two ponies. “I only ask because I don’t *recall* threatening to do anything untoward, but if I did and it slipped my mind, then I would hate to misrepresent myself.”

Twilight’s panic ramped to even greater heights, while Fluttershy took the opportunity to sneak around the two and help her animal friends set up. “Princess! You’re here! Oh no, I haven’t finished sanding the stairs to a uniform thickness! There are still variances of as much as one thirty-second of an inch between steps!” Twilight dashed away, her hair in disarray and her posture and appearance suggesting that she might at any moment slip into catatonic shock.

“Don’t mind her, Princess,” Spike assured the flabbergasted Luna as he followed after the purple unicorn with a few sheets of sandpaper, “She means well, she really does. Oh, and I burped up a scroll from your sister about an hour ago. She said she’d drop by in a little bit to see how things are going.” The dragon trotted away again, leaving Pinkie and Luna alone for the moment. Before either could speak, the door opened and dozens of ponies began pouring in. Luna was instantly thronged by scores of well-wishers, each eager to thank the Princess for permitting them to attend her party. As they did, Fluttershy’s birds began singing from their perches while the rabbits started tapping out a lively rhythm on their drums, using their feet to perform complicated beat patterns that no

11

drumstick could ever hope to mimic. The effect was cacophonous, to say the least.

“Ms. Pie!” Luna managed to cry over the general din. “Who are all these ponies, and what are they doing here?”

“Well that’s a silly question, Lu-lu!” beamed Pinkie, suddenly right beside the Princess. “You invited them, of course! Well actually, I invited them, but I invited them to your party, so it’s like you invited them!”

“I thought I told you it was just going to be a small affair!”

“Oh, Lu-lu! Little parties are *boring!* That’s why I invited all my friends!”

Luna looked around the party; it seemed that everypony in Ponyville was here. She tried counting to ten to calm herself, but the noise kept making her lose track. The birds were repeatedly increasing their volume to match the rabbits, while the bunnies responded by beating their drums even louder,

determined to be heard over the birds. And, of course, all the guests began to yell to be heard over the music and each other. Luna found she literally could not hear herself think.

At that moment Rainbow Dash burst in through the front door, holding a large package. Pinkie somehow vanished from Luna's side and appeared at the door through a mass of ponies packed so thick that even the fillies in the crowd could barely move. "Hiya, Dashie! Whatcha got there?"

Dash held out the package, smirking. "Oh, just a little 'gift' for the guest of honor. Don't worry, I've got a few other things planned too," she added, gesturing at her nearly full saddlebags before looking around the crowd. "I wasn't expecting such a full house, though. It'll be tough to pepper the food or anything with this many ponies watching."

"Don't worry, Dashie! If there's anypony who can pull it off, it's you!" Pinkie bumped noses with the rainbow-maned pegasus affectionately, then took the package. "You go ahead and mingle--I'll drop off your 'gift!'"

As Pinkie departed again, Dash smirked and whispered, "Don't worry, Pinkie. It. Is. *On*," glad for the confidence her friend had in her. Then she asked the pony next to her (yelling to be heard over the deafening music), "Hey, who is the guest of honor, anyway?"

The pony, who Dash recognized as Bon-bon, looked at her like she was an idiot. "What do you mean, 'who is she?' There are only two Princesses, and that sure isn't Celestia."

Dash peered through the crowd to where Bon-bon was pointing, finally catching a glance of the purple alicorn. As fear gripped her heart, Dash screamed, "Pinkie Pie, WAIT!" and pushed her way through the crowd as fast as she could.

Luna couldn't breath in her corset. The noise level in the room was so high she was afraid her eardrums would burst. She was surrounded by strange ponies, all trying to talk to her at once, and she couldn't understand a word any of them were saying. She had an awful crick in her neck from the ridiculous crown she was wearing, her hooves itched from those damnable *socks*, she hadn't had anything to eat today except some stale cereal six hours ago...

The Princess had spent three hundred sixty five thousand, two hundred and fifty-five days trapped alone in the moon, and today was challenging for the title of her Worst Day Ever.

Seemingly materializing out of nowhere, Pinkie Pie reappeared by the Princess's side. She held up a gift for Luna, saying something. Although Luna couldn't hear the words, it was obvious the present was meant for her. She held the box with her telekinesis, and pulled the string off with her mouth.

As she tugged the bow free, a tightly-coiled spring hurled a banana-cream pie into the

12

Princess's face. Before she had time to recover from the shock, a wave of spring-loaded snakes followed them out, shooting at and around her head. The animals ceased their music, and a deathly silence fell over the assembled ponies. The box, unaware of the sudden change of mood, shot out a gloved mechanical hand which traced an "L" on the Princess's cream-festooned forehead.

Everypony looked at Dash, who had suddenly stopped trying to press forward and was doing her best to look as inconspicuous as possible. Between her flamboyant hair and her reputation as a prankster, it didn't go well. "Ah, heh-heh," she stammered, "Um...oops?"

Pinkie laughed, apparently oblivious to the situation. Throwing an arm around Luna, she giggled, "Oh, don't be such a worrywart, Dashie! Lu-lu here knows how to take a--"

"DON'T. CALL. ME. LU-LU!"

The co-ruler of Equestria's horn pulsed with dusky light, and her eyes were black with lambent energy. Her entire body was suffused with an eldritch glow, and she slowly rose into the air as crackling

power filled the room. **“I AM PRINCESS LUNA, REGENT OF NIGHT, MOON-BEARER AND GODDESS OF THE SUNLESS HOURS. I WAS OLD WHEN THIS LAND WAS YOUNG. I HAVE TRAVELED THE DISTANT REACHES BEYOND THIS WORLD. I HAVE STOOD WITNESS TO THE VERY SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE ITSELF!”** The room was growing progressively darker as she spoke. Everypony stood in horrified silence as their monarch’s voice, saturated with dark puissance, washed over them like midnight-black waves. Even Pinkie Pie seemed to realize that all was not well. **“THAT IS WHO YOU SEE BEFORE YOU: PRINCESS LUNA OF EQUESTRIA. NOT LU-LU!!!”**

Although reports afterwords varied, most of the ponies agreed it was the rabbits who bolted first. Within seconds, there was a frantic mob of birds, ponies, pegasi, unicorns, and bunnies all stampeding towards the exits. Some broke through windows in their haste to escape, while others trampled their fellow party-goers in a mad rush for the door. Thankfully, nopony was so gauche as to wear metal horseshoes to a royal party, so casualties were limited to a few unfortunate mares and stallions having the wind knocked out of them.

The Princess was paying no attention to the bedlam that surrounded her, however. As chaos reigned all around, she continued, oblivious, **“AND I’VE HAD IT WITH THESE STUPID CLOTHES,”** her outfit disintegrated into black dust, **“And these stupid traditions,”** the ‘gift’ she’d been given followed suit, **“And all...this...noise...”** As her magic receded, Luna realized she was alone in the suddenly empty library. “Oh no. I’ve gone and made a mess of things, haven’t I?”

“That’s certainly one way to put it,” said a familiar voice from behind her. Turning, she saw Princess Celestia standing on the second floor balcony, together with Twilight, Spike, Applejack, Pinkie Pie, Rarity, and Rainbow Dash (the latter still looking a little guilty). There was also an overturned basket lying near Celestia, from which a long pink tail extended.

Luna bowed her head towards the group. “I’m sorry, Celly,” she choked, tears beginning to cloud her eyes, “I tried to put on a good party, I really did! But it’s all so complicated, and then all these ponies showed up, and I haven’t slept all day, and I...I just...”

“Hush Luna, there’s no need to cry.” Celestia descended to stand beside her sister, who gratefully buried her face in Celestia’s mane. “I’m sure you did your best. I’m sure all of you did.”

Pinkie spoke up, her face far more glum than usual. “Actually, Princess...I didn’t do my very best at all.”

Celestia looked up, surprised. “Whatever do you mean, Pinkie Pie?”

The pink pony shuffled her hooves. “Well, Lu-lu--I mean, Princess Luna--told us that she just wanted a simple little party, but she’s super-duper important, so I wanted her to have a super-sized

13

celebration! So even though it wasn’t really what she wanted, I invited lots of ponies and got all my friends to help make it a big ol’ bash instead of a teeny-weeny thingy.”

“And I wasn’t much help, either,” admitted Twilight. “I got so caught up in making sure everything was perfect for Luna that I didn’t take the time to actually work *with* her. Maybe if I’d been paying attention, I could have reined in Pinkie.”

“And if I hadn’t been so caught up in cleaning up after the girls, I coulda done the same,” said Applejack.

“I could have been a little more assertive, I guess,” added the basket. “Um, maybe if I’d insisted on only having one group of performers, the party wouldn’t have been so loud.”

“And you were right about the dress. It was a little...*young* for you,” confessed Rarity. “There were plenty of other ways to make you look stylish and chic, but I was so caught up in my vision for you that I forgot all about what *you* wanted, and what you would feel comfortable wearing.”

All eyes turned expectantly to Rainbow Dash. After a pause, she finally noticed that everypony was staring at her. “What? I didn’t do anything wrong.” A single drop of meringue fell from Luna’s hair as they all continued to stare. “Hey, I didn’t know it was a party for Luna! Pinkie’s fault for not mentioning that. I mean, it’s kind of important detail!”

“Dash...” Applejack warned.

“Ugh, FINE. I guess I learned to...always be nice. Or something.”

The other ponies rolled their eyes, but the general consensus seemed to be, ‘close enough.’

“I think all my little ponies have learned important lessons today,” Celestia said to the Ponyvillians, “But I have yet to learn mine. Luna, I don’t understand.” She pulled back so that the two Princesses faced each other. “All that time you were...away, I kept thinking about how neglected and ignored you felt. I vowed every night that I would make sure you were always recognized and respected when you came back. But now that you’re here...I don’t know what to do to help you,” she admitted. “I invite you to every court session, but you rarely come. I hold parties and balls at all hours to make sure you’re awake for them, but you never attend. I just don’t know how to let you know how much all of Equestria loves you!” Lowering her head, she nearly whispered, “How much *I* love you.”

Luna didn’t say anything at first. She silently wrapped her neck around her sister’s and offered the simple comfort of her presence. Celestia returned the gesture, and the two of them stood together for a moment. “Oh, Celly,” she finally said, “I know you love me. And I know how much you want me to be happy. But there’s a difference between being loved and being popular.” She brought her head back to face her sister. “I don’t mind if I’m not as famous as you, or if people talk about you more. That’s never what bothered me. All I want is for ponies to look up at the night sky every once in a while, and to see--really *see*--how much effort I put into it. Those parties and court functions aren’t what make me happy. Being appreciated for my work is all I really want.

“And,” she added, “I know that I am appreciated, thanks to you. Or did you think I wouldn’t notice that astronomy has become such a popular pastime in the last thousand years?”

Celestia grinned mischievously. “Oh, it didn’t take much--a few million bits for a royal observatory here, a tax credit for telescopes there--ponies just needed to be given the chance to see what you’d done. Once they started looking up into the night sky, they never stopped.”

“Well,” said Luna, turning to address the other ponies, “Would you all be interested in ‘partying’ with my sister and me? The music seems to have fled and the treats have been knocked down and trampled, but I’d be glad for your company nevertheless.”

Celestia grinned as the ponies all smiled and nodded. “I think that’s a wonderful idea. And

14

Twilight? Please do me a favor.”

“Yes, Princess?” Twilight asked uncertainly.

“It’s usually you that learns important lessons about friendship, but today I learned one for myself. Would you be so kind as to take a note for me?”

Dear Princess Celestia:

When you love somepony, it’s only natural to want them to be happy. But sometimes, we forget that not all ponies like the same things. We try to do for others what we would want done for ourselves, when what we really should do is listen to what that pony wants. Sometimes the two are the same, but not always. And if you listen closely to the ones you love, you’ll find that giving them what they truly desire is often easier than you think.

-Princess Celestia (transcribed by your loyal student, Twilight Sparkle)

Celestia smiled as she re-read the note in the privacy of her chambers. She was about to roll it up and place it with Twilight's other writings on the nature of friendship, but stopped. Instead, she began rummaging through her drawers until she found what she was looking for: a glass frame, one of several that she kept on hoof for presenting various awards and certificates to deserving ponies. Placing the scroll in the frame, she carefully levitated it onto the wall, where she hung it next to another important memento: a painting of Luna and herself, holding joint court for the first time in a thousand years.

Celestia took a step back and admired her handiwork; she had placed the painting across from her bed so that it would be the first thing she saw when she awoke every morning, and now she would see this reminder as well. It was a lesson she vowed never to forget.

15

[A.N.] Thank you for reading! This story was written for the Happy Luna's Super Magically Fun Story-Time Adventure Challenge, hosted by Midnight Shadow over at Equestria Daily. As such, there were a number of requirements. The main one, of course, was that it be about Luna being happy. Since so many 'Sad Luna' stories seem to be about how our favorite purple alicorn is weepy and depressed until somepony comes along and cheers her up, I decided to flip that premise on its head and write a story about how Luna was doing just fine, thank you very much, until a certain older sister started meddling and inadvertently ended up making her miserable.

There was additionally a list of mandated quotes and scenes, at least one of which every story was required to contain. Being an over-achiever, I've included every single one. To wit:

Lines of Dialogue:

- "I hate socks."
- "I can still fix it!"

Found on:

page nine, paragraph twelve
page seven, paragraph five

- "It. Is. ON." *page eleven, paragraph ten*
- "Don't give me that look." *page two, paragraph eight*

Scenes or Situations:

First seen:

- Best night ever *page one, paragraph one*
- Covered in tree sap *page three, paragraph sixteen*
- Pinkie Pie throws Luna a party *she cops to being the real mind behind the party on page twelve, paragraph thirteen*
- Two (or more) ponies racing *page seven, paragraph ten*
- A miscommunication causes problems *that's kind of the whole point of the story, innit?*
- Luna baking *page eight, paragraph fourteen*
- A bunny stampede *page twelve, paragraph six*

Additionally, there were, "Bonus points for it being episodic - something you'd like to see in season 2+." Although I didn't write this story with a mind to the time constraints of a 22-minute TV show, I'd like to imagine that the plot and tone are both in keeping with the aesthetic of the animated series this story is based on. And if Hasbro ever wants to make an episode based on this story...well, I somehow doubt that will happen, but feel free to send an e-mail, execs!

The only other rules were that it must be at least 3500 words (this story is 8237 not counting title and this whole bit, so no problem there) and must meet the normal EqD submission guidelines. So win or lose, I should at least have my bases covered.

If you enjoyed this story, please let me know! If you didn't, go ahead and tell me why! Either leave a comment at the site where you found this story, or drop me an e-mail at madethisjusttopostponies@gmail.com. Like all writers, I thrive on feedback.