

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 41

Maeve POV

I put my glass down as gently as possible. None of the chilled water **within** spilled over the fancy, gold-encrusted rim, and not a sound was heard as it settled against the table. "Like this?" I asked with a trepid smile.

Perhaps I got it right this time.

Luna Queen Leonora had elected to teach me some of the more intricate rules of etiquette in a fine dining atmosphere- more specifically, the topic at hand was how to properly drink from a glass with as much grace and refinement as possible. That meant no slurping, no clinking of the glass at any point against any surface, and **even** sipping placement was apparently of the utmost importance. According to the queen, when drinking from **a glass**, one had to take their sips from the same, exact spot every single time **to** avoid lipstick smears all over the rim.

So, to **help drill** the concept into me, she let me borrow some lipstick so I **could** see where to place my **lips**

I had no idea the rules of etiquette could be so thorough...but I supposed that was why I was here **taking** these lessons with her in the first place. Only someone with class would be familiar with such intricacies.

One would think **this a** pretty simple rule to learn, but to be honest, my mind had been lost elsewhere.

Hours had passed **and** the morning had come and gone **since** I'd had that dream, and as I sat with the queen for my daily lessons, I still could not shake that feeling about everything I'd seen... everything I'd heard. And if I were being even more honest, I was fairly confident that was why it had taken me **more** than a few tries to learn this rule.

Those dreams did not feel normal. By all accounts, it should have been impossible for me to hear the same mysterious voice twice over two different nights, even if it was nothing more than just some outlandish figment of my wild imagination. And it unnerved me that my baby was somehow connected to all of it

Something strange was going on.

And I **had** this slowly sinking feeling that it would all unearth itself sooner or later.

The Luna Queen took a few moments to examine the glass **and** its placement on the table, leaving me anxiously waiting for her response. It wasn't long, however, until she straightened back up with a small smile of her own. "It's flawless," she declared. "Your glass is impeccably clean and not an inch out of place. Well done."

I let out a breath I didn't realize I had been holding. What a relief...

"You have been progressing wonderfully, my dear," she beamed at me, full of **pride** as we sat together in her parlor. "I can already see a great deal of improvement after only a few days of lessons."

I bit my lip, feeling an unfamiliar sense of fulfillment. "Do you really think so?"

"I certainly do. It is only a matter of time before you become a spectacular Luna Princess that one shall tremble to behold," she proclaimed with passionate fervor, so much so that even I found myself believing her. "And

soon enough, you'll have the perfect opportunity to put your skills to the test."

"I will?"

She nodded, and the knowing glimmer in her **eyes** was a little bit nerve-wracking. "In two days, the king and I will be holding a small banquet. Only those in our immediate family will be in attendance, however, so you **will** have nothing to fear."

I tried to maintain as **much** of my composure as **possible**, but I couldn't stop the panic that swelled inside me. I remembered all **too** well how my last meeting with the family went, and I remembered what some of them thought of me. The Luna Queen might have been convinced of my improvement, but it was very likely I was only able to fool her into thinking so because of how comfortable I was in her presence.

The others—namely the king—**frightened** me. I would be nothing but a ball of nerves in front of him.

Oh no. This is going to be a disaster...

"You don't need to worry, Maeve," the queen said, trying to comfort me. "It'll **only** be the family you've **already** met."

The family I already met. I couldn't help but wonder if that really meant everyone.

"Will. Eric be there?" I asked.

The queen seemed stunned by my question but quickly maintained her stately composure. "If he feels well enough **to** attend, then I see no reason why he would not," she replied, though I detected some hesitation.

"Although, it entirely depends on him in the end. I hadn't realized you two had become acquainted already, my dear."

So... Eric hadn't told his mother. I was not sure if that was a testament to any potential lack of relationship, or if he just hadn't gotten around to it.

Either way, I thought it best that she knew.

I fiddled with the hems of my sleeves. "Actually...I met him yesterday after our lesson." I admitted. "Why does he...?"

Luna Queen Leonora sighed. "Look, dear," she murmured, looking **as** somber as I had ever seen her, which befuddled me. "Life has unfortunately always been a little bit more difficult for Eric than others. For as long as I can remember, he's struggled with **his** health and...different appearance, and his self-image **has** suffered because of it."

"But--there must be something that can be done to help him, isn't there?"

"There have been attempts...but I'm afraid there's not much **that** we can do. I'm sorry, Maeve, it's out of my hands."

That rendered me at a loss for words. How could the Luna Queen just give up when it came to her son like that? She seemed to really want to help him, at least from my perspective, but...she was so headstrong when it came to me.

I remembered that fire that scorched in her eyes. How she was so insistent for me to accept her offer to train.

But none of that was there now.

Why was Eric deemed such a lost **cause**...?

Third Person POV

It was is true.

There **was** going to be a banquet honoring the latest addition to the beloved royal family of the Werewolf Kingdom. Limited only to the immediate family themselves, **to** be fair, but still a banquet at the palace nonetheless.

As a Luna Princess of the firstborn Alpha Prince, Isabelle looked forward to these events more than anything else. There was **nothing** noteworthy about the standard duties of her station, which was basically little more than glorified volunteer work.

No—what she thrived on was the attention.

Letting the alphas gawk at her brilliance. Watching the other ladies stew in their delicious envy. She loved knowing that others thought about her...that others wanted to be her. And being the only Luna Princess that was married into the royal family was the delicious little cherry on top of it all.

But she could not believe it. She refused to believe it.

Maeve was a nobody from an insignificant, second-rate clan like Moonstone. She was not even married to her little brother-in-law yet and had received such a scalding review from the almighty Alpha King Arlan himself, thanks to the helpful tidbits provided by Isabelle.

So how the hell was Maeve to be the guest of honor for the night?

Nothing about it made sense.

It had only been a few **days** and Maeve **was** already beginning to hog all the attention away from her!

But Isabelle would be damned if she just let that little nobody march into the palace and charm her way to the top. Not after all the hard work she did to be able to marry Prince Henry in the first place.

There had to be something she could do to embarrass her in front of the royal family at **that** dinner... something that would prove to everyone just how undeserving of becoming Luna Princess Maeve was.

It was going to take time, but Isabelle was determined to see this through.

Maeve was not going to take **away** her glory.