

Claro De Luna

By James Corck



Disclaimer: This story is intended for a mature audience and features characters engaging in mature activities. Reader discretion is advised.

Table of Contents:

Chapter 1	3
Chapter 2	6
Chapter 3	17
Chapter 4	31
Chapter 5	39
Chapter 6	49
Chapter 7	58

Chapter 1

Luna found herself floating in a void. She felt so lonely. It always started like that. First the darkness, so hollow, engulfed her like a thick blanket. She couldn't escape the feeling of anxiety, until those violet lights appeared in the distance. Those eyes. They were so severe. They belonged to a mare that had suffered greatly in life, but who managed to pull through and come out strong and resolved. They represented that adversity could be conquered. Luna flew towards those purple beacons of hope as she tried to reach the pony that had been stuck in her mind over the past few months. She wanted to hug her tightly, pull her close, and whisper how much she loved her.

* * * * *

There was a knock on the door followed by the creak of it opening. Luna rolled over her side as she removed the hairs from her face. She had been twisting and turning in her bed for minutes. She couldn't go back to sleep. With half closed eyes she saw the blurred silhouette of her sister.

"Hello Celly." said Luna before yawning.

"Hello little sister." said Celestia with a smile as she stepped inside, moving the curtains away to let the warmish tones of the sunset fill the bedroom.

Luna had to wake up every day before the night started in order to bring up the Moon and all the stars in the sky. She kicked the blankets away and dropped from bed. She stretched her legs and moved to her bathroom. She brushed her hair and cleaned her face with some water. As she dried her face, she talked to her sister.

"So, what are the plans for tonight?" said Luna.

"Not much, really." replied Celestia. "We have the standard Guard Checking duty and then we have to read over the new budget bill that's

been trying to pass. Not to mention attending a meeting with those bureaucrats.”

“The ones that are trying to set a censorship motion against reading books in public? You know it will never be approved.”

“You never know Little Sister. Weirder things have been approved.”

Luna left her comb next to the sink as she took a sip of water in her mouth and gurgled to clear her throat. As she did that she returned to the dream she was having before waking up. Where did she saw that mare before? Luna couldn't help but lose herself in those purple eyes. She knew she had seen her somewhere, but she wasn't sure. Her millennial mind, though experienced, liked to play tricks on her. She stepped out of the bathroom as Celestia finished making up the bed.

“Oh, you didn't need to, it was my turn to do it.” said Luna.

“Not to worry Little Sister, I was getting bored, you take ages to brush your hair.” said Celestia with a giggle. “Oh yes! I just remembered, we have the Concert of the Canterlot Philharmonic in three hours!”

Luna looked at her sister agape. With all the paperwork they had to go through going to a concert seemed like an irresponsibility act on their side. Besides, Luna had a terrible sense of fashion for social events.

“Oh Celly, you know I have no idea of what to wear for such occasions.” complained Luna.

“Don't worry Luna, I will come up with something for you.” said Celestia as she turned around towards the door. “I will get your dress while you take care of your duties.”

Celestia closed the door behind her, leaving a very depressed Luna behind. The Princess threw herself over the bed and rolled over her back messing up her brushed mane. She felt emptiness in her stomach as she looked at the ceiling and the magical paintings on it. They moved to represent the history of Equestria to the tiniest detail, including her banishment to the Moon for a thousand years. She stood up with a spring.

“That piece of rock is not going to move by itself.” she said.

Luna walked to her balcony and stared at the sky. The colours of the sunset had almost completely faded as the dark blue from the night sky mixed with the orange. Luna took a deep breath and focused her powers on her horn as she closed her eyes. She raised her forelegs over her head as she flapped her wings lifting her from the marble floor. She felt the surge of energy grasping the gigantic satellite. Her mind was on fire and when she opened her eyes they glowed with white fire. On a final effort, she pulled up and the Moon rose over the horizon.

The silvery orb poured light all over the valley of Canterlot. The rooftops shined like little jewels. Luna landed back on the balcony feeling a bit exhausted with her mouth a little dry. She then looked over the cloudless sky as she brought every star out with a blink of her eyes. There was a surprised “Oooh” coming from all over the land. Luna loved when that happened. She left the balcony and returned to her room. Her sister was there waiting for her.

“How are things in the other side of Equestria?” said Luna.

“Everything seems fine.” said Celestia. “I love it when you bring up the stars.”

“Hehehe, yes it feels fantastic.” said Luna.

“Well, I brought your dress!” said Celestia as she put a dry-cleaners bag on the bed.

Celestia unzipped it and took out the dress Luna would be wearing at the concert. Luna looked over the dress with a shocked expression as she turned to her sister.

“You have got to be joking, Celly.”

Chapter 2

The Concert was at the bottom of their priority list. They were more concerned about the bills they had to read and sign, and Celestia had to send a donation to a Hospital in Maredrid that couldn't wait any longer. But public acts were an obligation every Royal Member had to deal with. They had to show themselves for the townsfolk, to be seen in public as normal ponies, even if they were not. Celestia enjoyed these acts more than Luna did. Luna envied her sister for her ability to switch off from work, and enjoy a little time with the other ponies. The Moon Princess couldn't understand how her sister could do it. She had been received very positively by all of Equestria, and she seemed to be supported by everypony out there. But she lacked Celestia's energy. She lacked her passion to do things.

The Carriage stopped before the amphitheatre and the doors opened.

"Come on Little Sister, you will dazzle them." said Celestia.

A groan could be heard before Princess Luna stepped out of the carriage. All the ponies gasped when they saw her. She was wearing an almost fully transparent gown made out of purple silk. It curled over her flanks doing waves and fell flat over her tail. She had a scarf coloured white and light blue. She wore horseshoes on her front legs, her hind legs were naked. Celestia stepped down from the carriage, but the attention had already been taken by her little sister. Her exquisitely braided white and yellow dress was respectfully ignored.

"You look gorgeous." said Celestia to her sister.

"I feel naked." said Luna. "Everypony is looking at me."

"That's because you look great. Now keep walking and smile. You are going to enchant them with your looks."

Luna did as she was told. She had to admit though; she liked to see the reactions of the ponies looking at her. There were a few male ones that rubbed their eyes in disbelief. She found that amusing. She preferred to focus on the reactions she got out of the mares and fillies looking at her. Some were of admiration, others were of envy, but not many were of attraction. She felt disappointed. She pushed those thoughts to the back of her mind and looked at the edifice before them. The amphitheatre was shaped like a Pegasus wing and had space for thousands of ponies. It was located at the base of a cliff which made the acoustics powerful enough for the music to be heard miles around. Luna and Celestia walked through the corridors that lead them to the Royal Balcony. From there Luna could see the stage so well she didn't need any binoculars. Two guards stepped inside with them as another four stayed outside. Celestia walked to the edge of the balcony and made a humble sign with one of her front hooves. Luna imitated the sign as they lowered their heads in symbol of respect. Everypony in the parquet replied with a bow followed by stomping the ground with their front hooves. The building rumbled with the sound.

"Welcome everypony! I hope you enjoy the concert!" said Celestia as she used a bit of her magic to raise her voice over the audience's roar.

The ponies replied with another batch of stomps as Celestia moved away from the edge of the balcony. Luna sat down on a cushion, making sure to not ruffle the dress, as she focused her attention on the stage down before her. Luna had never wished so much to be in the library, sitting on an armchair with a book on her lap. The lights of the theatre faded until everything sank into semidarkness. The voices of the ponies were reduced to an empty murmur and then finally quieted down. Luna looked around her feeling vulnerable by the lack of light. For her it was like going back to that dream.

Then she heard the music. The melody was so subtle Luna didn't realize it had started. She looked at the stage and saw the shadowy figure of an earth pony playing a cello. She couldn't tell if it was a mare or a stallion until she saw the eyes; they revealed that it was a mare and they were shining in violet. The lights of the stage bloomed and then Luna saw her.

"Oh my world..." said Luna with widened eyes.

It was her; the mare of her dreams. Her black mane fell over her head and behind her neck. The grey coat glistened under the spotlight. She was playing a cello but instead of sitting on a chair she was standing on foot. The instrument was too big for her. Her eyes were half closed and even from that distance Luna could distinguish the glowing purple light that emanated from them. She turned to Celestia and whispered.

“Who is that mare?”

Celestia looked at her sister and at the stage back and forth. She drew a smile to answer.

“That is the main cellist of the Canterlot Philharmonic. Her name is Octavia.” said Celestia. “Why do you ask Little Sister?”

Luna returned her eyes to the stage as she felt a fire growing inside her gut. The next words were strangled by her dried throat.

“She is gorgeous.” said Luna.

Celestia giggled in a whisper as she looked at her little sister.

“You always go for the gloomy ones, don’t you?”

Luna didn’t reply, although she found the comment quite true. She confessed to her sister she preferred the company of other mares way back before the whole Nightmare Moon incident happened. Despite Luna being worried about confessing to her sister, Celestia took the news with a big cheer and even threw her a small party. Since then Luna had always felt confident talking about romance and supposed crushes with Celestia. And her sister was right on the spot: She did find dark haired, gloomy and often serious-looking mares really attractive. There was something about them that Luna couldn’t resist. They were mysterious.

Luna had been dreaming of her over the past few weeks. If it wasn’t the mare of her dreams she looked an awful lot like Octavia: The dark grey coat, the glowing purple eyes, and the coal black mane falling over her shoulders. Luna was engulfed by the music. The melody was beautiful and sorrowful, a tone that swirled on Luna’s ears and touched her heart. Her breathing intensified and her chest throbbed hard as the music escalated in

tempo. Soon more instruments joined Octavia and what started like a solo turned into a fully orchestrated ballad that made the parterre applauded respectfully.

Luna didn't pay attention to any of that. There were no sections for Luna. There no strings, no brass, no winds, no percussion, nothing. There was no audience and no other musician ponies. Not even her sister was there. For her, the only thing in the amphitheatre was that cello's melody, and the mare that played it.

* * * * *

The concert lasted four hours, one of the longest musical pieces composed by Golden Notes, a renowned contemporary composer. His compositions had a big presence of the strings section, something that helped Octavia shine during the concert. Octavia's performance was applauded by all the ponies. Luna had to bring herself out of the shock to applaud her. As the concert ended the audience abandoned the building and the musicians gathered their instruments to take them to the backstage. Luna looked at the stage, anxiously. Her rational side pulled her from jumping off the balcony and fly down to meet Octavia. She talked to her sister to request permission.

"Celly, do you think I...? Well, uhm..."

"Don't you worry Luna." said Celestia. "I can read the bill and then make a sum up for you. You go talk to her."

Luna nodded and kept her first reaction to herself. She felt the cheers and the bounces of happiness inside her chest. Or maybe it was her heart, racing against her ribs. Celestia, noticing Luna's expression of hesitation, added with a smile.

"Just remember the protocol, Little Sister."

Luna nodded again as she whistled to let go off the pressure. She left the balcony and two guards followed her. She didn't mind that, safety came first. She walked down the flights of stairs passing next to the press ponies and then into the basement. Down there were the service tunnels, used by the artists in order to avoid fans and the press. It was for safety

reasons. There had been tragic incidents in the past. Luna stepped inside the tunnels and trotted her way towards the backstage. She wished, deep within her heart, that Octavia was still packing her things or that she had lost a contact lens, or that something (not severe) had happened to her that delayed her departure.

Luna was so lost in thought she didn't realize she had arrived at the backstage. There were a few other musicians moving their instruments and their music sheets to a big chest. One of the dressing rooms was still closed. Luna ignored the surprised looks of the ponies. They bowed before her as she asked the conductor. Her heart pounded her chest so hard it buzzed in her ears.

"Excuse me Sir, is Octavia still here?" Luna tried to sound as calm as possible, even though her lips were quivering.

"Oh, uhm...Yes, yes, your Majesty." said the Conductor as he stood up after paying reverence to her. "Her dressing room is the one still closed, but-"

"Thank you, Sir. Is it possible for me to see her?"

"Uhm...I see no reason why you couldn't." he said as he offered the door to Luna.

Luna knocked on the closed door and waited for a response. The Conductor stood there with his hoof lifted but unable to say a word. The door unlocked and when it opened Luna's heart skipped a beat. Octavia popped her head out and looked at Luna in shock. She remained silent as she looked to the Conductor, who also remained silent. Luna looked at Octavia and asked, in her most polite tone.

"I understand you are Octavia, right?" said Luna. "May I come in?"

Octavia looked at Luna and a smile appeared on her face. The grey coated earth pony opened the door completely allowing Luna to step inside. Octavia closed the door. Her face was a mix of surprise and shock. Luna walked around the room not sure of what to do or say. She rubbed her shoulder and looked at the cello lying on the bed. The case was half opened and Luna could see the shining instrument. She kept looking

around and she noticed the mirror. Instinctively she walked towards it and looked at her dress. She did look good, a bit provocative and the gown revealed too much for what she used to wear. But it made her look attractive. She was avoiding facing Octavia directly. She was terrible when starting a conversation. What would she say next? The Princess turned around.

“I saw your performance. I am impressed.” said Luna. “I think I’ve never seen a cellist with your talent, Octavia.”

Luna smiled but her gestured faded at Octavia’s silence. The earth pony seemed to be really shy, her head cocked to one side as she rubbed her fore hooves together. Luna insisted.

“I am sorry for being so daring. I am just impressed with your talent and I wondered something. How long have you been playing the cello?”

Luna couldn’t foresee what happened next. She saw Octavia taking a front hoof to her chin and then to her chest. Luna thought she was just scratching her neck. But then an array of hoof gestures and clops on the floor followed. What surprised Luna the most was the fact that she understood everything Octavia said through the Equestrian Sign Language.

“I started with the cello when I was but a filly. I am very happy that you liked my performance, your highness.”

Luna took a short moment to register the fact that Octavia was a mute. She wondered about how it happened and how Octavia endured it regarding her musical talent. Luna wasn’t sure about how to follow the conversation and that made her clear her throat in awkwardness. Before she could say a word, Octavia rushed to comfort her with another series of gestures.

“It’s okay; I get those looks a lot when they first see that I am a mute.”

Luna nodded and tried not to giggle. Octavia did giggle and Luna found that adorable. Luna measured her next words very carefully but didn’t change her voice tone.

"I am sorry if my reaction insulted you."

Before she could finish the sentence, Octavia rushed again to reply to her.

"You didn't, I can't feel insulted by you, your highness."

There was a moment of silence between them. Many thoughts crossed Luna's mind: Was she a fool? Had she been too forward? Octavia didn't seem insulted. They stayed quiet until Octavia decided to ask another question, this time daring to be more forward.

"May I ask, why have you come here?"

Luna cleared her throat again. Those eyes. Those gorgeous lovely lady purple eyes of hers pierced Luna's soul as the silky black mane fell over them half covering them in fetlocks. Luna wanted to wipe the mane away and hug Octavia so tightly. She felt the guilt devouring a part of her. Was that all? Did she just feel physical attraction for Octavia? Was there nothing else? She was gorgeous, there was no doubt about that, but Luna didn't want that to be just physical. Where the looks getting on the way?

"I just...wanted to see you." said Luna. "I was wondering if you were...free to go out tomorrow for a drink. Maybe we can talk more about your life and how you became such a good cellist."

Luna was shaking in her insides. She could feel her heart pounding hard enough to paralyze her limbs and cloud her mind. The suspense before Octavia replied to her offer terrified her.

"Are you asking me on a date, your highness?"

Luna rubbed a front hoof behind her neck. Denying the obvious was pointless, so Luna decided to bet everything on what she said next.

"Well, I think I just did that, so yes. I am asking you on a date."

Finally, Octavia moved her hooves quickly to deliver the answer Luna awaited so anxiously.

“I’d love to, your highness. It’s an odd request, but it also sounds like it will be fun.”

Luna noticed Octavia’s hesitation. Her hooves were shaking when she spoke to her. She picked her next words carefully to not make Octavia feel uncomfortable.

“Good! That’s really good.” said Luna. “We can go to Pony Joe’s Malt Shop. It’s next to the Castle.”

Luna loved Pony Joe’s Malt Shop. He had the best milkshakes in the city. Octavia seemed to be a fan of Pony Joe’s too because she didn’t hide her enthusiasm when giving an answer. Her hooves moved so quickly Luna had to pay even more attention to catch the words.

“That’s perfect, your highness! I will meet you there tomorrow, at what time?”

Luna was amazed by Octavia’s speed when replying. Her talent with the cello certainly showcased her rapid hand gestures and the quick and precise execution of her movements.

“Is half past eight a good time for you?” said Luna.

Octavia nodded with a smile.

“Half past eight is perfect.”

“Good, good. Thank you for your time, Octavia. It’s been a pleasure to meet you.”

“The pleasure is mine, your highness.”

Octavia bowed and when she stood up she found Princess Luna looking at her with tender eyes. Luna snapped out of her day dreaming and replied to Octavia’s bow just lowering her head. She hoped Octavia didn’t notice her slip in protocol. Not that it would hurt her image, but it made her feel silly. She felt the heat getting to her cheeks, making them blush pink. Luna tried not to get any closer or else she would hug her and kiss her. Luna was close enough to catch Octavia’s scent.

“I will see you tomorrow, Octavia.” said Luna with a kind smile as she stepped out the door.

Luna couldn't get her face out of her mind and her smell out of her nostrils. She could even taste it in her mouth. It was a long way back through the service tunnels but Luna was so taken by the images of Octavia that it felt short.

* * * * *

“It's adorable!” said Celestia.

“Don't make it sound so sappy.” said Luna.

“My Little Sister has a date, I am so happy for you!”

Luna would be angry at her sister, if she didn't sound so genuine. Celestia had always been open with Luna's preferences and always supported her little sister. But each time Luna had a date, Celestia couldn't help but cheering and giggling like a school girl. Celestia knew when to be serious and when to release her inner child. Having her squeeing over Luna's date made the Luna feel even more nervous.

Luna lay down in her bed as she gathered the bill's papers around and on her nightstand. She flicked the light switch off and the room plunged back into semi-darkness. The night was almost over. Celestia left the bathroom with her head covered by a towel.

“So, how is she?” asked Celestia.

Luna knew her sister. There was no spite in her words. Luna grabbed a pillow and hugged it, wishing it was Octavia between her front legs.

“She is fantastic.” said Luna. “She is talented, her looks are...Oh my, I don't know where to start describing how beautiful she is. Her black mane looks like a sculpture in black amber, her neckline, and her eyes, oh Celly! Those eyes are going to be with me forever, I will never be able to forget them.” Luna made a pause. She felt guilty for focusing too much on

the physical aspects. She sprang back as she remembered something else. "She surprised me! Did you know she is mute?"

"Of course I do, Little Sister." said Celestia. "I know of all the ponies in Equestria."

"Of course." said Luna, sounding defeated. "I don't want to think I am superficial!" she rushed to say. "I just...I wonder how it happened. She looked so sad and stoic when I talked to her. But as soon as I mentioned going on a date she cheered up! I was so happy because she looks like she suffered a lot and now she is finally getting over it."

Celestia removed the towel off her head, folded it and took it back to the bathroom.

"Wow, she sounds so...normal." said Celestia. "She looks like a very strong mare, I am sure she won't mind speaking about it."

Luna put the pillow back on the bed. She lay down and covered herself up with the sheets. They were so thin her whole body was visible underneath them. She curled her tail between her haunches and passed an arm under the pillow.

"Big Sister..."

"Yes, Luna?" said Celestia stopping in the door frame.

"Do you think I am...Superficial?"

Celestia furrowed her brow with a smile as she looked at her sister. Luna had moved her head to look at Celestia. It was moments like these when both sisters knew they needed sincerity between them. Luna knew that Celestia always gave an honest opinion and never kept anything to herself. Celestia knew that Luna needed to hear it.

"You will always focus on the surface first, but you will end up seeing beyond mere looks." said Celestia. "You know, like everypony else." Celestia smiled warmly and wished her sister a good sleep before leaving the bedroom and closing the door behind her.

Luna curled into a ball and put both her front hooves together over her chest. She heard the guards setting by her door. The sunlight passed through the half-closed blinds. Luna closed them completely with her magic and rolled on her other side. She couldn't take her mind off of Octavia. Anytime Luna closed her eyes she saw Octavia's, shiny and purple. She saw the mane falling over the shoulders in a cascade of black and grey. Luna felt a heat growing in her forehead as sweat drops rolled over her snout. She let go a sigh in frustration as she dug her face into the pillow. She moved a front hoof over her chest and then down her stomach stopping right where her diaphragm would be. Her chest hurt and breathing just made it worse. The pain was faint enough to let her sink into sleep.

Chapter 3

Octavia. Anywhere she looked she found her, and Luna galloped to meet her and hug her close; their hearts beating together and their mouths meeting in a soft kiss. But then, Octavia would vanish only to re-appear behind Luna, covering her eyes as if they were playing. Luna giggled as she removed the hooves over her eyes and turned around to kiss Octavia. Luna pulled Octavia closer against her body. Luna let go a moan that drowned in Octavia's kiss. They hugged and fell onto a bed made of torn musical sheets. The papers floated around them like butterflies. She felt the base of her lungs on fire and her mind burned white with thoughts racing too fast for her to catch.

She couldn't kiss Octavia enough times. She peppered her muzzle and her cheeks before fusing their lips into a long kiss that made Luna feel something inside her shatter. Luna twisted and turned in her dreams as she kept kissing Octavia once and again. The heat that surrounded her permeated into her head and finally Luna's pleasure defences broke. The pleasure flowed and she collapsed on her bed coming back to reality.

Luna felt out of breath and back on her bed. Her limbs hurt. She might have kept them in the same position for too long. When she rolled on her back, she felt wet all over her coat and on the bed. She kicked the bed sheets away and stepped down. She hadn't sweat that much since the last time she dreamt with another mare, not even summer weather hit her that hard. She removed the hairs that stuck to her face as she looked out the window. It was still day time, around two in the afternoon. She needed to clean off her coat. She stepped into shower and opened the cool water faucet.

Luna didn't dream of Octavia for the rest of the night. She was thankful for that; it saved her from making the bed every two hours. When Luna woke up again, the light in the sky was orange and the dark tones of

the night had started to move away those of the day. Her sister wasn't there to wake her up. Luna understood Celestia wanted to give her as much privacy as possible before her date.

Luna walked out of the bathroom after taking another shower and changed into a more elegant outfit. It wasn't as transparent as the one she wore for the concert; of that, she was sure. Her dress was of a dark purple tone, darker than her coat, and had a beautiful embroidery of a moon on the base. She wore a scarf that fell over her shoulders and horseshoes on all her hooves. She felt better with that dress, more confident and less exposed.

Luna left the Castle right after raising the Moon, around eight o'clock. The brisk night air hit her under her belly when she stepped outside. She enjoyed the smell of the clean fields, freshly harvested during the day all over Canterlot, as she trotted her way to the Malt Shop. Three guards followed her at a precarious distance. Luna spotted the Malt Shop in the entertainment district and standing by the door she saw Octavia. Her heart swelled with happiness as she felt it thumping against her chest once again. Luna rushed to meet with Octavia. A few feet away, she remembered to keep the protocol and so she approached towards Octavia in a less flustered way.

"Good evening Octavia." said Luna.

Octavia bowed formally before Luna and then through a series of hoof gestures and clip clops on the ground she replied.

"Good evening your Highness, it's a pleasure to see you again."

Luna felt the heat growing in her cheeks. She made all possible efforts to prevent Octavia from noticing her blushing.

"The pleasure is mine, Octavia." said Luna with a smile. "Shall we get inside?"

Octavia stepped inside as Luna turned to her guards and asked them to wait outside. She wanted some level of privacy with Octavia. Grievingly, the guards obeyed her command and Luna stepped inside. The smell of sweet milkshakes and baked cakes filled her nostrils as she sat at

the table Octavia was. The earth musician pony wore a simple vest coloured black and white and had gathered her mane into a long braid that fell over her chest. She looked even more beautiful with her hair like that, she could admire her neckline and shoulders. Luna shook her head.

“I think we should order first, yes?” said Luna.

Octavia replied the usual way, with precise and fast hand gestures.

“Good idea, your Highness”

“Oh please, call me Luna.” said Luna trying to sound laid back.

“It will take me a while getting used to that, Princess Luna.” said Octavia, with what Luna understood was the hint of a smile.

“Alright.” replied Luna smiling back at Octavia.

The waiter approached their table and took their orders.

“Good evening Pony Joe.” said Luna.

“Good evening your highness. So, what’s gonna be?” said Pony Joe taking out a notepad and a pen.

“I think I will have the cherry one with mango. What about you Octavia?”

Octavia moved her hooves. Pony Joe caught nothing of it, but Luna did and she smiled at Octavia’s choice. She had a preference for the soft flavours.

“She will have a white chocolate shake.” said Luna.

As Pony Joe left, Luna felt her stomach getting heavy. What to talk about? She had no idea where to start and she was getting nervous. She looked out the window as if inspiration was waiting for her outside waving a banner that said “Idea”. She decided to start some light conversation.

“So, do you come here often Octavia?”

"Oh, anytime I am in Canterlot. I love the ambience. It's so calm."
she replied, unable to remove the smile off of her face.

"I heard you were at the Grand Galloping Gala this year. I missed it because I was touring around Equestria during that week; public presentations, you know, so the ponies could see I was back."

Octavia nodded as she listened carefully. Luna figured there was nothing wrong with her hearing. Maybe she was a mute for other reasons. Octavia replied to Luna's comment about the Gala.

"It was a lot of fun, until one crazy pony and her group of friends brought havoc into the ball room. She destroyed my cello's bow, tearing the threads, it was awful."

"Aw, I am so sorry Octavia."

"Oh, that's okay. I got a new one; there is a good music store by the end of the main street."

"Yeah, my sister and I are friends with the owner."

"Oh, do you like music Luna?"

"I like listening to music when I am drawing. I prefer painting myself, I have no idea how to play a musical instrument. But I tried, oh yeah..." she then looked up to Octavia as a guilty smile appeared on her face. "Poor piano..."

Octavia giggled in silence as she replied.

"So, you like drawing. What kind of things do you like to draw?"

"Oh well, nothing in particular, I draw everything. I make pony drawings, landscapes, still life...Nothing special, to be honest."

"For you it's like a way to find some peace, right?"

“Yes, it is that, exactly.” said Luna. “When I am drawing, it’s like time stops.”

“And you can listen to your thoughts while you do so.”

“Yes. It also helps me organize my thoughts about the many changes there had been in Equestria over the last thousand years. I have a lot to catch up with.”

Octavia lifted her hooves but took them down quickly and then lifted them again to ask Luna another question. Luna wondered what Octavia was going to ask her. She was almost certain it had something to do with her banishment.

“But you will do more than just reading essays and reports, right?”

“Oh well, I am not too fond on fiction writers. I like to keep my hooves on the ground.” said Luna, and then followed it with a slyly smile. “Even if that’s really ironic.” she flapped her wings for emphasis.

“I love reading books about pirates. I love Treasure Island, have you read it?”

“Oh yes, that one is a classic.”

“I also like books about the Great Pony Wars. I find the warfare to be fascinating. All the little stories nopony remembers, or those heroes that were forgotten by the public. I can spend hours reading those books.”

There were many of those books in the library at the castle. Luna was about to offer Octavia some of them, when Pony Joe arrived with her malts. He left the glasses on the table and left. Octavia took a long sip of her glass and so did Luna. She wasn’t thirsty, but the milkshake looked so delicious.

“Do you want to try my shake?” said Luna.

Octavia stopped drinking and replied.

"Sure, I'll take a sip." said Octavia as she leaned forwards with her straw and drank Luna's sake. She took a sip and cringed at the flavour. *"Those are some strong cherries."*

"Yes, they are."

"You want to try mine?" said Octavia offering the glass.

Luna nodded and took a sip. It was delicious. Luna loved the sugary taste of the white chocolate. Her expression of bliss was enough for Octavia to know it tasted great. As she was flavouring it, a thought crossed Luna's mind regarding the books. She rushed to ask Octavia.

"Do you know the poet Coltca?" said Luna.

"Oh, he is amazing!" said Octavia as she took another sip of her milkshake; the cherries' sourness was still strong in her mouth. *"I love the way he describes the atmosphere."*

"He is really good." said Luna. "We have a large collection of his writings at the castle. Maybe you can come one day and we can read them."

They talked for a good while and time passed by for Luna. Their conversation changed subject countless times as Luna kept finding more things they had in common. They were not fans of sports. That was cleared when Luna grunted at Octavia's question regarding baseball. Luna was flattered when Octavia told her she preferred the night over the day. The calm and quiet allowed her to think on her compositions better than the busy day. Luna forgot how it was to have a normal conversation with somepony who wasn't her sister. Octavia seemed to treat Luna like a normal pony, and quickly stopped referring to her for her noble title. Luna used a moment of quietness to bring a subject she had been intentionally avoiding the whole night: Octavia's muteness.

"So, Octavia... Uhm..."

Touchy subjects were not Luna's speciality and she wondered for a couple of seconds how to bring it up. But Octavia, who seemed to know the

signals before she was asked such question, rushed and went straight to the point, with her swift hoof moves.

“You don’t know how to ask about my muteness, right Luna?”

“Oh...Yes, to be honest Octavia, I don’t know how to ask you about it.” said Luna with a smile of concern.

“Well, why don’t you do so?”

Luna couldn’t help but smile. She guessed it had to be a really cute smile because Octavia smiled her back.

“Well, how did you become a mute Octavia? What happened to you?” there was concern in her voice and she made great efforts to not sound patronizing.

Luna remained quiet as Octavia explained her story. She was enthralled by the gracefulness of her hooves’ movements and the rhythmical clip clops of her hooves on the floor and on the table. Luna had no problems understanding the sign language. She and her sister had invented it more than a thousand years ago. Some of the words escaped her comprehension but she figured them out through context. It was hard to learn but worth it and Octavia seemed to have mastered it thanks to her music skills. Octavia started to tell her story.

“It was raining...”

Luna braced herself. When having conversations, especially if they were about personal themes that had affected ponies greatly, Luna tended to connect her mind to that of the pony she was talking to. She didn’t do it intentionally, she was incredibly empathic. Octavia’s memories became hers.

“The wind had knocked down a branch over the road and my dad didn’t see it.”

The air whistled in her ears. Freezing rain drops splattered on her face. The pain of the glass tore her throat. The impact of the hospital’s

doors startled her. She saw the surgeon's face covered in that mask, ready to extract her vocal chords.

"I've never been so scared, and I doubt I'll ever be again."

Even the parts that Octavia saved from the story, Luna felt them. Her dad crying at her hospital bed was the one that broke her heart.

"My dad blamed all his life for the accident."

But after that and after explaining how she would never be able to speak again, Octavia picked up from there and pointed that the accident just served to fuel her interest in music.

"I moved to a different set of chords, if you know what I mean."

That light hearted comment sprung Luna back to reality.

"I want to think I can use the music to communicate what I would never be able to communicate with a voice" ended Octavia.

Luna took a moment to reply. Her mind and her body were still recovering from the stress caused by the linking. Her chest hurt from the sorrow she just shared with Octavia.

"Are you okay Princess?"

"Yes, yes, I...I can feel for you, Octavia." said Luna. "When I t-talk to somepony and it's about something as...p-personal as your story my mind...My mind tends to connect with that of the one telling the story."

Octavia opened her mouth as she instinctively moved her hooves towards Luna's and grabbed them tightly. The touch was electrifying. Luna had to close her eyes when she felt the musician pony's hooves over hers as her coat got goose bumps from the sensation. She was so soft. Luna answered holding Octavia's hooves delicately; those gorgeous tools of creativity that have brought so many symphonies alive.

"Thank you Octavia, I'm sorry." said Luna.

"It's alright, Princess." said Octavia as she released Luna's hooves. *"Let's talk about something more cheerful, shall we?"*

"Yes, I'd like that." said Luna.

They talked for the rest of the night. A group of empty malt glasses formed on a corner of the table. Luna and Octavia had moved back to the subject of artwork. Octavia seemed to have a fascination about it.

"What type of technique you prefer using?"

"Oh my, I don't have a favourite one. I guess my preferences are charcoal and the regular soft pencils, even though they tend to stain a lot, and sadly they don't last for long." she stared at nothing when she added. "Unless you add a fixative, which turns the paper yellow and makes the drawing look ancient."

They continued talking about art in between giggles and gasps of surprise anytime they found something they had in common.

"We went to the same school!"

"I wonder what happened with Miss Adagio."

"Oh, there was a picture of her on the commemorative wing. She died about four hundred years ago."

Luna swallowed the milkshake and tried to hide her sorrow. She liked Miss Adagio's classes, even if she was a bit stiff. Everypony she knew had perished and she hadn't been able to attend their funerals. She passed through that depression soon after her return to the public life, and it didn't take Luna more than a few seconds to retake the conversation.

Luna wasn't surprised when Octavia asked her for a moment to rest her hooves. They had been talking non-stop and Octavia was getting tired. She loved reading books and her favourite colour was magenta. It was on her favourite flowers and it's what she used to mark her musical sheets for errors. Octavia's favourite musician was Colccherini, a virtuoso of the cello. She had his entire collection of concerts in vinyl and a book of his musical sheets. Octavia dreamt to be as successful as he was.

"I know Colccherini. He has good music, I give him that, but sometimes he can get a bit hasty in his rhythm."

"That's what I like of him. His music energizes me."

"He is one of the greats. He will never be forgotten."

"Did you know that he died before his big masterpiece was unveiled?" said Octavia. "Only after he died he was recognized as a genius. He obtained the gift of immortality through his works."

Luna grimaced at the mention of the word gift along with the word immortality. She worried that might have upset Octavia, who quickly rushed to ask.

"Did I say something wrong Princess?"

"No, it's just..." Luna rubbed her shoulder with one of her front hooves. "I wouldn't call gift to something that keeps you young while everypony around you grows old and dies."

"I am sorry Princess, I didn't mean to upset you."

"Oh, you didn't Octavia, you didn't." it was true.

She wanted to move on from the subject as she noticed it was getting late, yet Luna hadn't said anything about how much she was in love with her. The thought crossed her mind so fast it didn't give her time to think.

"Well Octavia I..." she stopped before saying another word.

What if her panic was mistaken by anxiety or, even worse, desperation? She wouldn't forgive herself for that error. Octavia caught on Luna's feelings quite quickly as she offered her the means to resume talking.

"Yes Princess? What is it?" said Octavia.

Luna hated being sappy. She didn't want to take detours or sound like she was repeating something like a parrot. She also wanted to avoid using the word "love" because she didn't know if what she felt for Octavia was actually real love, instead of physical attraction. Luna put a hoof on the table and simply said.

"I think I like you. I think I like being with you, Octavia."

"Really?" her eyes were full of hope.

"Sure. I mean, you are smart, you are talented, you are a lot of fun to talk to and you are gorgeous. I really like you."

"Do you like me or do you love me?"

Presented with that question, Luna risked herself and took the answer she wished was true.

"I think it's more love you than like you, yes." she made a pause before saying the next part. "But I don't know if what I feel for you is genuine love or...if I just find you attractive."

Luna expected Octavia to get up from the table and walk away. Instead of that, Octavia raised an eyebrow and then smiled as she replied.

"Well, you are going to need more dates to find out then."

Luna smiled at Octavia as she moved a hoof over the table cloth instinctively.

"I've never felt like this before." said Luna. "When I saw you for the first time...I felt like I just discovered the most peaceful place in all of Equestria."

There was a moment of silence during which the only thing they could hear was the tinkering of the glasses coming from the kitchen. Octavia stretched her hoof and grasped Luna's tenderly.

"I don't remember the last time I fell in love with somepony. It's been so long I don't even know what the next step is."

"How about we go out again?"

"Yes! That's a great idea!"

Octavia looked at the clock. It was late, almost seven o'clock in the morning. Luna looked at the clock with a bit of alarm in her voice. She had to go back to the Castle and take down the moon!

"Oh no, I am really late!" said Luna. "Octavia, what do you say we meet here again tomorrow at the same time?"

"I'd love to, Luna." said Octavia.

Luna stepped away from the table and headed towards the door. Before she could even take a step she turned again and walked back to Octavia, put her hooves on her shoulders and gave her a kiss on the right cheek. Luna felt the Octavia's coat get shiver.

"Thank you for this wonderful night Octavia. See you tomorrow!" said Luna before exiting through the door. She giggled a little after seeing Octavia's struck expression.

As she trotted her way towards the Castle she licked her lips. The simple gesture made her mind swirl with happiness. She smiled and increased her speed as she rushed to lower the shining moon from the night sky. The guards that went with her couldn't catch up to her trotting as she left them behind her dust trail. Luna didn't bother getting through the door. She flapped her wings and flew all the way up to her balcony. She started to focus her magic energy as she removed the clothes.

* * * * *

"You don't need to apologize Little Sister."

"One minute! One more minute and I would've thrown the balance of Equestria out the window!" said Luna.

Celestia kept a cool head and tried to transmit her mind state to her sister. To say things were not working was an understatement. Celestia left

the toothbrush on the edge of the sink as she took a sip of water to clear her mouth.

"I don't know what's gotten into me." muffled Luna as she rolled on the bed with her head stuck under a pillow.

"Love!" said Celestia after spitting the water in the sink. "That is what has gotten into you, dear Sister."

"Indeed." was Luna's short reply. "When I was with her tonight...I can't explain it, she was everything around me. There was nothing but her, you know what I mean? She was...She was my everything during those eight hours."

Saying the amount of time she had spent with Octavia gave her vertigo. She couldn't believe eight hours had passed so quickly. She wanted to see her again and keep talking. She wanted to hug her tightly and kiss her and tell her she'd love everything about her. Luna heard Celestia leaving the bathroom and she popped her head from under the pillow.

"I am really happy about you, Luna." said Celestia as she got close to her sister and gave her a good sleep kiss. "So don't get your mane in a tangle just because you arrived with just one minute spare, okay?"

Luna nodded.

"I am still sorry, Sister." said Luna.

Celestia smiled as she shook her head.

"Sleep tight Little Sister. Have good dreams."

Celestia closed the blinds and left the bedroom. Luna rolled under the bed sheets as she rubbed her hoof over the empty space next to her. She felt that same void inside her heart. Something was missing right there, right in front of her. She hugged her chest tightly as she rested her head and buried her face into the pillows. It didn't take long for her to fall asleep.

Luna swirled inside the ocean of her dreams. An ocean full of stars surrounded her. She was drowning. She paddled around with her front legs as she tried to reach a portion of land, anything to grab onto, but there was no end to the liquid enemy. She swallowed water and it got inside her nostrils. It engulfed her trying to devour her, pulling her down with invisible claws made of water. A figure appeared in the horizon. It was grey and black and it sailed on top of a cello. The figure used the bow of the cello as a paddle. Luna raised her hoof splashing stars everywhere and something grabbed and pulled from her. She held onto the smooth surface of the cello and pulled herself on top of it. The figure looked at her and Luna saw those haunting violet eyes.

Luna lay over the cello as they drifted over the waters of the deep black night. Luna felt Octavia's mouth kissing her everywhere, from the muzzle to the cheeks and down her neck. Each time she moaned she breathed a cloud of musical notes that whirled around their bodies. Luna hugged Octavia and took a deep breath at her mane. Luna closed her eyes and as Octavia moved lower down her body something pulled from her and she woke up.

Luna closed the water faucet and grabbed a towel. The water slithered in small rivers down her body as she stepped out of the shower drying her coat. It was the second time she woke up, with the bed sheets stuck to her body and the fur on her lower abdomen dripping wet, two nights in a row. As she passed the towel over her mane, she couldn't resist a thought escaping her mouth.

"I can't get her out of my head, oh wow..."

Luna threw the towel over the pile of clothes to be taken to the cleaners as she left the bathroom to make the bed again. She flapped the bed sheets and used a drying spell on them. She took a sip of the cold water she had on her night stand. Tucking the bed sheets again she left a flap open and hopped inside, as she hugged the pillow and tried to get back to sleep. The ruffle of the fabric and the groan of her mattress eased her into another dream, this one without images of Octavia.

Chapter 4

Luna kept meeting with Octavia for a couple of weeks.

They always went to the same Malt Shop and they always sat at the same table. Sometimes Luna had to leave earlier to take care of her Royal duties. After the fourth date in a row in Pony Joe's Malts Shop they decided to go to different places in each date.

They visited the castle's gardens, and Octavia made friends with the gardener there. One night Luna took Octavia up to a slope and she told her about the constellations. Luna talked and talked as Octavia listened. There were so many words Octavia noted down to look later on her dictionaries. She never knew she would need to use the word "supernova" so many times in a conversation. Lying on the grass with their eyes stuck in the night sky was the best thing for them.

But as the days passed, Luna grew eager about taking her relationship with Octavia a step further, even though that step scared Luna beyond her nightmares. She didn't want to find out that all the love she felt for Octavia was merely based on the powerful physical attraction. What if the passion she felt for her would die after they had made love? She could feel Octavia's eagerness too. The last time they met at the Malt Shop, Octavia kissed Luna in the mouth so deep and for so long Luna could still feel her taste on her lips the day after. Sleeping together, lying together on the same bed, could either strengthen their love or ruin it. Both prospects, so different and terrifying, paralyzed Luna and didn't let her take any decision for days. It had to be something special. It had to mean something.

Finally, she took the step. She decided to invite Octavia to the castle after their last date at the Malt Shop, to show her a room she didn't think about showing her before. Luna wanted to be close to home in order to keep it private, and if things would get any further the palace was the most private place in Equestria. Luna guided Octavia through one of the corridors. From time to time Luna rubbed her head over Octavia's neck and down her neck to comfort her. Octavia would reply with a smile and kissing

her on the cheek. Luna was quiet for most of the walk. It was impossible to have a conversation with Octavia while walking; she couldn't do both at the same time. The cold night was no problem for the temperature as the expertly balanced heating system kept the corridors warm. Their steps echoed under the ceilings and the domes, as they got closer to a door with rich engravings depicting musical instruments. Octavia stared at it, struck and surprised.

"I thought you would love to see this room, Octavia." said Luna with a smile. "I really don't know why I didn't show it to you earlier."

Luna put a hoof over the doors and pushed them open. The doors creaked out of the way and Luna stepped inside followed by Octavia. It was pitch black but the light coming from the door revealed golden and silver shapes piled in organized groups. A gust of wind made one of the shapes produce a subtle whistle. Luna made her horn glow and the entire room lit up. Octavia gasped as she was presented with the biggest collection of musical instruments she had seen in her life. The room was divided like an orchestra: Strings, Percussion, Woodwinds and Brass. Some of the instruments were so big only Princess Celestia would've been able to play them. There were small instruments, so small they had been designed for rodents. In one corner that was a full orchestra of instruments made of glass. Hanging on the wall there was a collection of saxophones that had a novel engraved in their surface.

Luna left Octavia marvelling at the instruments as she walked towards the Strings section and lowered a delicate looking cello. Octavia turned towards her and the expression on her face made Luna very happy. It was that of somepony who had found a missing treasure in a lost catacomb.

"I think you know this one." said Luna.

Octavia placed a shaky hoof over the instrument. She touched it delicately as her eyes shined. With quick hoof movements, Octavia talked to Luna.

"How could you find a copy? There are only seven of these in all of Equestria, and the other six are splinters."

“My sister and I knew the creator.” said Luna. “We preserved it upon his request. He trusted us with it and we have been keeping it here, as means of preservation.” and she offered the instrument to Octavia. “Why don’t you try it?”

Octavia’s expression changed from moved to terrified. Luna could feel her fear of breaking it, or even scratching it with her hooves. A cello like that belonged in a museum. The earth pony replied with shaky hooves but determined, as she looked back and forth between the cello and Luna.

“But I can’t. I mean, Luna, I can’t play this Cello. It’s a relic! What if I break it? What would happen if I damage it?”

“Come on Octavia.” said Luna. “What’s an instrument if there is nopony to play it? Try it, just one time. You can’t hide your eagerness.”

Octavia bit her lower lip as she looked at the instrument. Luna waited patiently until Octavia finally gave in. She took a deep breath and grabbed the cello between her fore hooves. With a rather athletic spring, Octavia stood up on her hind legs using the cello as a mean of support. Luna handed Octavia the bow. It was made out of glass. Octavia took it and placed it gently over the cords. There was a small twinkle when the threads touched. Luna walked backwards until she reached a faint couch. She hopped on it and lay with her front hooves flexed under her chest.

“It’s all yours.”

Octavia closed her eyes and she started playing the cello with enviable grace. Luna closed her eyes and let the music lick her ears. It transported her to worlds she would have never imagined. It took her breath away. Luna felt her body floating, not like when she was flying, but as if she was being levitated and taken to a place made of pure joy. Her heart pounded inside her chest as she started panting. Wet trails ran down her cheeks as her eyes started to itch. Luna took a hoof to them but it was no use. The music intensified to the point where there was no faint sofa or room anymore. There was just music, Octavia’s music, invading her body with every note. The melody faded on a last note that floated in mid air. Luna opened her eyes when the note’s echo stopped. She could only see a myriad of blurry shapes. The tears had shattered her vision. She cleared her eyes and sniffed as she looked at Octavia.

"I...I don't know what to say." said Luna.

Octavia made a quick gesture with the hoof that held the bow, but Luna understood it and she chuckled at it.

"That's very ironic."

"Yes. Yes, it is." said Luna. "But...I think it was just the second most beautiful thing in this room."

Luna wanted to add something to her words but she choked due to her crying. Octavia smiled shyly as she carefully left the cello resting over a tripod, leaving the bow over it. She walked towards Luna with her eyes half closed and when she stepped over the faint couch their eyes met.

"I know." said Octavia.

Octavia seemed even more eager than Luna. Luna wanted to start with a careful snuggle, and then small kisses on the cheeks, maybe a peck on the lips and a bit of snuggling. However, Octavia was the conductor here as she leaned forward and kissed Luna deeply in the mouth. Luna had to lean back until her head lay on the faint couch's armrest, her hair spread under her head like a white and blue aura. Octavia leapt over Luna and hopped over Luna and landed on her stomach. Luna kissed Octavia back as she licked her tongue and gasped for a bit of air. Luna moaned as she finally caught her breath, breaking the kiss. Octavia was now fully lying over her body, their chests rubbed together.

"Octavia..." started Luna. "Are you sure you want this?"

Octavia nodded energetically as she darted forwards once again to kiss Luna. Luna welcomed the kiss as she embraced Octavia with her fore legs. She rested her head on Octavia's shoulder.

"I...I am scared Octavia."

Octavia stopped moving. She was panting and her forehead shinned under the moonlight. She brought her hooves up to ask Luna about her fears. Luna replied unable to look at her in the eye.

"I...I love you. I love you with all of my heart but...I don't want to think it's because I find you attractive and nothing else."

Luna expected any kind of reaction except the one she got. Octavia's hoof movements brought a smile to Luna's face.

"Well, we better find out, right?"

Octavia smiled as she kissed Luna once again, this time deeper. Luna couldn't believe her joy at Octavia's reaction. She hugged the earth pony tightly against her chest as their bodies started to quiver in a mix of elation and pleasure. Luna moaned as Octavia released her lips and kissed the princess on the chin. She lowered her kisses to the neck and then down the chest. Luna yelped when Octavia nipped her over the chest making her jump on the sofa. When Luna felt Octavia lips smooching lower and lower on her stomach her mind became a haze of red and white. She could only moan as passion took her heart to the limit.

* * * * *

Luna lay on her back with Octavia resting over her chest. Luna hugged her tightly, not even making a noise. Their bodies were covered in sweat, but Luna ignored her urges to clean up. She was having too much fun to care about that. They had made love, what Luna considered the most passionate and wild thing she had ever done in her life, and the passion for Octavia wasn't gone. On the contrary, it now roared with the intensity of a million fires. Her chest throbbed with warmth and she tasted Octavia's scent in her mouth. She tried to accommodate on the couch but her legs were sore and the pain stabbed her right over the flanks. She stopped trying to move and just hugged Octavia closer to her.

A fragile moan came from the earth pony's mouth. Luna looked at her. Octavia fluttered her eyes and looked at Luna. Octavia smiled as she kissed her in the lips and made a faint gesture with her hoof.

"Hi."

Luna smiled as she hugged Octavia pushing her head over her shoulder. Luna took Octavia's hoof with hers and brought it to her mouth as

she started to kiss it. She kissed it tenderly, appreciating what Octavia used to make such beautiful music and compose such haunting melodies. She stopped the kissing only to throw her fore legs around her and pull her head to her chest.

“I love you Octavia.” said Luna. “I want to always be with you.”

Right after saying that line, Luna felt the panic striking her. “I want to always be with you.” Luna knew that was impossible. They would never grow old together. Her gift, that overrated immortality, is what ruined that illusion. Luna shivered as she hugged Octavia even tighter. She thought Octavia would vanish right between her forelegs, that this perfect moment was just a mirage. Octavia had to feel Luna’s fear because she lifted her head and looked at Luna right in her navy blue eyes.

“You will be.” said Octavia. “I don’t care about your immortality. I don’t care if I grow old and you stay young. I only care about you. I love you, Luna. I just want you to be happy.”

Luna smiled and rested a hoof over Octavia’s face. There was no reason to say no, to reject those feelings and ban her from being happy. For Luna, decades meant nothing. She had seen reigns fall and leaders perish. She had seen great thinkers pass away. She had seen lovers being drifted and houses broken. She had seen geniuses give up and abandon their ideals. And all those crimes had been committed by the same heartless executioner: Time. An enemy not even a Goddess could apprehend. But that wasn’t a reason to stop chasing the happiness and achieve it. And Luna had indeed achieved it and was willing to keep it as long as she lived. If time was impossible to stop, so was love.

Luna hugged Octavia again as she kissed her on the mouth several times.

“And I want to make you the happiest mare in the world.” said Luna, and instantly added. “That sounded really cheesy, didn’t it?”

Octavia nodded with a smile and kissed Luna on her cheek before replying.

“But I liked it.”

The night passed by as Luna and Octavia lay on the sofa. It got to a point where Luna stopped caring about cleaning up and just wanted to stay with Octavia a few more minutes. She didn't want to let her go. Not now. Not in that moment where everything around her was perfect. However, she couldn't ignore that pressure under her heart, that niggling squeeze that reminded her of the inevitable.

* * * * *

"And then what happened next?"

"I am not giving *ouch* you any details of my sex life."

"I am so happy for you!"

Luna and Celestia were in Luna's bathroom. Luna had a tangle in her mane and she needed Celestia's help to fix it. Celestia brushed the mane down and down again but the hair knot didn't loose up. Luna would've found the brushing relaxing, if it wasn't for the constant pulling every minute.

"My little sister has a girlfriend! This is so cool."

Luna arched an eyebrow when she heard her sister say "cool". Celestia used that word only once before, and it was to describe the new astronomer at the Canterlot Astronomical Society Team.

"So, are you sure now that what you feel for her is love?"

"Well, ouch! Celly! I am under the hair, remember!?"

"I am sorry Luna, the knot keeps slipping. Well, is it?"

"Oh yes. It is, without a single doubt. Now I dream with her twice per night."

"That's so sweet." Celestia took another comb and started brushing under the knot. "Why don't you tell her to come live with us? Your bed is big enough for the both of you to share."

Luna pondered the idea as she felt the knot in her mane disappear. It felt great when the hair comb passed through her mane in one single movement without hurting her. She looked at her sister and threw her forelegs around her chest.

“Thank you Celly.”

“Why? Because I removed the knot or because of the offer I made you?”

“Both.”

Chapter 5

The entire Palace had been decorated for the wedding.

After six months of going out to places and be together, Octavia and Luna had decided to take their relationship further. They talked about getting married after three months of being together, and it took Luna a lot of courage to say yes. After six months of preparation and delays, the wedding was settled. The wedding was announced all over Equestria, and the most important personalities were attending: Musicians and singer alike, as well as writers, poets, artists, scientists, and the most important citizens of Ponyville attended.

Luna opened the door and peeked outside. She saw the rows of ponies sitting before the atrium. Luna and Celestia were finishing the details on Luna's dress inside the chapel's dresser. Luna was wearing an indigo dress with a skirt and laced horseshoes. Her hair was braided over her ears and she had a veil over her eyes. Celestia was tying the last laces around Luna's waistline.

"Don't worry Luna. I have everything covered."

"You better." said Luna. "How many times have you marry two ponies?"

"Not enough, I am afraid." said Celestia. "But I wouldn't let anypony else do it. You are my sister, of course I will do it!"

Luna turned around and hugged her sister tightly.

"Thank you Celly." said Luna. "I am so nervous."

"It will go really smooth, you will see. I will get to the podium now. You wait until the music starts playing."

Luna nodded and let her sister do her job. Celestia left through a corridor that ran parallel to the chapel's main room and left Luna alone.

Luna stood in front of the door and waited for the music to start playing. The seconds before that seemed ten times longer. The music started to play. It came from a group specialized in strings instruments. She wondered what kind of musician Octavia had hired for the wedding. Luna opened the door and she stepped into the chapel. All the looks and all the cameras turned towards her. Her walk towards the altar was covered in white flashes of light and the music of cellos. And at the end of the walkway, was her. Octavia wore a full black suit without skirt and a bowtie. She looked really elegant. Her eyes drifted between Luna and the orchestra. When Luna arrived to her side, Octavia did a small comment.

"The violin player, his tempo was off."

Luna arched an eyebrow and Octavia rushed to say.

"You look gorgeous."

Luna smiled and nuzzled Octavia's jaw line.

"You are right, his tempo was off."

Celestia cleared her throat and everypony in the chapel sat down. The ceremony proceeded as normal. Celestia liked to start the weddings telling a sappy story about marriage and trust. Luna rolled her eyes every time Celestia got teary when mentioning the word "love". Celestia used it a lot: "When two ponies are in love...", "Love conquers everything...", and so on. Luna didn't pay attention to her sister. She had her eyes focused on Octavia's. Luna rubbed one of her front hooves on Octavia's forelegs. The build up was piercing her gut.

"Luna, Octavia..."

Celestia calling her brought Luna out of her distraction. Luna and Octavia held their hooves together and waited for Celestia's words.

"I, Princess Celestia of Equestria, give you my blessing on your union, and declare you married before my eyes and the eyes of everypony." Celestia lowered her head and whispered to her sister in the ear. "You can now kiss her as much as you want."

Luna was pretty sure that wasn't in the actual writing. Luna leaned her head towards Octavia's, but the earth pony jumped forwards and fused their lips together in a passionate kiss. The rows of ponies erupted in an applause. Some of them applauded quietly, but the majority stomped the ground and cheered, making their joyful voices echo out of the chapel.

Luna took a photo camera from one of her dresses' pockets and lifted it with her powers before them. They posed for the photo as Luna couldn't hold her cheerfulness. She was so happy she thought she was going to explode. After taking the photo, Octavia leapt forwards and kissed her on the lips again.

* * * * *

Luna was really eager to show something to Octavia. A few weeks have passed since their wedding and the honey moon had been pretty wild. Luna was sure that Octavia would love to see what she had planned for her. They walked to the highest point in the Castle, the south tower that pointed directly towards Ponyville. The night greeted them with its dark coat. It was always night time for Luna and Octavia. The top of the tower was empty except for a telescope and two deck chairs. Luna brought Octavia to one of them.

"Lay down, Tavy." said Luna.

Octavia hopped onto one and lay down with her belly up. She gestured towards Luna.

"What is this thing you want to show me?"

Luna took a hoof to her mouth and then stood up on her hind legs. Her horn beamed with powerful magic as she flapped her wings and lifted herself from the roof top. Her body swirled and glowed with energy and directed both her front hooves to the sky, pointing at different stars. With the moves of a conductor, Luna started moving the stars. They changed positions at the speed of light and formed a figure. A face. Luna landed on the roof top as her magic energy disappeared for around her. When Octavia looked at her face, sculpted from stars, floating in the sky, she couldn't move her hooves to express her shock.

"I wanted to make it for the wedding..." Luna said as she patted the ground. "But I was so busy organizing everything that I couldn't."

When Octavia finally replied, she made Luna giggle.

"Won't you get in trouble for this?"

"Oh, of course not." said Luna. "Besides, one single blink..."

Luna blinked towards the sky at the same time her horn glowed, and Octavia's star portrait expanded until it disappeared. The stars returned to their original place. Octavia looked at Luna and furrowed her brow in disappointment. Judging from her face, Luna knew she could've said "Awww."

"But all your work..." said Octavia. *"You didn't even take a picture."*

Luna leaped over Octavia and kissed her on the mouth. Octavia kissed her back as she moaned. Luna released Octavia's mouth and started to lick down her neck, peppering her coat with small smooches.

"Why would I take a picture, when I have the real Octavia with me?" said Luna as she continued kissing.

Octavia gasped as she looked up to the stars while Luna's mouth started licking down her body, getting lower and lower.

* * * * *

- But it wasn't soon before the General Stratospheric Explosion plunged down into the battlefield wielding a sword in his mouth and cutting through the enemy's defences with his battalion of two hundred Pegasi. His delay arriving to the battle was quickly compensated with the crushing over-powered strength of his brothers in arms... -

Luna and Octavia had the library for themselves. There was a section in between two gargantuan book shelves that had a couple of arm chairs and a table. There was quite a selection of books about the Pony Wars and a few booklets about poetry. Luna was sitting on one couch while

Octavia listened to her narration from the other, hooves under her chin, listening like a filly, in trance.

- The enemy tried to contain his advance, but Stratospheric was too much for the armies of Colonel Spear. He withdrawn from the attack with half of his infantry massacred and all of his air troops dead. Stratospheric Explosion became one of the most well known strategists of the war, famous for his quote -

- I might have lost twenty five ponies in a raid, but that means I saved a hundred times that amount of innocent lives -

Luna lowered the book. She had been narrating the entire battle and she got really into it. She wasn't big in warfare, and the books she read the most regarding history were those about economy and law. Luna always considered warfare to be foul and dirty, no honour in it whatsoever. However, reading those books to Octavia made her see a face of it she never knew existed. There was honour in the battlefield, and lots of it.

"This is amazing." said Luna. "I never knew of this General, Stratospheric Explosion. But of course, this battle happened when I was banished."

"I knew you would like it." said Octavia. "Keep reading, you are about to reach the part where they are assaulted by three dragons and Stratospheric ties them down using a rope on fire."

"Really!?" said Luna turning towards the book. "Oh yes, you are right! Right here..."

Luna kept reading the books out loud as Octavia listened. They went to the library every night. Sometimes they read a book and it was so interesting they couldn't stop. Other times Luna had to stop because the writing was too boring and cluttered. During their time together, they managed to read the entire warfare section of the library, and two thirds of the poetry section.

* * * * *

Luna was surprised by how quickly things turned mundane. Not boring, just mundane, predictable, normal and absolutely enjoyable. Her duty, taking care of the Moon, was the only thing she had in her life. With Octavia by her side, there were a lot more things to do. Reading through books was one of Luna's biggest past times, but with Octavia it became a totally new experience. Never before she spent an entire night talking about the recession and how the construction plunged the economy into a monetary black hole, until Celestia fixed it. Octavia didn't seem to have a passion for those books. She had a passion for how Luna talked about it.

If they were not reading books, they would walk around the Castle courtyard, or check on the corridors and prank the guards that were sleeping. There was one time when Luna set a curtain on fire trying to zap a guard with a low voltage shock. They'd go to the kitchen and assault the fridge. Luna wasn't a good cook, nor was Octavia, and many times they burned the cupcakes they tried to make. They always ended up doing a veggie sandwich for each other.

Other nights, Luna and Octavia were really busy with their respective works. Luna had to read an essay about the legal system's collapse, and Octavia had to practice for a concert. Luna never tried reading while listening to music. She enjoyed the peace and quiet of the library too much to try something new. It wasn't until Octavia talked her into it that she decided to read the essay while on the music room. Luna never returned to the library to read her essays. Even when she didn't need to read her essays, if Octavia had to practice, she would go with her to the music room.

Luna lay down on the couch, looking at the ceiling as Octavia adjusted the chords on her Cello. Her toughened expression showed a few wrinkles around the eyes. Luna knew she was preparing the Quartet in B-Minor from Colccherini's 8th Symphony. It was Luna's favourite piece of him. Luna looked towards her wife and wondered about Octavia's talent. She was so good with the cello and other instruments she could open her own school.

"Tavy..." said Luna.

Octavia stopped adjusting the chords to pay attention to Luna.

“Have you ever considered opening your own school?” said Luna.
“You are really good, you should consider it.”

Octavia put the bow under her front leg and gesticulated quickly.

“If the money wasn’t a problem, I’d do it.”

Luna shrugged.

“We can give you some, how much do you need?”

Octavia was going to take the bow again but she stopped in the middle of it. The bow slipped off under her leg and clattered on the floor. Octavia replied with a beaming expression.

“Somewhere around fifteen thousand bits. I saw an available place next to the Malt Shop, it’s been closed for two or three years. The building alone costs fifty thousand bits.”

“Only?” said Luna. “Don’t worry about it then, we can get it for you Tavy. I will talk with my sister.”

Octavia left the cello on the tripod and trotted towards Luna, hopped over her and gave her a hug. Luna couldn’t react in time and had the air knocked out of her when Octavia landed on her stomach. She hugged Octavia back as she regained her breath. If Octavia’s hugs were an indication of something, they meant she was really happy. Luna kept hugging her as her thoughts drifted towards the school. Building it was the easy part. Getting students for it wasn’t going to be hard either, Canterlot brimmed with young ponies looking for a career. Her thoughts moved away from the school and back to Octavia. Her mane rubbed over Luna’s snout and it smelled so nice...

* * * * *

Building the school didn’t take as long as Luna expected. The edifice next to Pony Joe’s Malt Shop was big enough and was practically new. It only took them a few weeks of cleaning; fixing the broken roofs, the shattered windows and the holed up walls and the school was ready to open. The façade was grey with black door frames and window frames. It

was three stories tall and had a flat roof top. Luna and Octavia had designed a banner with a treble clef as a logo and the name of the school on it: Good Vibes. Luna had taken some of the musical instruments from the Castle into the school. They even managed to get two musicians to give class at the start of the course, retired musicians who wanted to pass their knowledge to future generations.

When Octavia wasn't busy practising or playing in concerts, she would also give classes. The school started slow, like all schools or private academies do. At the beginning, Good Vibes Music School for Fillies and Colts only had three students. Two weeks later they had twelve students. Three weeks later they were fifty students. After a month, Octavia had all stories of her academy full and a waiting list of two hundred families asking to get inscribed. Three months later she had to set an entrance exam and it broke her heart to reject some of the fillies and colts that came looking for a future in the music world.

Octavia was checking over some bills the school had received in the music room back at the Castle, when Luna stepped inside. Octavia went to greet Luna with a kiss on the lips and returned to her duties.

"Are you too busy?" asked Luna. "I just came in to see if you needed anything."

"I'd appreciate your help organizing this bills, thank you." said Octavia.

Luna sat next to Octavia on the table and checked over the bills. She was relieved to see all of them were paid and on time, and that Octavia just needed to file them.

"I am a bit tired." said Octavia, her hoof moves indicative of her exhaustion.

"I see that." said Luna. "Why don't you leave the filing for tomorrow? You can come to bed and keep talking me about that concert you say you want to write. It sounded so big."

Luna looked at Octavia. She looked really tired, and maybe not just from filing bills, running the school and working for her concerts. She

couldn't help but notice the bags under her eyes, the dots on her temples and the smudges of white and pale grey fur on her coat. After a short moment, Octavia nodded and looked at Luna.

"Yes, let's go back to bed."

"Really? Are you sure?"

"Absolutely."

Back in their bedroom, Luna and Octavia got back in bed and hugged closely. Luna gave Octavia a sweet kiss on the lips and Octavia rubbed her head under Luna's chin. Her black mane fell between their bodies. Luna held Octavia close to her chest and breathed over her neck. She listened to her heart, beating like a marching band. Her own heart beat against Octavia's cheek. They stayed like that for a couple of minutes until Octavia moved away to get something that laid over her night stand. It was a notebook. She took it and put it between them.

"This is the concert I've been working on." said Octavia. *"I don't know the title yet, but it's going to be big."*

Luna looked over the notebook. It was full of smudges and parts that Octavia had scratched, surely because she didn't like how they sounded, but the parts that were clean of marks seemed really well organized, and Luna even managed to mutter part of the melody.

"It sounds great." said Luna.

"Thank you love." said Octavia, as she gave Luna a quick peck on the lips. *"I just don't know when will I end it. Or if I will ever see it finished."*

Luna turned to Octavia with a severe expression in her face.

"Don't say that." said Luna. "Never say that again, Tavy, do you hear?"

Octavia just rubbed a hoof over Luna's cheek. Her touch relaxed Luna. Her smell, the texture of her fur, it reminded her that Octavia was still there with her, inside their bed, together.

"You are adorable when you get angry." said Octavia.

Luna smiled and Octavia and moved the notebook out of the way to the bottom of the bed. In a sudden move Luna kicked the notebook off the bed as she lowered her body over Octavia's.

Chapter 6

Luna stepped inside the school. The main lobby was busy with new comers and other students waiting for their classes to start. When they saw her they all bowed before her. Luna replied with the basic protocol bow and walked towards the principal's office. The night shift just started, so Octavia had to be in her office. Luna was all shades of worried. What happened yesterday night during Octavia's performance worried her, but not as much as Tavy's attitude when they returned to the Castle. Luna stopped in front of the door and knocked on it. Three knocks came from the inside of the office. Luna pushed the door open.

"Tavy, can we talk?" said Luna poking her head inside.

Octavia was writing on a music sheet with her muzzle. Earth Ponies can't use their hooves for writing. Octavia nodded and Luna stepped inside.

"We need to talk about yesterday night." Said Luna.

Octavia pouted and replied.

"I was just tired."

"Are you sure?" said Luna. "Tavy, you missed thirty notes in the first segment, and the days before you've been failing notes as well. I don't think you are just tired, why don't we have a doctor to check up on you."

"I don't need a Doctor." said Octavia. *"I already know what I have, but that's not going to stop me from playing music. I will stop when I can no longer hold my bow."*

Octavia rolled the music sheet and put it inside her saddle bags. She stepped away from the table and walked around it. Her legs were a bit shaky, but she was still firm as a young mare. Luna followed Octavia out of the office and to the class.

“Do you mind if I come with you?”

Octavia said “no” with her head and let Luna follow her. The class brimmed with students. Luna bowed before them as they bowed before her, and took a seat on the background. Octavia walked to the front of the class and greeted her translator. She hired one after the first week. Octavia took out her cello and placed it on the tripod. Through the translator, she started giving directions to her students. Luna watched carefully her every move, her heart beating in fear. Luna knew Octavia was worse than she thought.

Octavia lowered to grab the bow and brought it against the chords. But as soon as she made pressure against the instrument Octavia groaned in pain and dropped the bow making the chords tingle. Luna looked in abject terror. Octavia lowered herself to grab the bow again, but she couldn't even take it. It kept falling off her hoof. Luna trotted towards Octavia as the confused students looked at her teacher. Octavia was groaning trying to grab the bow but it kept falling. Luna took Octavia from her shoulders.

“Tavy...”

Octavia just groaned in frustration as she kept trying to grab the bow. One time she almost did but it fell again.

“Tavy, stop it.”

Octavia wailed and threw herself against the floor as she tried to grab the bow with her mouth. Luna held her before she could do such thing and pushed her against her chest. Octavia threw a few punches to Luna's sides. Luna didn't feel a thing. It was like a rag doll tried to hit a boulder. After a short while, Octavia stopped punching Luna and broke into sobs. She wrapped her forelegs around Luna's neck and cried over her shoulder.

“I am taking you to the hospital, understood?” said Luna. “There they might find a way to help you.”

Luna took Octavia out of the class and left the students with another teacher. She talked to the vice-principal to take care of the school until new order. Octavia was still able to run the school. Maybe she wasn't going to play the cello for what she had left of life, but she was going to keep running her school.

The visit to the Hospital was one of the worst experiences Luna had ever gone through. She had to wait outside of the doctor's office as they examined Octavia's hooves. They were checking for every disease in existence, including a biopsy to make sure it wasn't cancer. Luna wished it wasn't cancer. That was the worst scenario. She tumbled up and down the waiting room sitting in different seats and leaning over the walls. She went back and forth between the waiting room and the cafeteria, but still nothing was happening. The door didn't open. Luna closed her eyes from the exhaustion just to let them rest, and snapped them open again. She thought she heard the door opening. It wasn't Octavia's, it was someone else's.

“Oh please, when will this end?”

Her comment had to be heard by the doctor because, right there and then, the door opened. Luna stepped inside and what she saw pulverized her heart and went through her defences. Octavia was lying on a hospital bed and she had her face buried between her hooves. She was crying grievously. Luna looked at the doctor, who ushered to explain her.

“We made the tests, and the results indicate it's not cancer.”

Luna let a sigh of relief escape her chest. That was good news. Still, Octavia didn't stop her silent crying and the doctor kept holding a deck of papers before his eyes.

“There is also bad news, your Highness.” said the doctor. “The tests reveal a big deterioration on her bones. Octavia has developed a sort of traumatic arthritis on her hooves' joints and it's so severe it won't let her hold any objects heavier than a piece of paper. She will be able to

communicate, maybe not as fast as before, and she won't be able to play the cello again."

Luna could feel the doctor's regret when giving the news. She swallowed saliva and tried to ignore the memories that crossed her mind; of how many times that dedicated physician pony had given terrible news to wives and husbands. She nodded to the doctor.

"Thank you, doctor." said Luna.

"I am very sorry." said the Doctor. "I will wait outside to give you some privacy."

After the doctor left, Luna walked towards Octavia and rubbed her muzzle against her head. Octavia didn't reply right away. She had her front hooves wrapped in bandages. She cleaned the tears with one of them and looked at Luna. Weakly, she lifted her hooves and talked. Luna was amazed by her strength.

"I guess it's over, eh?"

"Oh no." said Luna, snuggling Octavia close and kissing her on the cheek. "You can compose. It's not over Tavy; you have me, and your prodigious mind. I am sure you will come up with something."

Octavia nodded faintly and looked at Luna with misty eyes. She was smiling though. Her hooves moved as quickly as they allowed her. She winced in pain at her hooves' moves.

"Can you hug me?"

Luna bit her lower lip, pulled Octavia towards her body and gave her a tight hug. Octavia hugged Luna and sunk her face into her shoulder. Luna rubbed her hooves over Octavia's back as she felt her weak body shaking. It was the exhilaration and the adrenaline. Luna had never gone to the doctors to get such severe tests. She didn't even try to imagine what it was. Octavia's memories hit her mind like a freight train and Luna experienced them herself. They kept hugging each other until Octavia stopped crying.

Luna lifted Octavia's head with her hoof.

"Do you want to go to the Malt Shop?" said Luna.

Octavia looked to the side and then back to Luna. She nodded.

* * * * *

Octavia took on the endeavour of writing for other orchestras with her characteristic passion. There was always a big presence of the cello in her compositions. When she sent the first one she couldn't go to sleep waiting for the response. Luna had to talk her into getting in bed to calm her down. Luna felt the tension leaving Octavia's body as she lay back on the bed, her body half covered by the sheets, breathing heavily. Luna was breathless.

"I...When was the last time we...we did it three times in a row?"

Luna moved her head towards Octavia, who replied with shaky hooves.

"*Never?*" said Octavia.

Luna giggled and Octavia joined her giggles as she rolled closed to Luna and rested her head over the princess' chest. Luna wrapped her front legs around Octavia and kissed her on the neck. She passed one of her front hooves over the mane, soft like the very first day.

"I am sorry Tavy." said Luna. "I wish I could have done something."

"Don't torture yourself. Not even you can't stop this from happening."

Luna held back a sob and rubbed her chin over Octavia's face and hugged her close. She wanted that moment to last forever. She made the effort to remember every single little detail so she could go back there anytime she wanted. As she hugged Octavia, Luna looked over at the notebook.

"Do you have any other pieces ready?" said Luna.

Octavia let go off the hug to reply properly.

“I have many, but they are unfinished. Do you think I should try and complete them?”

“Yes! You totally should, Tavy.”

Luna and Octavia stayed in bed until they finally fall asleep from exhaustion. Luna remembered Octavia’s weight over her body for months to come. That would be the last time they could manage to have some intimate time together. Octavia’s condition grew so severe Luna had to leave the bed just for Octavia. While sleeping, the earth pony would wake up startled by the sheering pain in her hooves, and Luna had to grab the bottle of painkillers. That didn’t stop Octavia, though. She managed to send up to thirty compositions and concert pieces during the next three years, and some of them were accepted by big orchestras. Sadly, the ones that were accepted were never Octavia’s favourites. The conductors said some of her compositions were too complex for them to execute. Much to her regret, her name became slightly popular for those works she didn’t fully love.

After the thirtieth composition, Octavia stopped sending her works. She was tired and ideas didn’t come to her with the affluence they had in the past. At least, that was what Luna saw. Octavia would pass the nights checking the notebook, reading and writing, tweaking on a musical piece she wouldn’t let Luna to see. She insisted that it was a surprise, that she would show her on a special occasion. Luna thought Octavia would be sadder, that the decision to stop composing will devastate her. However, Octavia wasn’t all that sad. Anytime Luna asked Octavia about it, Octavia would reply hugging and kissing her on the lips.

“I love you, Tavy.”

“Thank you, Luna.” and after a moment she added. *“I love you too.”*

They were together. That was all that mattered.

* * * * *

It was two months before their anniversary, and Luna woke up like every other night. If it wasn't for her worries, she would've said she was fresh as a daisy. She looked on her left and saw Octavia, still sleeping. She was thin and her rib cage was noticeable under the skin. Her coat was more white than grey. Her legs remained somewhat strong looking, at least for a 26 year old pony. Luna stepped from the bed after kissing Octavia gently on the chin and walked towards the balcony to raise up the Moon.

When she returned, Octavia had moved out of bed and she was walking as fast as her advanced age allowed her, which wasn't very fast. Luna rubbed her head under Octavia's chin and kissed her softly on her wrinkled lips. Octavia replied and snuggled her back. Luna had something planned for tonight. She wanted to cheer Octavia up and she had a great idea for it.

"I have something for you, Tavy." said Luna. "Come with me."

Luna took Octavia out of the bedroom and through a path they both knew very well. It was the way up to the highest tower on the castle. Luna kept thinking about how she will show her surprise to Octavia. They both will lie down on a deck chair and Luna will move the stars around. Octavia will look at the dots as they formed the music sheet of one of her compositions. Then Luna will take out a violin and perform the piece for her. Luna had been practicing in secret during the last four months to refresh her memory. It had been literally ages since she last took one. Luna smiled as she stepped up the flight of stairs, with Octavia behind.

"You are going to love it, I can hardly wait." said Luna, sounding like a filly. "And if you are still in the mood after it, we can go check the gardens again, what do you think of...it?"

Luna had reached the tower's rooftop, but Octavia wasn't there with her.

"Tavy?" her voice trembled with fear, a cold sweat crept up her neck. "Tavy!" she rushed to the flight of stairs. "TAVY!"

She found Octavia at the bottom of the stairs, breathing with difficulty and holding her chest with a front hoof. Luna rushed and took Octavia up with her powers and put her on her back. She then rushed to the infirmary

as fast as she could. She felt Octavia's raspy breath on her body, her lungs fighting to stay alive.

* * * * *

Luna lost perception of space and time. The next three minutes before she reached the infirmary felt like three hours. The three hours she had to wait before the door until the doctor came out, felt like three hundred years. When the doctor stepped outside, his look didn't calm Luna, who couldn't hold back the tears. Her semblance remained serious and her lips quivered, but she didn't sob. She swallowed every one of them.

"It's the heart." said the Doctor. "There is no disease is just...She had lived a good year beyond the normal life span of a pony, your Highness. It's only normal."

Luna nodded and more tears came from her eyes. When she talked she could only whisper. If she raised her voice any higher than that she would end up bawling.

"H-How much d-does... she have left?" said Luna.

The doctor's expression wasn't hopeful.

"Two weeks, and I think that's too much, according to her condition. If she is strong, she has two more weeks."

Luna nodded again.

"Can she stay in our bedroom?" said Luna, a wail escaping her mouth.

"Yes, she can. I will ask a couple of nurse ponies to take her there."

Luna nodded again and left the clinic. She didn't want to be there. She didn't want to be anywhere. She walked around the castle with no direction. She went through corridors, not sure of what she was doing, until she encountered two big doors, white, with engravings depicting musical instruments. She stopped a moment, as the sorrow filled her chest, and with a shaky hoof she pushed the door open. She stepped inside the

darkness and sat on the faint couch where Octavia had loved her so passionately. Luna climbed on to it and lay until the exhaustion from the bad news caught up with her. Her eyes closed heavily and she fell asleep.

Something was shaking her. Something or...somepony.

"Luna..."

That was her sister's voice. Luna woke up from her dreamless sleep and looked at Celestia. She was kneeling before the couch with two guards standing behind her. Celestia made a signal and the guards left them alone, closing the doors. In the darkness of the music room, Celestia's mane glowed with blue and pink. Luna didn't want to look at her.

"She only has two weeks left, Celly." said Luna.

"More reason for you to stay with her, don't you think?" said Celestia.

"The day...The day I dreaded and that I so happily ignored all these years is here and I don't know why...With all my planning, all my foreseen of things, why I feel like this?"

"Because nothing can prepare you when these things happen, Little Sister." said Celestia. "No matter how well you try to convince yourself, the death of a loved one will always hurt you."

Luna sniffed and Celestia rubbed her snout under Luna's chin. Luna replied leaping forward and hugging her sister's chest.

"Don't leave her alone now." said Celestia. "Stay with her until the end."

Luna nodded and sniffed, not letting go of her sister.

Chapter 7

Luna walked down the corridor that led to her room.

It was the end of the night and she had to bring down the moon. There was still time left, around three hours, but she wasn't coming back for that. She looked on her left at the empty space. Alone. She tried not to remember the last time she felt so lonely. Inside her bed, lay Octavia. She was holding her notebook between her hooves, filled with musical sheets. There was a pen in her muzzle and she was writing something on the last page. When Luna closed the door, the click alerted Octavia, who closed the notebook and left it on her side. Luna furrowed her brow in resignation as the sadness swamped her heart. Thinking she gave Octavia all the love she could have didn't make her feel any better.

She walked slowly towards the bed as Octavia extended a hoof to Luna's chest. Luna was still the same, the soft skin and her bright mane and coat, all brimming with life. Octavia's coat was pale with patches of grey and black here and there. Her face was full of wrinkles, on the corners of the mouth, on her forehead and around her eyes. Even her long mane was grey and white and not silky anymore. The only thing that remained young like the very first day they saw each other, were her beautiful violet eyes.

Octavia rubbed one hoof over Luna's chest and raised her other hoof. She waved it in front of her face and down to her stomach, wiped it over her brow and finally placed it over her chest. Luna couldn't hold back the tears coming to her eyes as she smiled as sweetly as she could and grabbed Octavia's hoof.

"I won't." said Luna. "I promise you, Tavy."

Octavia smiled at Luna and Luna smiled back but not for long. She felt it. She felt that void in her chest. Trying to contain her sobbing, Luna took Octavia's hooves between hers and leaned forwards to kiss her on the forehead. Then she lowered her face and nuzzled that of Octavia's and finally pulled her fragile body into a soft hug. Luna released Octavia and let her lay down on the pillows. She would stay with her until the very end. She won't leave her alone. Luna saw something in Octavia's face that crushed her heart but at the same time made her hopeful.

Octavia was smiling.

* * * * *

Luna demanded the funeral to be held in the most rigorous privacy possible. Only relatives of both families and the closest friends of the Royal Family would be allowed to attend. There were around one hundred ponies attending: Students from Octavia's school, The Captain of the Guards, Celestia's best student and her friends, and conductors from all the different orchestras in Canterlot. Luna didn't care for the amount of public.

"I can't do it." said Luna. "I am...I won't be able to say a word, Celly."

"You will do it." said Celestia. "You will, because you love her. You always will, Little Sister."

Luna closed her eyes as tears rolled down her cheeks. She threw herself on her sister's arms. Celestia let go a mournful sigh when hugging her sister.

"Oh, Luna..."

"I can't...I can't help it, I'm sorry." said Luna in between sobs. "I...I have to. I'll do it, for Tavy's memory, right?"

"Exactly." said Celestia. "Now come on, do it."

Luna stepped outside and walked towards the stand while Celestia walked to the front bench. Luna walked with shaky legs and stood up in front of the podium as she looked at the ponies attending. They all looked so old, and she looked so young. She silently cursed her immortality. When it came the moment to read the eulogy, Luna had never felt so vulnerable in her life. Reading those words with Octavia's corpse behind her was the hardest thing she had ever done in her life. She ordered the speech and swallowed saliva. The moment before she started talking, her mind went blank. The words left her mouth as she talked like there was nopony else there but her.

"Octavia is...Octavia was the only pony I would have spent my whole life with. She was the most creative...The most talented..." she had to make constant pauses to avoid breaking into tears, but she kept herself strong, firm in her voice tone. "...the most important pony in my life. But she is not gone. She never will. She is alive now in our memories; in mine. Anytime we think about her, she will be alive. Anytime we listen to her music, she will be with us. Anytime we...R-remember the time we spent with her, she will be a-alive. " Luna had to swallow to keep reading, her throat was clenching on her. "I want to think that, as she made me the happiest mare during the last twenty years, I have given her the best years of her life. I love you, Tavy."

She turned around without looking at the opened coffin. She didn't want to remember Octavia as an unmoving corpse with those beautiful eyes closed. She sat next to Celestia, who hugged her. The touch of her sister's leg over her shoulders broke through her weakened emotional defences as she finally erupted in sobs and wails, as one of the guards approached to close the coffin. Luna pressed her face against Celestia's face. Her sobs were the only sound in the chapel.

* * * * *

It took Luna five months to go back to her bedroom.

During that time she spent the days sleeping in the faint sofa at the music room. It was the only place in the whole castle that brought her peace when sleeping. But after five months, she grew tired of moping around and decided to go back to her room. She knew Octavia wouldn't have liked to see her like that. She felt a scary sensation of déjà vu when she walked down the corridor and pushed her bedroom's door open. She thought she'd see Octavia lying on the bed, and for a moment she believed it. Seeing the empty bed hit her really hard. She walked towards it and hopped on it making the bed sheets wave and the pillows bounce. She grabbed one of the pillows and took it to her face as she breathed on it. The smell took her back to those violet eyes. She left the pillow on the bed and passed a hoof over it. Her eyes had stained the fabric.

She looked over to her drawing and photography set. There were so many pictures of them together stuck on the wall. Luna moved towards it. She didn't know what to do with them. The lack of ideas made her decided not to remove them. Octavia looked so happy in every photo. She was adorable.

As she headed to get out of the bedroom she saw something lying on the corner. Something that seemed to be forgotten because it hadn't been used in years: Octavia's cello. Encased and covered in a fine layer of dust. Luna walked towards it and lifted it with her magic powers, leaving it on the bed. She remembered the time they closed it. Luna thought she'd never open it again. She unclasped the locks and lifted the heavy lid, but what she found inside wasn't just a cello. There was also an envelope. Luna took it with her mouth. It really was heavy. She left the envelope on the bed as she looked at the cello. It was old and had scratches all over its surface. There was a dent on the side. Luna made it one time when Octavia didn't want to come to dinner because she wanted to finish her practice. She went to the cello and gave it a bite. She didn't know why she did that, it was just so silly. She was brought to the moment where they put it on the corner.

Luna lay both hooves over the cello and pushed it gently to the side as she focused on the letter, doing her best efforts to ignore the pain in her chest. She took the envelope and cut it open, emptying the contents on the bed. Luna gasped when she saw Octavia's notebook. During the last months of her life she had been focused on that notebook more than anything. Who could have placed it in there? Luna knew it hadn't been

Octavia. Luna took a moment to consider whether she should open it or not. Luna finally gave in and opened it.

“Oh, Tavy...”

It was the concerto, and its name was “Claro de Luna”. Octavia had spent the last days of her life writing a concerto that, at least for what Luna could read, lasted around three hours and was planned to involve every part of the orchestra equally. Luna was holding an entire life’s work on her hooves. Right before her eyes laid Octavia’s gift to the music world. Luna passed page after page. She wasn’t too sure about the tempo, but as she read the notes she also hummed the tune. Luna smiled in many parts as she recognized a fragment that she and Octavia composed together. Finally, Luna reached the last page. It was empty, but at the bottom there was something scribbled in Octavia’s exquisite muzzle writing.

*Thank you for the best years of my life.
Now go out and share our love with everypony.*

For the first time in months, Luna’s smile was genuine. She placed a hoof over the writing and looked at the wall covered in photos and paintings. That concerto wasn’t going to be kept as a secret. Everypony had the right to enjoy it. Luna closed the notebook and galloped at full speed to meet with her sister. They had to call the best composer and the best conductor in all of Equestria to get that concerto up and running.

* * * * *

Luna dedicated herself (almost) full time to organize the “Claro de Luna” Concerto. There seemed to be nothing that could stop her. Her passion could take down walls. Only her royal duties and her task of raising and taking down the Moon took her away from getting the concert in motion. Celestia managed to diverge part of the castle’s budget to aid the concert. They had the help of three hundred ponies to set the amphitheatre and organize the different orchestra sections. Luna contacted all the bands in Canterlot and formed her own personal company with the best musicians of each band. The rehearsals took place during the six months previous to the concert and Luna supervised every single one of them with the help two conductors.

The premiere night, Luna was nervous. She was standing on the balcony from where she first saw Octavia, twenty two years ago. She looked at the stage as the technician ponies set the seats, placed the cables and the amplifiers. A knock on the floor took her off her surveillance. It was Celestia.

“Can I come in?”

“Sure.” said Luna with a smile.

Celestia walked towards her sister and sat down next to her.

“What you are doing is amazing, little sister. I am sure Octavia would have loved it.”

“I bet she would’ve.” said Luna, sounding more cheerful. “I can’t thank you enough for this, Big Sister.”

Celestia didn’t reply right away. Celestia leaned over her sister and nuzzled her under the chin, pulling her into a hug.

“You don’t need to thank me, Little sister.” said Celestia. “I know how you feel.” and she broke the hug before saying. “I know it very well.”

Luna looked at her sister and leaned over her shoulder as they contemplated the technicians setting up the spotlights and the instruments for the opening concert. She looked down and then up to her sister.

“Do you still have that semi-transparent dress?” said Luna.

Celestia laughed and looked at her sister.

“I think so, why? Do you want to wear it?”

“Well, why not? I think it looked good on Me.” said Luna with another giggle.

“I think it’s in the bottom of my wardrobe. I will have to go get it, if the moths haven’t eaten it already.”

They kept talking until the concert started and it got too late to go back to the castle and get Luna a dress. Luna knew the concert was going to be exactly how Octavia had planned it. She wasn't too sure about the audience's reaction. She didn't care for what the critics would say; she just wanted the ponies to enjoy the concert. Luna sat there in the darkness of the balcony as the music unveiled before everypony, and each time the orchestra finished a segment, the entire audience applauded. Luna had to look over the balcony to see everypony was stomping the ground, rumbling the amphitheatre with their appreciation. They applauded so much that the initial four hours duration turned into six hours and a half. By the end of the concert Luna was beyond moved by the ponies' appreciation.

"They love it." said Luna, and she turned to her sister. "They love her."

Celestia smiled and pulled Luna into a hug.

As it turned out, both the audience and the critics really liked the concerto and they turned it into a massive success. The "Claro de Luna" was featured amongst the most popular pieces in Equestrian history, and Octavia's name appeared amongst some of the most renown composers, those who were regarded once they are no longer amongst the living to make music. But it didn't end there. Octavia's popularity made many ponies wonder if she had composed something before the "Claro de Luna". Her first compositions, those that were rejected or ignored initially were re-discovered. Octavia passed from being just a background composer and cellist to be one of the most well known musicians in Equestria. All the money that came from those concerts was given directly to Octavia's Music School for Fillies and Colts. Luna couldn't walk around without hearing Octavia's music coming from somepony's house, or read through reports without finding an advert about a concert featuring Octavia's works.

Octavia was now part of Equestria's history. She wasn't just in Luna's memories, but within the mind of every pony out there. Luna couldn't be happier. In a sense, Octavia will never be gone. Thanks to her music she achieved something only a Goddess could.

~~THE END~~