The library rocked back and forth under the unrelenting winds while rain hammered away at the tree, filling the whole library with a constant hum. Whatever power the library had previously was clearly gone. Candles were the alternative tonight, filling each room with a dim glow.

A fire crackled softly in the lone fireplace. Everypony in the house huddled close to the fire to receive its warmth before it dissipated in the cooler air. Early Blaze was nestled in Fluttershy's forelegs as they slept in one of the sleeping bags. Macintosh sat to her left, still awake with worry. To his left, Pinkie Pie and Luna slept in the semi-circle, exhausted from trying to console Dusk and Dawn. The fillies slept quietly under one of her wings.

Rarity was the only other pony still awake, sandwiched between Luna and the wall. She glanced up at the clock. It was 1:30 in the morning. Applejack and Rainbow Dash had been gone for over an hour, and the storm hadn't let up in the slightest. She exchanged a glance with the red stallion.

"They're alright," he replied quietly.

"It's been over an hour Macintosh," Rarity fidgeted in place. "I'm just about to go find them myself."

Mac opened up one of his saddlebags and pulled out a sprig of hay. He chewed on the thin end thoughtfully, "You wouldn't last one minute in that storm."

"But-"

"They can take care of themselves just fine. Just get some shut eye."

Rarity opened her mouth to push the point a little further. A calm look from the older stallion silenced her, and she laid her head on her pillow. Despite her complaints, she was asleep in minutes.

Big Mac lost himself in thought, absent-mindedly tossing another log into the fire. He was confident in his words, but the situation really bugged him. Rainbow was all in a tiff about something, and he had to admit, he thought he heard somepony screaming before he came inside. It sounded a lot like the former librarian.

He snorted. Despite his more laid-back nature, he was smarter than others gave him credit for. Though knowledge of the supernatural was out of his expertise, he was raised to always trust his gut. Applejack had confided in him that Rainbow was having "hallucinations", and pretty vivid ones at that. She almost went to fetch Nurse Redheart when it started getting bad. That added to his sense of unease.

He looked up at the clock: 1:51. Everypony looked fast asleep. He rose to his feet, walking quietly to the front windows. Lightning filled the sky, illuminating the empty streets. He waited for another, and another.

Luna lifted her head from her place, staring at the worried stallion.

"I s'ppose you want to stop me from goin' out there?" Mac's voice was quiet. Every word seemed well thought out and meticulously chosen.

Luna shook her head, "There's nothing I can say. You've already made up your mind."

Mac never turned to look back at the princess. He opened the door, struggling to keep it from slamming into the wall. The sudden sound made some of the other ponies stir, but he grabbed hold of the door with his teeth and dragged it shut.

The wind tried its best to blow the stallion over, whipping water into his coat. Lighting pounded at the ground in the distance, lighting the paths once more. He took off down the road. Every time he came to another side street he would poke his head around the corner. Nothing. There was nopony out in this damn storm, not even his sister.

Mac slowly rounded another corner, making his way towards the center of town. A wave of relief fell over him when he saw his sister stubbornly tugging away on a rope. He shook the water out of his eyes as he started running towards her.

Her eyes lit up when she saw her brother. "Macintosh! Ah need you're help!" She yelled.

He looked down the hole. He recoiled immediately and the color drained from his face, "AJ! Is this what I think it is!?" He started moving towards her.

She backed into the statue, eyes wide. Even though the yelling was necessary, she was terrified whenever he did yell. "Mac, she's **alive**!"

He scrunched up his face, confusion and anger filling his head.

"Ah don't know how, just grab hold of that damn rope!" She barked, before grabbing the rope in her teeth once more and tugging like a mare possessed.

His anger slowly subsided. She was passionate about her friends, he knew. But he worried that she had finally lost it - just like Dash. The quickest way to find out was to pull. He grabbed hold of the rope just in front of her, giving it everything he had.

It was tough going. Part of the road had already started to wash away. Mac had to dig his hooves into the slippery mud for every inch of rope he gained. Applejack was coated in a mixture of mud and sweat. Already chilled to the bone, she was starting to lose her concentration.

Just as Rainbow's hoof grasped onto the edge, Applejack collapsed into the mud, panting heavily. Mac gave the hardest tug he could manage, dragging the cyan pegasus and a shivering purple unicorn onto solid ground.

Macintosh spit the rope out of his mouth and yanked his sister up by the scruff of her neck. She shook herself off and staggered over to Rainbow Dash and Twilight. Mac followed close behind her.

Twilight was out cold from the ordeal and Rainbow was still barely hanging on to what traces of energy she had left. Carefully, Dash balanced the purple unicorn on her back, taking a few steps to make sure she could handle the extra weight. Twilight was warm, but Rainbow was worried that she wouldn't be for long.

Applejack tucked herself underneath Twilight as well splitting her weight with Dash. She smiled at the pegasus, who returned a weak smile. Big Mac pushed the statue back into place, covering the hole back up.

He led the way back through the storm, staying just far enough ahead to have some time to

think to himself.

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Big Macintosh had been gone for almost a half an hour. Luna had risen from her bed and had been pacing for quite a while now. The storm was brutal... almost deliberately so. The fact that it hadn't died down even now put her on edge. What could be taking Bright Light and his school so long?

The answer to her silent question was almost immediate. The room filled with light, bright enough that the princess of the night was forced to shield her eyes. She could feel the familiar warmth of the sun as the light faded away, letting the walls bleed back into her field of vision.

Standing in the center of the room was Princess Celestia, a deep look of concern on her face. The magic dissipated into the air. Celestia rushed forward, grabbing Luna in a tight embrace. Celestia sighed, "Oh, Luna! Thank goodness you're all right."

Luna nuzzled warmly against her sister, finally feeling a little more relaxed. "I was worried about you Celly," she said. Her voice picked up in speed, fueled by her concerns, "What is going on? Did you find Bright Light? Is Canterlot alright? What-"

Celestia pulled her closer, "Shh... It's alright. Bright Light is working on clearing the storm. It should dissipate soon."

Luna calmed herself. She glanced over at everypony else, ensuring that her excitement hadn't woken them.

"Did anything happen?" Celestia's voice still wavered in concern. There were several empty sleeping bags lying on the floor, "Where is everypony else?"

"I don't know. Rainbow Dash seemed pretty worked up about something. She even dragged Applejack outside with her." Luna swallowed, trying to shuffle through her mind for the right words, "And... Big Macintosh left a half an hour ago to find them. They haven't returned yet."

Celestia frowned, staring at the front door. Her sister should have stopped Applejack from following Rainbow Dash, as she had no way to help break up the storm. Further, Luna should have stopped Big Macintosh from going out to find them, especially since Celestia was certain that they had been gone for quite a time before the stallion felt it was necessary to brave such a dangerous storm. It was almost intentional.

She gazed at Luna, who was fixing the covers for her young fillies.

It didn't add up. Luna had become strong friends with every one of Twilight's friends. Over the last four years she and the twins had become like family to these ponies. Celestia had to admit, she and Luna certainly felt the same way about them.

Still, that didn't compare to keeping Luna's little ones safe. With all the minor and major incidents, she wouldn't want to drag any of the others into the same situation by leaving her foals and Fluttershy's daughter in the midst of a dangerous storm.

The conflict tore at Celestia's attention, but she managed to shove it into the back of her mind. Luna wouldn't do anything to destroy everything she had gained.

"Do you think they're alright?" Luna asked.

Celestia smiled, "I'm sure they're fine. Although it is quite the storm."

Luna nodded. Silence washed over the room. Celestia lifted another log with her magic, placing it neatly on the fire. The embers piped up into the chimney, glowing for a few moments before disappearing from sight.

Suddenly the door slammed open, nearly falling off of its hinges. Wind whipped the water across the floor with thunder booming in the background. Macintosh was panting heavily, his hooves planted firmly on the floor

"P-p-princesses." Mac stammered, taken aback by the unexpected appearance of Princess Celestia. He gave a quick bow before sprinting over to the fireplace. "We need to get to Nurse Redheart's, **now.**"

The cacophony of sound had long since awakened Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, Rarity, and all of the fillies. Luna was doing their best to calm the three young ones, holding them close to her as Applejack strained to drag two unconscious ponies into the library.

"What happened to Rainbow Dash?" Pinkie Pie shouted, running over to help her. She never made it the whole way. Silence followed as almost every pony in the room stared at the unconscious purple unicorn.

"Mom? Who is that?" Dusk asked, pointing a hoof at the stranger.

Luna had been too busy fussing over the three of them to get more than a glimpse at the unconscious ponies. She turned to look as well, causing the color to drain from her face. A mix of confusion, horror, and excitement flooded her brain.

"Twilight..." she whispered under her breath.

Celestia stared on, filled to the brim with questions. Is she real? Is she alive? But the most prevalent of them all worried her the most:

Is she a threat?

She couldn't take that chance lightly, not with all the disturbing occurrences that had happened tonight. Everything seemed connected... and tonight had "danger" written all over it.

"Twilight?" Fluttershy peeped, stepping forward first. She put a hoof to her neck and jerked it back in surprise when she felt a pulse. Her previous apprehension melted away. She put her hooves on both Rainbow's and Twilight's foreheads.

"Oh my goodness!" She cried, turning on the group, "We need to go right away! They're both far too cold."

Nopony moved.

"Please!" She yelled, getting more upset by the second.

Applejack came up from behind her, stopping short in front of Princess Celestia, "Princess! It'd be mighty helpful if you could use your magic to help us. I dunno if we can make it in time."

Princess Celestia hesitated for a moment. She couldn't destroy her subject's trust, even if it

was a trap. She would have to risk it.

"Very well. I will take them both by magic." Her horn started glowing, raising Dash and Twilight into the air. She turned to Luna, "Luna. Take everypony else with you and meet me there as soon as you can."

Light began to envelop Celestia and the other two ponies, erasing their outlines as it grew brighter. Then, just as suddenly as it grew bright, it disappeared. So did Princess Celestia and her burden.

Luna turned to look at the other girls who still stood in various states of shock. Pinkie Pie was mumbling off a list of party favors while talking to herself, worried that they wouldn't be alright. Fluttershy had hovered over to Luna's side, embracing her daughter and whispering in her ear. Rarity decided this was the appropriate time to collapse onto the floor, out cold.

Applejack turned to look at Luna, "When are we gonna follow?"

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Twilight lay sleeping peacefully in her hospital bed. Wires were strung all over her coat, connected to all different types of machines. A steady beeping synchronized with her heartbeat. The clock on the wall read 3:40.

Throughout the room were several chairs, each of them empty. Right beside her, Rainbow Dash lay in the other hospital bed. She had her own slew of wires and connectors, complete with a similar heart monitor that chirped in harmony with the other.

The only other noise in the room came from the murmurs outside the door, where Princesses Celestia and Luna stood alone, talking quietly to one another.

"Are the girls alright?" Celestia asked.

Luna looked down the hallway. She could see them sleeping next to Applejack in the waiting area, "They're fine for now. I haven't even figured out how to tell them what's happened. I'm not even sure if I can without upsetting them."

Celestia frowned slightly, "I know. It's better that you haven't yet."

A moment of silence passed between them. Luna looked up at her sister, "It is really her... right?"

Celestia looked in through the window at her former student. Not even an hour ago she had thought the same thing. Nurse Redheart had set up the space in the clinic without hesitation; much less cautious as Celestia had been in bringing her here. With all of her tests and machines, she seemed so absolutely convinced that it was really Twilight. That was enough for Luna, but Celestia took a moment to verify it with her magic.

"Without a doubt. But..." Celestia trailed off. She couldn't help being apprehensive about her resurrection being without motive. Too many coincidences pointed at her being dangerous. Or being controlled. Silence filled the hallway once more.

Luna's heart sank in her chest, dreading the words Celestia had on her mind. She had never truly stopped missing her closest friend and - although it was purely circumstance - her mate. Her daughters never new Twilight as she did: smart, brave, and passionate about the stars and her friends, and the list went on.

"Luna... I think she was brought back to hurt us," Celestia said. It hurt to say it. Twilight **was** family to them both, more than ever before. The thought of her being used against them... Celestia felt sick.

Luna felt as though a dagger was being shoved into her heart. She simply gawked for a moment, struggling to form the words to respond. She looked back at Applejack, knowing that every one of Twilight' friends would have turned on Celestia right then and there. It took a lot of composure not to do the same.

"How... how could you say something like that?" Luna asked.

Celestia cast her eyes to the floor.

"She saved my life." Luna found herself raising her voice, "She saved you! She saved all of Equestria!"

"Luna."

"Celly, I **love** her!" she pleaded as she started to cry.

It nearly broke Celestia's heart to see Luna crying.

"She would never..." Luna slumped down against the wall, "she would never..."

Luna cried softly to herself. She couldn't bear to be torn away from the one she cared about. It would be more painful than before, when she believed Twilight was gone forever.

But, as blunt as her sister's words were, they held truth. The feeling of the moon being yanked away from her control had made her physically ill in the Library. Whatever or whoever was doing this had her nervous and scared. Not just for her safety, but for the safety of Dawn and Dusk.

Luna flinched when Celestia lay her neck across her own, but after a moment she buried herself in her sister's mane. She poured all of her confusion into her sobs, unable to think straight or do anything else.

At least ten minutes passed. Celestia held up her calm demeanor to sooth her sister. But it was flimsy. It was there for Luna, just as much as it was for herself.

Everything she had ever done to protect the ones she loved ended up hurting them in the end. She had always struggled to find ways around that curse, but it was what it was: a curse. Tonight was just another reminder of that.

"You know I don't want anything to happen to Twilight... right?" Celestia whispered.

Luna slowly stopped her crying to listen. She leaned more of her weight on her sister's shoulder.

"Twilight is family to me. I watched her grow up into a brilliant mare. She fell in love with you, even when the world fell apart around you - when I was helpless and unable to hear your thoughts." Celestia swallowed. She paused to find the words to say, "... she sacrificed everything for you to be happy."

Luna nodded.

"So we need to make sure that she can't get hurt again."

Luna was quiet. She looked hesitantly at her sister.

Say it, a voice in the back of Celestia's mind egged on. "Just listen to me. I have an idea." Celestia placed a hoof on her shoulder, "Spike has been studying with the dragons for quite some time. Remember when we said goodbye?"

Luna nodded again.

"He has some excellent teachers. Teachers that could make sure nopony can hurt Twilight, or let her be used by anypony else."

Luna nodded once more, hesitating for a moment before doing so.

"Then she could come back here without any harm done to you or anypony else. Am I right?"

Luna looked away from her. It would probably hurt their friends more than anyone else. She hated to admit it, but... Celestia was right. Luna still needed time to explain to her fillies. She also needed time to think about what to say.

"I..." Luna tried her best to act calmly. She didn't want Celestia to ever find out her feelings, "I don't know."

"Take a little time to think about it. The sun will be up in a few hours, and you know I can't stay here after that." Celestia embraced her sister once more, draping her head over her neck. She was finding it hard to continue her solid composure, "I don't want to be right, but think about what would happen if I am."

Luna nodded and broke away from her sister, walking down the hall and into the waiting area, disappearing from Celestia's view. She walked through the doors and out into the evening air. The heavy rain clouds had finally been tamed by Canterlot's unicorns, leaving the moon to cast its pale glow over the drenched ground. She spread her wings, kicking off into the night air. There wasn't much time for her to figure things out.