

Allegrezza: Concerto Quattro

CoffeeGrunt

Octavia returned to the table, delicately balancing the two drinks upon her forehooves. One was her Shiraz, having moved on from the Sauvignon Blanc she was drinking earlier, the other being Vinyl's drink. She delicately placed the glass on the table, but still with enough force to produce a noticeable bang. She had to hoof it to herself, she was doing well despite the fuzzy veil of alcohol that was draped over her mind.

Vinyl shot up from her semi-conscious position, her eyes turning from bright joy to dulled confusion. She tapped the glass, sniffing the contents before turning her confused gaze to Octavia.

"What the hay is this?"

Octavia had expected this, she'd swapped Vinyl's alcopops for something at least passable. Partly because she wanted to sit with somepony who wasn't drinking foals' juice, and partly because she hadn't a clue what the drink was called.

"It's a glass of Stagner's Pear Cider, try it."

Vinyl gave the glass another cursive sniff, before looking back at Octavia.

"Look, I'm not changing it back. You could at least *try* to develop a palette for a better tippie. I mean, I can't expect you to even understand why I enjoy this Shiraz, for example. But if I'm paying, you're going to drink something worthy of your palette."

"Pear cider...isn't exactly posh, Octavia..." Vinyl brushed her muzzle against the rim of the glass, before wrapping her magic around it, and taking an exploratory sip. The sip became a slug of the alcohol, and within a few seconds she returned to the air, gasping. The now half-full glass was dropped back on the table, a smile spreading on Vinyl's face as she enjoyed the subtly sweet aftertaste.

"Gotta hoof it to ya...that was good!" She licked her lips, taking another, more measured drink.

Octavia smiled, raising the Shiraz to her lips. Her snout caught the subtle play of the peppery notes of the wine as she sipped it, the flavour itself being as powerful and full-bodied as the barcolt had promised her. She'd never tried South Zebrican Shiraz before, but she had to hoof it to the barcolt, he knew his drinks. Maybe this was a new bar to frequent on her days off.

"I'm just glad you're moving up the tables. Maybe one day I'll have you sipping refined liquors and wines like a true connoisseur."

"Yeh, or I could just stick to this. Way better than Bacolti at least." She gulped down another slew of the bittersweet drink, before slamming the empty glass on the table, eyes glittering in earnest at Octavia.

“Look, just because you won our wager, doesn’t mean I’m buying you a new drink every two minutes.”

“Fine. I’ll just go have fun with the jukebox then.”

“Don’t think you’re just putting any old rubbish on! There’s other ponies with ears here too.”

“I have to save them from jaw-dislocation, in case they yawn too hard at the boring music *you* like, Octavia.”

In a display of both fillyish immaturity, and surprisingly sober co-ordination, the two mares leapt from their seats, racing to the jukebox. Octavia reached it first, leaning against the hoofprint-streaked glass, until Vinyl quite rudely shunted her out of the way, usurping her delicately tuned balance, and knocking her to the floor.

“You did that on purpose, you little hayseed!”

“That I did, Octy...oh yeh, you’ll love this!” Octavia’s mind was bombarded by the same cheap, bassy music she remembered in the bar they had both met. “Can you hear that? Unce, unce, unce, unce, unce, unce, unc-ow!”

Octavia had risen from the floor like a phoenix, knocking Vinyl over to take her place. She rattled a hoof over the selection button, trying to find something worthy. “Iron Mareden, Haul Mycartneigh, Fill Coltins, ugghhhh...is there anything at all here worth listening to?!”

“If...you...let me...finish!” While standing was easy for Vinyl, the intricate maneuvering of the hundreds of muscles necessary to come to her hooves was now beyond her. She dragged herself up the jukebox’s front, hooves slipping on the frictionless glass. Octavia couldn’t help it, the sight of Vinyl pawing at the glass in a vain and fruitless attempt to stand up ruptured her into a fit of giggles.

“Alright, Vinyl. You’re embarrassing me, I wasn’t aware you were such a lightweight.” She reached a foreleg under Vinyl’s stomach, and lifted her as best she could, the mare shakily rising to her hooves.

“Look, Octy...I swear to drunk I’m not Celestia, okay? Just lemme pick a song. I think I got it.” Vinyl has given up on magic, instead hoofing the selection button with the speed and precision of a geriatric. She flicked through the tracks, resting on one in particular. She tapped the play button, letting the music roll through the speakers.

A synergy of beautiful orchestral music, and synthetic electromagical noise. The violins were played across with the delicate thrumming of the bass, the pianos creating a punchy medley that had Octavia’s forehooves tapping in time with it on the floor. It was simply a masterpiece, she sipped another mouthful of the Shiraz, enjoying the powerful taste combined with the powerful music coming to her.

Vinyl had already moved on, head bobbing with the bass, as usual. She located the chocolate

fondue buffet, and balancing a stick on her teeth, speared a row of marshmallows, before coating them in a slick of chocolate, and devouring them one-by-one. Little trickles of chocolate dribbles from her mouth, and she licked her lips like an ecstatic foal enjoying a candy bar.

“Isn’t that almost cannibalism, Vinyl?”

“Eh what?”

“Eating soft, white, squishy marshmallows, when you’re a soft, white, squishy pony?”

Vinyl dropped the stick from her teeth, shocked by Octavia’s accusations. “Are you saying I’m fat?”

“*Oh dear.*” Octavia’s mind halted, then slammed itself into reverse. “No, no, no no no! I just went, you look...cuddly, like a marshmallow. Nevermind, forget I said it.”

“Good, because you try to cuddle me, and I’ll go Buck Norris on your flank. Now you have to do an apology forfeit for calling me fat.”

“And what, precisely, would that be?”

Vinyl giggled, grabbing a lime slice from a nearby platter intended for drinks, and coating it in the chocolate. She brandished it at Octavia, who grimaced, realising the proposition. “Eat up, Octy, and be sorry.”

“Can’t I just say sorry?”

“Nope, that prissy tongue of yours scared to touch anything actually interesting?”

“Hoof it over here!” Octavia snatched the chocolate lime, biting onto it hard. The first moment was glorious, the bitterness of the lime intermingled with the sweetness of the chocolate.

However, as the first second passed, the lime juice created a tidal wave of powerful, bitter flavour in her mouth. Her taste buds were overpowered, but she had to save face. Chewing slowly, she swallowed, rind-and-all. Alcohol was great for inciting stupid acts.

Vinyl must have seen the grimacing face Octavia had pulled, because when Octavia turned back to her, she was on the floor in hysterics. A hoof wiped a tear from the corner of her eye, and she in turn felt a hoof pressing on her stomach. Looking up, she saw Octavia bearing down on her, stick perched between her teeth, a chocolate-coated pickled onion nestled on the end.

“*Bon appetite*, Ms Scratch.”

* * * * *

Octavia brandished her chocolate-pickle tipped spear at Vinyl’s muzzle, who had her own stick locked between her teeth. The two stared each other down, willing the other to make the first strike. It was Octavia who made the first light jab, aiming for Vinyl’s mouth. Vinyl parried the stick with a deft move of her own, poking Octavia’s cheek for good measure. Octavia jabbed once more, pulling back as Vinyl moved to block the attack, then bombing the pickled onion straight into her open mouth. She laughed triumphantly, a wicked grin spreading across her face as Vinyl grimaced at the taste in her mouth.

To an outside observer, this may have presented itself as being slightly foolish. However, the barcolt had drawn differing conclusions to what a pony with a closer view and a cleaner mind may have created. He coughed lightly; a professional cough, perfectly calculated to be audible, but not intrusive. Truly, learning to cough in the right manner was half a barcolt's job, the other half - serving drinks - being relatively elementary.

"Ladies, I don't mean to intrude...but we don't like to condone those kind of acts in this bar. Not that I take any issue with it, but please, keep it for the bedroom."

Both Vinyl and Octavia gaped at the barcolt, Octavia's stick dropped to the floor, while Vinyl's dropped into her mouth, her convulsions and choking knocking the dumbstruck Octavia from her perching spot on Vinyl's stomach.

"We're...we're not...what even made you think that?!" Octavia started patting Vinyl's back with a hoof, who's face was turning to a worrying shade of azure. She gripped the stick in between her teeth, pulling it out of the DJ pony's mouth, before spitting it on the floor.

"Oh, nothing darling, just you seemed fairly close, is all. Very close...in fact."

"Hey, buddy. I'm not like that with Octavia. Mainly because she's an annoying prude who likes annoying prudey things!" Vinyl pointed an indignant hoof at the barcolt, her accuracy improved by the adrenaline countermanding the alcohol in her blood.

"Like a little white knight in shining armour, how romant...oh silly me." He grinned at the glares from the two mares. "I'll ask no more questions, so you'll tell me no more lies!"

The barcolt sauntered away. Beyond him, Octavia could see the ice cream pony from before fervently scribbling away at a notepad levitating before her, alternating her gaze between the paper and at Vinyl and herself. Octavia had suffered a significant number of disgraces today, mainly at the hooves of the damned mare next to her. That the barcolt even suggested the possibility...well, it was simply absurd!

The little hayseed with the quill and paper was about to receive a sizable portion of Octavia's expansive and pyroclastic mind. She stormed up to the brown-coated pony, bearing over the notepad before snatching it with a hoof. She scanned the page...it's probably best left unsaid what said page contained, but Octavia would have sent the notepad to the moon had she the power. Her prepared arguments were lost in the shock, and she turned to an interesting off-white, almost beige shade. Instead of her satirical intentions beforehoof, she simply tore the paper into as many fragments as ponily possible, put them in the mare's drink, and left her with a comment on how she was the lowest rung of the pony writing society.

As she sauntered away, the ice cream pony pulled out the backup copy, once more scribbling away while requesting a new drink from the gleeful barcolt.

"Another story for the fans, Butters?"

"Oh, you know me; I love the inspiration in the field."

"Can I have a copy?"

“First edition. When it’s done, Rayo.”

Vinyl had watched the confrontation with an abject look of confusion and nonchalance. Octavia stormed up to her, seething with irritation at the...the invasion of her privacy in such a deep manner.

“What was on that notepa-?”

A hoof was jabbed into Vinyl’s mouth. “No, we’re not discussing it. Ever? Understand?” Though Vinyl understood, it was difficult to convey this fact with another pony’s hoof between her jaws. She sputtered around Octavia’s hoof, who then removed it with a disgusted look on her face.

“She’s still writing, Octavia...”

“Oh, who cares? No pony would read that crass, sick....teenage fantasy junk anyway.”

“Ohhhh. So what’s in the story?”

“I don’t feel it’s prudent to discuss it...it was quite...horrifying.” Octavia visibly shivered, which Vinyl took as face value for her being cold, wrapping a hoof around her shoulders. This jolted Octavia’s mind back to the first few sentences of the...story. “Please, Vinyl. Get off. We don’t want to give them any ideas.”

“Fine. You be cold then. Besides, I know what kinda ‘teenage’ story it is anyway.”

Octavia’s cheeks lit up faster than a sunrise. “Ho-how do you know?”

“It’s obvious. *Twilight* fanfiction...just sick.”

Disclaimer:

I don’t hate ButterScotch Sundae’s work, just that it seemed to fit Octavia.

[<Chapter Three](#)

|

[Chapter Five>](#)