

The music playing over the speakers was fast, pounding a beat that everypony in - or near - the building could feel in their hooves. The lights were low, the main area dark compared to the bright spot lights that illuminated the stage. Colorful neon lights accented the walls and the edge of the stage, ran like ivy up and over the bar, where alcohol and salt water flowed steady into the waiting glasses of the patrons. Where there was no neon, reflective chrome mirrored the action on the stage.

The music faded slightly, dialing down from a roar to a dull background ache, as the show on stage came to a brief close between sets. Behind the red sequined curtain, Moondancer made another tiny adjustment to her costume. She half listened to the DJ as he spoke to the audience, one ear cocked, waiting for her cue as she fiddled with the blue ribbon holding her mane back. She tugged blindly on the bow with her magic until she felt it sit just right against the back of her head.

The music changed, the tempo picking up, and the rubble of hooves clapping against the floor in approval joined the thumping bass line. The DJ shouted out over the music and Moondancer disappeared. The curtain opened just enough and Wild Rose, the star performer at Canterlot's premier nightclub, the Pink Pony, trotted out onto the stage. She waved at the crowd and reached up to grab the chrome plated pole that was attached to the stage floor and the ceiling above in perfect lockstep to the music. Her buttercream coat glowed under the lights as she did her first turn, showing off blue colored satins and silk lace that covered her.

She stopped, her back to the crowd and her horn lit as she looked over her shoulder and batted her eyes. The clasp that held her top closed came loose and the crowd cheered as the show really got started.

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"Whoo! Let's show this 'Pink Pony' who the [i]real[/i] Pink Pony is, girls!" Pinkie Pie bounced in place, her eyes wide and her grin stretching ear to ear. She pointed at a garishly decorated establishment with loud music drifting out of its second floor windows. "I'm the only one that can claim that title!"

"Er...Pinkie, there are a lot of other ponies with pink coats. It's not like you are the only one." Twilight came to a halt next to her friend and looked at the surrounding buildings and the other ponies besides them and their other friends that were still out this late. Somehow, Pinkie's birthday celebration had turned into a cross-city trek from one party to the next for Pinkie to check out the competition. Ponies - all unfortunately not pink enough to make a point with and mostly stallions - milled about outside the place with the offending name, eyeing her and the rest of the girls as they caught up.

Rainbow Dash touched down on the cobblestones on the other side of Pinkie, throwing an arm over the birthday girl's shoulders. "Pinks, I know you got a point to prove and all, but do you know what kind of place this? I don't know if you really want to contest the whole...pinkiest pony thing."

"Why not?" Pinkie rolled her eyes. "I'll [i]clearly[/i] am the pinkest pony here. The building isn't even painted pink! It's a muted sort of adobe colored at best!"

"Not that I exactly follow Pinkie's logic, but yeah...why not?" Twilight raised an eyebrow.

"I think Rainbow means to tell ya this here is a house of ill-repute. Dunno why the Princess let's it keep its doors open, really."

"Oh don't be a silly pony, Applejack." Rarity giggled, tapping the farm pony lightly on the side with her hoof. "It's not some sort of common breeding stable, it is a [i]burlesque parlor[/i]. Glamorous ponies perform for a decidedly adult clientele. It's about the show, the fantasy of it all."

"How would you know that, huh? Been here before or somethin', Rarity?"

"Um...actually...it's been in a lot of the cultural magazines...about the Canterlot night life. I...uh...read the articles too." Fluttershy offered quietly from the back of their small group.

Rarity grinned triumphantly and doffed Applejack's hat. "See? And no, I have not been here before, but now that the opportunity presents itself, I say we go in. Pinkie Pie can do...whatever it is she does to prove her pinkest-ness, and [i]we[/i] can take in the sights and catch a performance."

"So..." Twilight turned, looking at Rarity. "I'm still not sure what goes on here. Is it a theater? Poetry house? Maybe I should have looked up the newer businesses in town?"

"Twi," Dash sighed, "it's a strip club." She grimaced, leaning back to restrain Pinkie who was now pawing at the ground and growling low in her throat like an attack dog. "A bunch of mares dressed in lingerie and tassles take it off while twirling around a pole."

"Buhwha...a [i]strip club[/i]?! We can't go in there!" Twilight gaped, her brain refusing to process the implications of the Princess of Friendship and the Elements of Harmony being seen in such a place. Mostly she got stuck on the mental image of herself staring up at a dancing mare on stage that was covered in semi-transparent lacey things.

She was just starting to wonder if she was supposed to just toss bits directly at the performer, or if there was a defined sort of donation system or clearly structured menu of dance moves when

Rainbow grunted and stumbled backward. Pinkie Pie shot forward like a rocket, barreling straight toward the door of the Pink Pony. Pinkie knocked a couple of the stallions closest to the entrance aside, and vanished inside a second later.

“...Oh my goddess, she just ran in.” Twilight shook her head. She blinked and then started running after her friend.

“Save her!” Dash picked herself up, leaping into the air to give chase.

“Oh my!” Rarity, Applejack and Fluttershy all followed a second later, the fashionista leading the way. “Stick to the plan, darlings!”

“Oh jeez, let’s go!” AJ lowered her head, charging forward with a burst of speed that got her to the door as the last of Twilight’s tail vanished into the glare of neon.

In the transition from outside to inside, Twilight’s vision blurred for a split second, spots of color dancing in front of her. In that split second she lost sight of Pinkie Pie, the mare somehow managed to make her way all the way to the bar at the far end of the main room. Twilight slowed to a confused stop, seeing Pinkie laugh, already in deep conversation with the stallion bartender.

Twilight turned her head to call to the rest of her friends that Pinkie was alright when she glanced at the stage. Applejack brushed past her, heading for Pinkie and Twilight didn’t react. Her eyes glued to the performance, more specifically the mare, bathed in the bright lights at the front of the room. Her hooves started to move by themselves, altering her course to bring her toward the stage. Distantly, Twilight could hear the voices of Rarity and Fluttershy, but the music drowned out their words.

The mare on stage was a vision in red, yellow, and blue. She seemed to glow with an inner light and the closer to the stage Twilight got, the more that the rest of the world seemed to fade away. Perfect hooves gripped the pole on the stage steadily as the mare spun in slow motion, her lower body relaxing absurdly toned abs to drop her rear hooves to the floor and slow her spin even more. Twilight struggled to swallow, her throat going dry as she noticed the litter of silken garments around the dancer. She still wore sheer stockings, the hem around her thighs held there by a clasp and strap that guided Twilight’s eyes to the mare’s waist. There she wore a matching garter belt and panties that seemed to be held there by two loose knots on either side of her wide hips.

By the time Twilight had reached the edge of the stage, the mare had stopped her rotation and lowered herself even more, legs wide as she squatted back on her ankles. Ponies near the edge of the stage parted slightly, allowing the Princess complete access. She bit her lip, staring up at the unicorn dancer. The mare was breathing hard, but in measured time with the music, a faint sheen of sweat adding a twinkling glistening to her sculpted flanks. Up close, Twilight

could see what fantastic shape the mare was in, the only part of her that seemed to possess any layer of fat was the plump buttock that jiggled ever so slightly.

Twilight was dimly aware of hooves and wings gripping her sides. She could hear an undercurrent to the music that sounded vaguely like her friends again, but when they tried to pull her back, she dug her hooves into the thin carpet. On stage, the performer worked her hips and magic at once, making her butt bounce steadily while a surprisingly deep indigo-colored aura pulled on the strings that formed the knots at her hips. The strings pulled away from her sides until they lost all resistance and the ties came undone. The silken panties, once firmly held in place, slid to the stage floor. The unicorn's lush tail kept her covered, but was not helped when she added some lateral hip sway, flexing one firm cheek and then the other.

The insistent hooves and voices continued to try and pull her back, but Twilight resisted, watching the dancer perform her craft to perfection. The indigo aura of the mare's magic moved to the ribbon that held her mane back in a bouncy pony tail, untying it, and releasing a fan of straight red hair. Unlike the rest of her lingerie, the ribbon glided playfully across her back, slinking lower until it reached her tail, and then it started to circle the base. Twilight felt her breathing stop as the ribbon pulled itself tight around the tail, working its way down so that the now constrained tail lifted in time with the dancer dropping to all four hooves. The music started to die down, the unicorn with the perfect body sauntering back toward the red curtains, the last part of her anatomy revealed for a split second with each swaying step she took.

Twilight finally fell back as a new set of hooves joined the struggle and she suddenly found herself looking up the very flustered faces of Rarity, Fluttershy and Applejack. The rest of the club invaded her senses and she could feel the prickly carpet digging into her back as the rest of the audience stomped their hooves and cheered wildly. Above the din, Twilight could just make out the DJ asking for more applause for the talented Wild Rose.

"Wild Rose...that's her name."

"What in tarnation has gotten into you, sugarcube?" Applejack leaned down, looking into Twilight's misty eyes. "I've never seen you like this, Twi."

"I think..." Twilight shook her head softly. "I think she had a piercing back there."

"So...anypony know why the Princess has gone soft in the head?"

"Um...I don't know, Applejack." Fluttershy leaned in closer and put her hoof on Twilight's forehead, just under the alicorn's horn. "She feels kind of warm."

"Twilight, hon? Are you getting sick?"

Rarity's head joined the other two above Twilight, jostling for room with a trademarked roll of the eyes. "Oh really now! Applejack, Fluttershy dear, can you not see our dear Twilight was smitten at first sight by that elegant dancer? She is not sick! Pick her up off the filthy floor this instant!"

Twilight opened her mouth to retort, when she was hauled bodily off the floor and slung over Applejack's back, all the air rushing from her lungs in a whoosh. The ponies around them cheered and jeered as she was carried off, the space where they had stood filling in while another performed waltz out from behind the curtains. Their destination wasn't far, when AJ dropped her onto a bar stool, she found herself once again in the company of all her friends plus a large stallion behind the bar with a thick beard, shaggy mane and hooves that looked as big as her face.

"So, what's the Princess' poison of choice?" The stallion leaned forward, smiling friendly, his teeth a brilliant white against his brown coat and black facial hair. He gestured behind himself at the wall length recessed shelves lined with bottles of all colors and shapes. "I've got it all, wines, liquors, spirits, just name it."

"Uh..." Twilight flustered, her cheeks growing hot under the attention of the bartender. "I'm not much of a drinker, sir."

"Well then I also got salt water, and an assortment of non-alcoholic punches and juices and even some of the teas that seem to be popular."

"I say you get a peach-lime-mango-kelp-hay-banana-papaya-artichoke-agave on the rocks!" Pinkie Pie shouted from a few stools down, holding up a tall glass. "I got mine with a pinecone on top!"

"Pinkie?" Twilight leaned back in her seat to look around Rarity and Rainbow Dash. "I thought you came in here to settle something about who was the pinkest pony? And now you're just hanging out?"

"It's no big, Twi!" Pinkie giggled and drained her glass in a single gulp. "Me and Quick Shot here, worked it out and we've decided to a cease of all hostilities for the time being. Isn't that awesome?"

Twilight looked back at the bartender, presumably Mister Quick Shot, and raised her eyebrow. He shrugged noncommittally. She eased herself back forward and drummed her hooves awkwardly on the bar top. "So...about that drink...er..." She squinted at the labels behind him, trying to make heads or tails of the names and information there. Twilight didn't fancy herself much of a social drinker. Her experience with alcohol extended to a few glasses of wine she'd had at a few of the royal functions she'd attended and something Rarity called a 'wine cooler' at the last garden party they had attended. How one was different from the other, she still wasn't sure.

"I think what the Princess [i]really[/i] wants is to see that last unicorn on stage dance some more."

"RAINBOW!" Twilight yelled, her cheeks flushing brightly.

"Heh. That was Wild Rose's last set for the night. If you want a private dance, we do offer that service." Quick Shot smirked, leaning his bulk onto one elbow against the bar. The six mares all went quiet, their eyes wide as they clearly hadn't expected that option.

"So...she seriously could see her dance some more?" A leering smile worked its way across Rainbow Dash's face. "I say do it!"

"Yeah!" Pinkie piped in cheerfully. "That would be - wait." She looked at Quick Shot, her face and tone serious. "Twilight still hasn't gotten a drink. Are drinks allowed in the private area?"

The barkeep nodded an affirmative.

The party pony jumped up, plumping her hoof into the air and spun around on her bar stool when she landed. "Then that would be awesome!" Pinkie finished and downed another gulp from her mysteriously refilled drink. "We'll even pay for it, won't we girls?"

Twilight's jaw dropped when the rest of her friends looked back and forth at each other, murmuring in agreement that this was not only a good idea, but also a sound financial decision. "You guys can't be serious...can you?"

"Um...Twilight, you [i]were[/i] kinda staring hard."

"Yeah, I gotta admit, Twilight, you were looking at that filly like a crow eyes a junebug." Applejack doffed her hat, chuckling to herself. "Well, maybe not in the traditional way...but you get the point."

"I, for one, am totally on board with this decision." Rarity offered. "You were obviously smitten, Twilight. Now would be the perfect opportunity to find out if it's all just a crush, or if this mare may return the emotion. It's about time our newest Princess was out on the prowl, looking for a special pony. Imagine how progressive the tabloids will paint you."

"P-p-progressive?! How are they going to paint me just for coming in here? How are they going to paint [i]all of us[/i]?" Twilight threw up her hooves. "Aren't any of you the least bit concerned?"

"Hmmm...nope."

“Nah.”

“I don’t read the tabloids, really.”

“I like the pictures!”

“Any press is good press, if you spin it right.”

Twilight sighed, letting her head fall into her hooves, and leaned against the bar top. “I can’t believe this. Do I even get a say in the matter?”

Applejack laughed, beating Twilight neighborly on the back. “And when do ya ever get yer way in a peer pressure situation?”

“Never?”

“Darn tootin’!” The farmer pony laughed again and beat on the bar this time. “Cider, hard. Three of ‘em.”

“Three?” Quick Shot reared up straight and turned to the wall of bottles behind him.

“Yeah, one for miss-about-to-get-a-dance, and two fer me. If we’re gonna wait around for Twilight, I might as well get a buzz out of the deal.”

“So, exactly...how do we get Twilight her private dance?” Rarity crossed her arms, leaning forward on her stool. “I will take a glass of salt water please. I prefer to not smell like an alcoholic later on.”

Quick Shot turned back around a second later, arms laden with drinks and passed them out among the mares. “Well, for the private session, we just need to let Wild Rose know.” He pursed his lips and whistled shrilly. A moment later they were joined by pale blue stallion with a long flowing mane and muscles to spare. He had small black saddle bags that were marked with the Pink Pony logo and embroidered with the word ‘staff.’

The new pony smiled blindingly at the group of mares and then glanced at Quick Shot. “Go to the back and let Rose know there has been a request for a private show.” The new guy nodded and turned to head toward the rear of the building. Noticing how half of the collected mares had their eyes glued to the departing stallion, Quick Shot cleared his throat. “That there is Rock Solid, part of our Male Review. We have that every Ladies Night on-”

“Does he do private shows?” Rarity stood up on her stool, knocking Quick Shot back and peering over the heads of the other patrons, to watch Rock until he vanished through a doorway. “I’ll pay for a dance now!”

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Moondancer, aka Wild Rose to her fans, ran a brush through her magically re-colored mane while simultaneously trying to straighten the seam on one of her stockings. The rest of her outfit sat in a tidy pile besides her on the table top, waiting for her to meticulously redress herself. After her last set for the evening, she usually roamed the club, taking drink orders and professionally flirting with the clientele. It usually made her a few bits extra in tips on top of her nightly pull from the stage work. Not that she was hurting for money, but the more facetime she spent with the patrons, the steadier the returns on her performances.

Like so many other things in her life, it was a constant balancing act. Being personal and professionally detached at the same time. Reserved library rat by day, enticing dancer by night.

Moondancer looked up into the small mirror that sat on the table with her outfit and smiled tiredly at herself. Her face still glistened from the sheen of sweat the dance and the heat of the lights had worked up. Looked great on stage, but now she looked like she had just finished up a marathon jog and her contacts were starting to make her eyes itch. She stopped fussing with her stocking, her magic still making steady strokes with the brush, and reached for a towel to pat herself dry.

“Maybe I’ll just tell Quick Shot I’m taking off early.” She groaned quietly, stretching in her seat. “I don’t think I’ve got the umph in me for schmoozing tonight.” Moondancer set down her brush, checking her appearance in the mirror again. “I could still swing by the doughnut shop before they close. Lemon Hearts has the late shift this week, I think.” She nodded to herself and stood up, scooping her silk and satin lingerie up in her magic.

She walked over to her locker, dodging around the other performers that were rehearsing their acts or otherwise milled about the staff area. She knew all of them by name, shared the stage with most of them at some point in the last five years. They were good ponies, mostly. The kind of folk her mother would call the salt of the earth - at least until she found out they were exotic dancers and burlesque performers. Then the more colorful language would flow and the judgemental stares would start.

But for all she knew and generally respected her fellow performers, she really couldn’t call any of them friends. It was just like school all over again. There were cliques and she was, once again, the odd pony out. Of course, when she had still been a student at the most prestigious school in Canterlot, it was because she wasn’t quite smart enough. No pony cares if you graduate 2nd in your class. It seemed as if she were forever destined to be just on the outside of that most elite position. Here, now - things were reversed. These days she was ostracized

for being [i]too[/i] smart, [i]too[/i] pretty, [i]too[/i] talented. She was number one here and it was nothing like she ever used to dream it was like.

Moondancer stopped at her locker, opening it up and tossing her outfit inside. She looked at the little haphazard pile with a blank stare for a few seconds. With a sigh, she fired up her horn and quickly arranged the various clothing items properly, folding them neatly. She was turning to remove the rear stockings she still wore and add them to her locker when she heard her name being called by one of the burly male performers.

“Yo! Rose, you got a private dance request. For a mare.”

Moondancer scowled as the other performers around her let out catcalls and whistles. “Oh like you all haven’t done it!” She knew it was playful jeering between co-workers but after the sixth or seventh time, it had become just a bit tiresome.

“If they want Wild Rose, it must be a big spender!”

“I bet it’s some bored nobelmare looking for a thrill to go home and tell her husband about.”

“Go show ‘em why mares are best, Rose!”

“If I had a ass like hers, can you imagine the bits I’d make here?”

She caught the last comment, spoken under somepony’s breath, just as she walked out the door. Moondancer shook her head and made her way toward the private rooms. There was a long hallway off to the side of the club’s main area, lined with doors that lead to small rooms outfitted with comfortable couches and seats. A few of the slightly larger ones even had their own tiny raised platform with a pole, just like the one out on the stage.

At the far end of the hall, one of the larger rooms had a red-colored tag that marked it as ‘client waiting.’ Moondancer made her way over to it and turned the tag around to let any other performers know that she was in with the client. [i]Ok, lets see what we’ve got here.[/i]

She fired up her horn, rearing up on her hind hooves and opened a peephole in the wall that would allow her to see inside without being noticed. It was a little security measure Quick Shot had insisted on for the safety of performers and the business. Rumors abounded about the place, but Quick Shot kept the club running by ensuring that no illegal hanky panky happened behind closed doors. Inside she could see a purple colored pegasus that was fidgeting as she read the plaque on the wall that stated the club’s rules on behaviour. She seemed youngish, perhaps closer to her own age, though the mare was rather tall.

Moondancer smirked and closed the little peephole, dropping back down to stand just outside the door. She could tell the pony inside was nervous, most were on their first time back.

Moondancer started to silently count to ten in her head. If this mare wanted a thrill to tell her friends about later to prove how daring and progressive she was, then letting that nervous energy eat her up a little more was the way to make the whole experience all the more intense.

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Twilight fidgeted, her wings flexing and squeezing her sides, and looked back up at the plaque on the wall for the dozenth time since she'd been left in the room to wait for Wild Rose. It spelled out, in a clear and concise way that she appreciated, that she—henceforth referred to as the 'client'—was not allowed to eat or drink in the private area.

[i]That's a good sanitation rule. Maximizes appearance and cuts down on cleaning costs.[/i]

She was not allowed to touch the performer with either her hooves or wings. The plaque claimed this was for the performer's safety. [i]Safety is good. Why endanger ourselves when we could be safe?[/i] However the performer was apparently allowed to touch her, though the following bullet point said she could refuse any contact initiated by the performer. [i]That's worrying. She can touch me? Do I want that? Is that what ponies do back here? Am I about to die of embarrassment? How would I refuse anything if I'm dying?[/i]

Finally, the helpful sign proclaimed that there was to be no transactions, for bits or services, directly between her and the performer. Transactions were handled strictly by the club on the performer's behalf and if the performer offered any additional services, it was potentially illegal to accept them. It even cited a series of Canterlot and greater Equestrian laws by number and edition.

Twilight caught a strand of her mane in her mouth and chewed at it nervously. "Additional services?' What does [i]that[/i] mean? If I ask her to show me that move where she flexed her individual buttocks to the music, is that an additional service?" She grit her teeth, groaning in frustration. She dropped herself onto the couch and rubbed her face with her wings. "Why do I [i]never[/i] have a book handy when I need supplemental information?"

She nibbled harder at the errant strand of hair, her tongue working it into a knot inside her mouth. [i]What if she's not a nice pony? Can mean ponies dance that good? Of course they can, don't be dense! One's butt shaking skills are not related to a pony's personal ratio of kindness versus...not-kindness.[/i] Twilight groaned. [i]What...what if I get too uncomfortable? If I call it off, would that embarrass her? I mean, it's her [b]job[/b] to entertain me, right? If I call it quits early, she might see that as a sign that she's not very good, which would be ludicrous, because she's [b]amazing[/b]! No, it is my duty as a Princess to see to that the ponies of Equestria find fulfilment in their lives. Well, that's not an official duty of mine, but Princess

Celestia would want me to, I'm sure. I must grin and bare it, no matter what. Do it for Wild Rose, do it for Equestria, Twilight.[/i]

Twilight took a calming breath and let the tortured and tied mane fall out of her mouth. She smoothed it back into her non-sheepshanked locks when another thought occurred to her. [i]What if I'm not uncomfortable? What if this turns out to be actually fun? Am I just blowing things out of proportion and it's all some innocent dancing with the allure of forbidden fruit?[/i] She looked at the room again with fresh eyes. She was no Rarity, but even she could tell the entire focus of the decor was to put ponies at ease. Comfortable seating, recessed lighting, earthy warm tone colors, and smooth textures. The room was for the same experience at the main stage, just without all the other ponies. Clearly, everything was on the up and up and she was merely reading too much into the situation.

Twilight let out a breath that she hadn't realized that she was holding. "Yeah...that's it. Everything will be fine. It's like getting tutored in dancing. Nothing to worry about at all. It's a learning experience."

"Oh, you'll learn a lot of things tonight."

Twilight choked, caught off guard by the sudden appearance of Wild Rose, and started coughing into her hoof. She blinked away some tears brought on by her coughing fit and stared. Wild Rose stood in the door to the room, haloed by the brighter lights of the hall and leaning casually against the frame. Her mane was loose and hung like a supple sheet down her graceful neck and sleek shoulders. She stepped into the room, her pale colored magic closing the door behind her and Twilight could see she was still wearing the stockings and garter belt from her stage outfit. The blue satin ribbon still held the unicorn's tail scandalously aloft.

"You requested me?" Wild Rose smiled beautifully, putting one hoof on the raised platform with the chromed pole.

Twilight stared, trying in vain to pull her eyes away from the mare's too perfect curves. "Um...yes." She cringed when her voice came out in a hushed, Fluttershy-esque squeak. "W-Well, sort of. My friends seem t-t-to th-think I wanted to watch you dance a-again."

"You saw my show?" Wild Rose looked up, surprise and happiness clear on her face. "You liked it? I did the choreography myself! I studied the types of dances and moves from other performers that got the strongest reaction for audiences and incorporated them into my routines until I had the optimal...um...sorry about that." She bowed her head, pulling herself onto the platform and curling around the pole. "I didn't mean to gush like that, it's unprofessional. I bet you just wanted to see more dancing, right?"

“Wait.” Twilight’s ears perked up and she blinked. “You studied dancing? Like...you built your routine out of different components with the goal of finding the best ratio of motion to audience reaction?”

“Um...yeah?” Wild Rose shrugged, gripping the pole with her hoof and idly spinning around it in a slow circle. “I know it’s weird. Please forget I said anything.”

Twilight clapped her hooves and leaned forward, grinning at the unicorn. “No nonono! I think that’s interesting! I’ve never thought about approaching dancing of all things like an equation—maybe that’s why I’m so epically bad at it. But you! You’re fantastic! Your dancing was phenomenal and knowing that you constructed it like that, to [i]be[/i] phenomenal, not just trusting to raw instinct to do it...” Twilight squealed, wiggling in place on the couch. “That makes you even more awesome! It’s so rare to meet other ponies that appreciate a methodical, scientific approach!”

Wild Rose completed her turn around the pole and reared up to lean her back into it, her legs wide while her forehooves reached up to keep her balance. She rolled her abs, twisting her hips rhythmically at the same time. It was a move designed to draw the eye to her core so she could quickly get the look of surprise off her face. True to form the unicorn mare focused on her hips, a slight hint of flush rising to her cheeks.

[i]Wait...unicorn? I could have sworn she was a pegasus when I looked in a few minutes ago.[/i] She increased the swaying of her hips, the other pony watching her with an unnerving sort of focused scrutiny. It occurred to her that might very well be the face she made when doing her own studies. Now in the light from her small stage, Moondancer took the time to examine her client. [i]Yeah...horn...and wings. So...oh crapbaskets.[/i]

She froze and the purple mare looked up at her in mild confusion. Purple coat, straight mane with pink stripe that was so much like her own was when not magically colored, alicorn-y-ness, unusual amount of interest in the nerdier part of her dancing—there was no denying that she was in the presence of Equestria’s newest royal and her old school friend, Princess Twilight Sparkle. Moondancer dropped down, bowing deeply. “Forgive me, I just realized who I was performing for! I’m sorry, Princess...I, uh, don’t know what the proper etiquette is for...this...”

“Oh, no, Wild Rose, it’s ok!” Twilight chuckled nervously and scratched the back of her head. “Um...I’m honestly not sure what the protocol for this would be either...so, let’s just forget about that stuff, please? I would like to just be like a normal pony...I mean, I’d like you to treat me like a normal client, ok? I really just wanted to watch you dance again. You were so entrancing out on the stage earlier.”

“Really?” Moondancer looked up at Twilight as the Princess nodded emphatically. [i]You didn’t think I was so entrancing back in class, did you? I seem to recall you skipped out on my party to celebrate graduating second in class.[/i] She squashed that line of thought. The slight still

stung dully in her mind, but then again the day after her party the sun had gone dark for several hours until Twilight and some other ponies from some little town saved Princess Celestia. Logically, it made sense to her that Twilight's snub then was unintentional as she took matters into her own hooves to prepare for the return of a legendary evil. It still bothered her though.

"You think I'm entrancing? Th-thank you, Princess."

"You can call me Twilight, Wild Rose. It's totally ok to do that."

"Oh...ok." Moondancer picked herself up, wondering if she just pick up where the routine had left off. It didn't feel quite right though. This private dance was suddenly anything but routine. She had never had the opportunity to perform for a royal patron before. That alone was notable enough to add to her popularity later on. The other pony dancers would resent her just a little bit more. Then again, this royal was also an old school mate, an old friend once. The mare she looked up, had modeled her life after in those early school years. The mare that inspired her to develop her love of learning. The mare she had chased right until the end of school and lost when Twilight had gone on to save the country while all she had achieved was perfecting twerking to a money making artform.

Moondancer stepped off the low platform, moving closer to Twilight. The Princess obviously didn't recognize her without her glasses and her mane recolored to a bright crimson red.

"Princess...er, Twilight, if you don't mind, I'd like to show you my gratitude for letting me entertain you."

Twilight jerked her head back in surprise and glanced up at the plaque on the wall. "Wait, does that count as an 'additional service?' Those are supposed to be against the rules."

"No, it's not one of those, it's just a different part of the same service." Moondancer smiled and placed her hoof on Twilight's chest. She could feel the Princess' heartbeat speeding up from an already rapid thumping. "I just thought you might like a display of some of my more advanced techniques?"

Twilight nodded, her eyes lingering on the hoof that was touching her. Wild Rose's hoof was soft and strong as she was pushed back until she was sitting on her own tail. Thankfully, the couch held her comfortably in this position just as well as it had when she'd sat there on her hooves. She blinked when Wild Rose clambered up with and then over her. Her eyes glued themselves to the mare above her, tracing the curves and lines of her athletic body. She had noticed how toned Wild Rose was when she'd first seen her, but up close it was even more amazing. Not even Rainbow Dash could compete with the abs that she was being presented with.

Twilight could feel her cheeks heating up and when Wild Rose adjusted her stance a little, she noticed another flash of metal catching the dim lighting in the room. The dancer had another

piercing in her belly button. A tiny steel stud engraved with star shapes. Twilight opened her mouth to ask about the odd accessory when Wild Rose started moving again, her hips swaying inches from Twilight's nose.

The alicorn swallowed, leaning back to try and relax as the most beautiful mare she could recall meeting in a very long time moved sensually until Wild Rose was in her lap, straddling Twilight's legs. Wild Rose kept herself raised just enough to move her hips easily, doing a tight figure eight. [i]Is...is this dancing? How does she do that with her hips and stomach? I can't do that![/i]

Twilight clamped her mouth shut as a sudden groan threatened to escape from her. Her eyes traveled over Wild Rose, drinking in the details. A voice in her mind weakly said it was for science. That she could learn from this filly and improve her own skills. A louder part of her mind told her to stare at the muscular thighs that gently grazed her own with each twist and roll Wild Rose did. The desire to do just that was great, but the glint from the belly stud kept tugging at her attention. Twilight watched Wild Rose's abs roll again and she decided that looking there wasn't so bad either. The engraved stars on the little piercing nagged at her though, digging up a strange feeling of déjà vu for some reason.

[i]What is it about that engraving?[/i] One corner of Twilight's mouth tugged downward. She raised her eyebrows when she noticed that the stars there matched the ones on Wild Rose's flanks. The mare had a few stars there on her cutie mark, along with a crescent moon in the center. The more she focused on it, the stronger the nagging feeling of déjà vu got. [i]Where do I know that cutie mark from? I'm pretty sure I don't know a Wild Rose other than this one.[/i]

Twilight shook her head and looked back up the body of the dancer and into her face. Wild Rose's eyes were closed, her mouth partly open, her breathing was steady as she concentrated on the motions her body was doing. [i]I'm fairly certain I would remember meeting a filly this pretty and talented.[/i]

Moondancer opened her eyes, catching Twilight examining her, and locked eyes with the Princess. She licked her lips and felt her own blush rising, even as her body continued the routine almost automatically, her natural talent for dancing controlling every muscle and movement. Moondancer reached out and gripped the back of the couch on either side of Twilight's shoulders and snaked her body in a quick move that pressed her chest against Twilight and then continued down her torso, pressing her entire core into the Princess before pulling back. The move left her client panting and Twilight's wings were starting to work their way out from her sides in a clear display of arousal.

"Princess?" Moondancer put one hoof on her chest, over her heart, the other still bracing her against the couch. "Are you enjoying yourself?"

Twilight nodded mutely, her wings reaching full spread as Wild Rose ground her hips and butt into Twilight's lap. The unicorn dancer started to slow her movements and leaned forward, that odd feeling of familiarity returning with force.

"I know you said I could call you Twilight, but I wanted to offer you the same courtesy." Moondancer smiled, bringing her muzzle to Twilight's ear and whispering. "You can call me by my real name. Moondancer."

"Moon...dancer?" Memories went off like fireworks in Twilight's mind. Her early school years at Celestia's School for Gifted Unicorns spent with her nose in books mostly. Mostly. Between the study sessions that she would later become infamous for, she spent time with her friends, her classmates, Twinkleshine, Lemon Hearts...the other one...and a filly named Moondancer. The only other foal there that could come close to her test scores or her ability to learn. She'd even gotten her mane styled the same way as Twilight's after their first year there.

But [i]this[i] mare couldn't be [i]that[i] Moondancer, right? [i]The cutie mark...Moondancer had one with stars, like mine. It's what got us talking to each other. Her coat was that pretty shade of yellow...just like Wild Rose's, now that I think about it.[i] Twilight narrowed her eyes and leaned back to look at the filly again. They did look a lot alike...but...

"I know...knew... a Moondancer once."

"We used to pass notes in advanced physics class. We even encoded them so—"

"So that nopony else could read them if we were caught." Twilight finished, her voice hushed.

Moondancer nodded, her horn flaring and dismissing the spell that recolored her hair, her natural highlights and stripes that nearly mirrored Twilight's returning. "It's me. Long time no see, Twilight. I never expected to see you here of all places. But you know what? I'm glad. I've missed you ever since you moved out of Canterlot."

"Moondancer...Moondancer!" Twilight threw her hooves around the mare in her lap, hugging her tightly. She laughed loudly and then froze in place as her brain registered that she had just broken one of the rules. She jerked back with a gasp, dropping her hooves. "Sorry! Sorry! I forgot I'm not allowed to do that here!"

"Heh...it's ok Twi. Really." Moondancer giggled, wiping her eyes as tears formed. "I won't tell. I'm just sorry I don't have a set of wings to show you how glad I am to see you and see that you enjoyed my performance so much."

Twilight's blush roared back to life when she realized that her wings were out and stiff. She struggled to pull them back in. "Really? Um...I'm...uh, sorry?"

“Don’t be.” Moondancer shook her head and leaned into Twilight, lifting the Princess’ chin to bring their faces close. “I said I missed you a lot. And I won’t tell if you don’t.”

“Moondancer...I’m a Princess now. Much as I might want to...I can’t just break rules willy nilly.”

“Then don’t.” Moondancer grinned, her voice getting softer. “We can go somewhere where it’s not against the rules. Is your memory still as good as it was in school.”

Twilight nodded.

“Then meet me back at my place. I live nearby, just east of the stadium on Horseshoe Lane. You’ll see my name on the mailbox.”

“Are...are you propositioning me?”

“No. I’d just like to catch up on things with an old...[i]good[/i]...friend.”