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Epilogue

“Surprise!”

Twilight grinned fondly as Pinkie sprang from unsubtle ambush the moment the tree door swung open. Even without her new senses telling her who was inside, she would have expected it from the pink pony.

“Welcome home!”

That came from five throats, and the mad stampede of her friends faltered only due to the sight of Luna stepping in behind her. The alicorn smiled and waved a hoof at them. “Don’t mind me. I know you haven’t seen your friend for a while.”

The greetings were more restrained, but no less heartfelt. Twilight exchanged hugs and greetings, feeling an even deeper respect for her friends from the perspective her new godhood granted her. She could see deeper than was really comfortable, and how hard they worked to perform their everyday miracles was humbling even - or especially - to a goddess.

Eventually Rarity bobbed an abbreviated bow to Luna. “We didn’t expect to see you here, Princess. May I ask what brings you by?”

Luna gave the group a winning smile. “I’m moving in.”

There was a half-second of stunned silence before Pinkie Pie began bouncing happily. “Oooh we can have a welcoming party and for royalty! What should a royal party be like? Lots of crowns, that’s what, and Gummy would look *great* in a crown. I wonder where I can get bulk crowns.”

“Pinkie Pie,” Twilight said with amused exasperation. “Shh.” She let a flicker of power into her voice, and the earth pony looked surprised as her volume was abruptly squelched. Twilight looked around at her friends. “I - or rather, we - have a couple of announcements for you.”

“The first,” Luna said, drawing their attention, “is that Twilight and I -” The alicorn balked from finishing the sentence under the combined gaze of five relative strangers, and the unicorn took up the thread of conversation.

“We’re together. Fillyfriends. Whatever you want to call it. That’s why she’s moving in.”

The silence was even more thunderous this time, and Luna spoke into it quietly.

“It’s not a secret, but I’d prefer it not be gossip, either.” The alicorn looked around at them. “A lot happened on that trip, so this isn’t as arbitrary as it may seem. Twilight?”

They’d discussed the best way to reveal the unicorn’s new status. Twilight had no doubt her friends would believe her, but sudden divinity was a difficult pill to swallow, even for them. They had finally decided on the direct approach. The unicorn freed the power and presence within her, and light blazed forth into the room.

It wasn’t silence now. There was a faint singing, humming noise that accompanied the coruscating brilliance radiating from the unicorn. Spike, knowing what to expect, had donned dark glasses. Twilight couldn’t begrudge him that; he was, after all, sitting on her back and closest to the conflagration. She let it blaze for a few seconds, and then pulled her godhead back into place.

“I’m not just a unicorn anymore,” she told them. “Like Luna said...a lot happened. I’m, um, technically a goddess now.” She gave them her best smile, though she saw poor Fluttershy was already terrified. The yellow pegasus clung close to Rainbow Dash, and Twilight’s eyes narrowed in sudden suspicion. The auras of those two were mingled, and Twilight wondered how many secrets were plain under the eyes of a god.

But it wasn’t her business, so Twilight ignored that particular revelation as Applejack spoke up. “So, uh, does this mean we’re supposed to bow now or something?”

“No!” The unicorn shook her head. “No, I still want to be your friend Twilight Sparkle. I know that things are different now, that this isn’t just a talent or a skill. You liked me for who I am, but who I am is not quite the same.” She looked around at the other five ponies.

“Not even Celestia is sure exactly what I am now. Things might be...somewhat strange from now on. I only hope that you *can* remain my friends, no matter how I’ve changed.”

The silence stretched on. Twilight shared a glance with Luna, knowing that it was this sort of reaction that had isolated the alicorn in the first place, and the other goddess didn’t have the benefit of already having fast friends.

The voice that finally broke the rising tension was soft and uncertain, but all the more significant because of that hesitancy. “You’ve always been a good friend to us, Twilight, no matter what we were like or what we did,” Fluttershy said. “And I don’t see why it should be any different now. Um...right?” She trailed off, looking at the others.

“Right!” Rainbow Dash agreed firmly from her place next to Fluttershy. “There’s no way I’m going to let a little thing like this change our friendship!”

Rarity shook herself, emerging from an open-mouthed reverie with a determined look on her face. "Absolutely, Rainbow Dash. Why, this just means we have another pony in our little circle." She ducked her head to Luna again.

"I don't know much about gods or royalty or any of that," Applejack added. "But I've never done wrong by you in the past, and I don't think I will now, either."

Twilight looked at Pinkie Pie, not entirely certain what to expect from her oddball friend, but she wasn't disappointed as the pink pony bounced and beamed hugely. "Wow! Can you do that 'shh' thing again? That was awesome! I was all talking like this!"

Twilight let out a relieved breath as her friends crowded in around her and Luna, her heart light within her. "You are all the best friends any pony could ask for," she told them. "And now..." She waved a hoof at the cake, balloons, and other accouterments that had been forgotten after Luna had stepped through the door. "I think we have a party to get to."

"Twilight! Luna! Message from Princess Celestia!" The two ponies looked up from where they were collaborating over a mass of papers, to be bound eventually into manuscript form. Twilight had gotten the accounts from Fluttershy and Rainbow Dash and had hopes of putting together the text at the same time she was detailing her own adventure.

Spike waved the bound parchment at them as he finished climbing the stairs. It was unusual for the mail to be addressed to both of them; Twilight's role as student - now in both magic and divine - and Luna's role as princess did not often coincide, so it had to be a personal message. "Thank you, Spike," the unicorn said. "Let's hear it!"

She could have read it directly without ever taking it from Spike's claws, of course, but she'd found that she vastly preferred this way. Though she enjoyed being the goddess, she had to leave room for the pony.

"Of course." Spike unrolled the parchment and cleared his throat. "Dear Luna and Twilight," he said, emphasizing the missing titles. "I would like to come by this evening to discuss a personal matter with you. This isn't an official visit - or official request - by any means. At your convenience. Signed, Celestia."

"Do you know what this is about?" Twilight asked Luna, and the other mare shook her head.

"She didn't say anything to me," Luna said thoughtfully. "It must have just come up. I

can't imagine what it could be."

"All right. Spike, a reply."

"Yes'm!" The dragon held up readied quill and parchment.

"Dear...Celestia." Twilight felt extremely strange omitting the title, but if the Princess had decided to be casual, it seemed that she should reply in kind. "Of course you can come by, any time you like. We'll be waiting." She looked over at Luna. "Anything to add?"

"If only there were a polite way to say 'don't keep us in suspense' to her," Luna said dryly. "I think she delights in this sort of thing. No, that sounds fine. Signed, Luna and Twilight."

"Luna and Twilight," Spike repeated, the scratch-scratch of the quill sounding before he rolled up the parchment and sent it on its way.

They only had to wait a scant hour before a flash of light, visible to all Twilight's senses, announced the arrival of the sun goddess. "Celestia!" There was no question of formality in private. The two ponies went to greet the new arrival, exchanging embraces.

"So, what's this all about, 'Tia?" Luna asked finally, sitting back and cocking her head at her sister.

"I want to beg a favor," Celestia said, looking from one to the other.

"Well, of course," Twilight laughed. "Anything you want. What is it?"

The alicorn didn't answer immediately. She turned to gaze out the window at the setting sun, looking pensive. "I am tired," she said at last. "I have spent the last thousand years raising sun and moon and administering to matters of state because there was no pony else to do it. I do not complain; it was my duty." The last word was said in sharp, ringing tones, as of struck steel.

"But now I can entrust the running of Equestria to you." She nodded to Luna. "And while Luna may not be able to raise the sun, you can." The alicorn looked at Twilight. "I want to take a vacation," she concluded. "But I cannot simply drop those responsibilities onto you, especially if you aren't ready for it."

Twilight was astounded. It was difficult to imagine Celestia being susceptible to such a mundane affliction as being *tired*. But she had no quibble with the alicorn's desire to take a break; she couldn't remember a day when the princess hadn't been busy morning to night, even and especially with the time she'd taken just for Twilight.

“Of course, ‘Tia,” Luna said, her voice gentle as it was only with Twilight and her sister. “I’d be glad to.”

“Yes.” Twilight nodded in agreement. “I’m sure between the two of us we can keep Equestria going for a week or so.”

“Besides,” Luna added, “if there’s any protocol I’ve forgotten, I’m sure Twilight has read about it somewhere.” She gave the unicorn a fond smile, and Twilight giggled.

“And perhaps it is not such a bad idea for the court to see the Princess and Princess-Consort working together,” Celestia mused aloud, drawing a shared, embarrassed look from the other two ponies.

“So, when were you planning on the vacation?” Luna asked.

“It will take at least a week for the machinery to work its way through,” Celestia told them. “In addition to whatever time you need to arrange yourself.”

“A week should be fine,” Twilight answered for both of them. She thought that would be enough time to square away things with her friends - though she suspected some, if not all of them would seize the excuse for an extended outing to Canterlot themselves.

“You already have it set up, don’t you?” Luna asked, half amused, and Celestia grinned like a foal caught with her hoof in the cookie jar.

“So, where exactly are you planning to *go* for vacation?” Twilight was glad to see Celestia back in a less serious mood. “I mean, it’s got to be special, right?”

The goddess smiled mysteriously. “Oh, I’m sure I’ll think of something.”

And this really, truly concludes Apotheosis. Thank you for reading! If you’ve want to leave a comment or otherwise get in touch with me, feel free to send something to daetrin@gmail.com, or use the EqD comment page :)