

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 58

THIRD PERSON POV

Somewhere outside the dungeon on the outskirts of the capital, a hooded figure cloaked in black wandered the looming dusk. Fast, frightened footsteps delicately clacked against the pavement, anxious to **reach** their destination.

With the sun shipping **past** the horizon, there **was always** a fear that trouble walked the streets not knowing who or what hid within.

Bella might have had a bold streak, but she was not one to teeter on the edge of danger.

However familiar she was with the capital, this was **an** area she usually tended to avoid. The dungeon was only a place where criminals. and undesirables went—the worst of the worst of society occupied those walls. If it **hadn't** been for her determination, she would never have been caught dead here

If it hadn't been for the need to right some wrongs, she would be at home right now.

As she cautiously approached the front gate of the dungeon, she was stopped by a tall, burly guard, older in age and with a stern face. "You there, stop. What brings you to the capital dungeon?"

She gulped, forcing herself to stand tall. “I–I’m here to see one of the prisoners.”

With an unimpressed hum, he looked her up and down, taking in her petite frame. There was something about the leer in his eyes that rubbed her the wrong way. Almost as if he thought her to be a pathetic thing.

“What’s a small, feeble girl like you got business with around here anyway, eh?”

Bella growled. “H–How dare you **speak** to me with such discourtesy.”

Instead of cowering like she’d hoped, he let out a **small** scoff. “Run on home, little miss,” he muttered, waving a hand to dismiss her. “This place ain’t suited for the likes of you, especially at this time of night.”

Growing frustrated and reaching the end of her rope with this brash guard, she threw back her hood. “I am the daughter of Alpha Charles, head of the Crimson Crescent pack,” she boldly growled, holding herself proud and watching with pleasure as the guard slunk in fear before her. “What do you think he’d say when he finds out you spoke to his beloved only child in such a way?”

Frightened at the prospect of possibly angering an alpha, the guard began to stammer. “I–I apologize, m–miss... you may g–go inside.” As further consolation for his rude behavior, the guard helped lead Bella to where she needed to go **and** left **once** she told him to.

“There you are.” Victoria uttered from deep within the dimly–lit dungeon when she finally caught sight of Bella.

In response, Bella **quickly** dipped her head to the Luna **as** she hurried over to where she stood. In the cell that Victoria stood in front of a small figure slumped against the bars of her cell Bella approached with caution, during which she caught sight of bedraggled **dark** brown hair, dangling in loose sections around the prisoner’s pale, dry face, normally puffed with fine layers of delicate makeup.

She knew this face, and it was **one** she hadn't seen in over a month.

"Sarah," she remarked, surprised. "**You** look- "

"I don't need you to tell me what I already know," Sarah snapped, holding up a hand to stop Bella. Her nails, which were normally pretty and manicured, looked plain and unimpressive, in desperate need of a good polish. All in all, not something one would normally worry about, but two spoiled alpha teenagers, it was practically the end of the world.

"What have they done to you?"

Sarah's bottom lip quivered with **fury**, "**It's** awful" she hissed, paring her cell as she ranted out loud. "I have to wear these disgusting rags all day long and they serve me my dinner with water! No expensive wines to be seen!"

Bella's mouth fell open, aghast. "What a nightmare!" she gaped. "I can't believe they force you to live like this!"

"We need to get me out of here—fast," Sarah urged, grabbing onto the bars with white knuckles. "I can't spend another day in this place."

This was the first time the three women were able to arrange **a** meeting together. The Luna had been the mastermind of it all, of course not willing to watch her daughter spend another day in that horrible cell while her husband refused to do a damn thing to over turn her sentence. It hadn't been long before she decided she needed to **take** matters into her own hands, albeit with the help of **a** girl she knew loathed Marve just **as** much **as** she and Sarah did. Bella was their key to getting answers through the princess, while Victor tried to pull whatever strings she could from the sidelines.

But they were hardly making any headway with their mission to break up Maeve and Prince Xaden. With every passing day, they were running out of time.

“Honestly,” Victoria scoffed, rolling her eyes at Bella. “We could have made some progress if **you** hadn’t **given up** so quickly during your tea with Princess Charlotte. If you had been more discrete with your questioning, like we’d discussed, then maybe we’d have something we could work with.

Bella’s stomach plummeted. She didn’t want to be seen as the weak link of their team. “**I-I’m** sorry, Luna Victoria,” she muttered, lowering her gaze. I tried my best, but she evaded all-

“If you did, then my daughter still wouldn’t be behind bars,” Victoria countered, projecting her pain and misery onto the girl and ignoring the subsequent widening of Bella’s eyes. “But you’ve always tried to get yourself ahead of Sarah, haven’t you? Maybe **what** you really want is for my daughter—your best friend—to be locked up for trying to attain the attention of your beloved Prince Xaden.”

Bella blanched. “That’s not true,” she protested, albeit weakly,

Sarah gaped, horrified. “Is that what you really want, you deceitful bitch!! After all that we’ve been through together!”

“Don’t do this to me?” Bella shouted. “Why would I go through all this trouble with the princess and risk getting myself thrown in **prison** if I only wanted to keep you back there? This is all to right the wrongs committed by your sister! She’s the real villain here!”

“Fine, fine...” Victoria muttered, raising a hand to placate the agitated girl. “You are a **valuable** asset, we know. But this is something we need to do before they get married, otherwise the prince is lost to us forever and Marve will be untouchable. You’ll have to go back and try **this again.**”

The thing **was**, Bella had tried. She had tried for days to even be able to come to one of the princess’s highly coveted tea parties in the palace rose garden, but now that she had finally been able to, she was quick to learn that getting answers about Maeve’s **status**—both regarding her relationship with Prince Xaden and when any possible mating ceremony would be taking place

would not be as easy as they anticipated. This was not something that **could** just be resolved through simply asking questions.

Especially if no one in the palace seemed keen to even acknowledge Maeve's existence.

They needed a better plan.

"This isn't something we can do on our own, Bella insisted. "We have tried many times and failed. We need help"

Victoria cursed silently, biting her manicured thumb. However much she didn't want to **admit** it, she knew the girl was right. There was only so far her power as a second-class Lana could take her, and with her precious baby girl locked up in the capital's dungeon and Alpha Charles's daughter lacking the necessary fire to fully commit, the three ladies appeared to have come to an impasse.

They needed someone with the right influence to be able to pull this off

Someone close to the family who they also had access to

All of a sudden, a name launched to the forefront of her mind. A name she had heard her husband mention many a time before. He matched all of the needed qualifications that could help them.. but he was not an easy man to get in touch with, even with her husband's help. Not only was he a fellow alpha, but he was the head of one of the largest **and** most powerful **clans** in the entire kingdom, which practically secured his influence, if it hadn't already been for the fact that his daughter was married to one of the most powerful men in the land.

By **all** accounts, he had no reason to help them remove Maeve from the palace. He would gain nothing from conspiring against Prince Xaden and **risk** tarnishing his good name for a girl he had no connection to.

But damn it. they had to try

Anything to restore **Sarah's** freedom and right all of the wrongs against her family.

“I think I know someone who could help, Victoria murmured thoughtfully, catching the attention of the two younger girls. “But getting

to him won't be an easy **task**. I'd need to be careful in how I approach him about this.”

And for the first time since entering that cell, Sarah's eyes brightened. “Who?” she pressed. “Who is he?”

Look at her, Isabelle thought with a scoff. Daring to enjoy herself.

The afternoon of the banquet had come and, as a prettily-dressed Mauve mingled with Xaden and Charlotte on the far end of the banquet hall, engaging in private, light conversation with one another, the dubious first **Luna** Princess observed from a distance Delicately sipping at the glass of wine in her hand, she felt a familiar rage swell inside her, remembering the outcomes of their last encounters.

Maeve having the audacity to insult her in front of the royal family at the last banquet.

And then days ago in the hallway, when she dared to ignore a potential summons from the king himself,

She couldn't stand how self-important Maeve thought herself to be. There was no right for her to **talk** back against people with more influence and power than she could ever dream of having

This time, however, Isabelle felt absolutely certain she had come up with a plan that was sure to throw Maeve off her game. Something that she would never expect, nor something that Xaden could defend.

All of a sudden, there were small, timid tugs on the back of her sleeve.

“So why am I over here, again?”

Isabelle suppressed the urge to roll her eyes. She found herself in the company of the ditzy daughter of an alpha of some inconsequential **pack**, so much so that Isabelle could not even remember the name of it or where it was located. To some, she might be considered pretty, what with her short, curly strawberry-blonde hair and light green eyes, but her less-than-impressive intellect was a turn-off to many men.

In any other case, Isabelle would never dare to be caught with a girl like this, she served a greater purpose today.

“I told you..” she said with a forced smile, turning **back** to the woman in tow. “You are here to make friends with that black-haired girl sitting over there.”

Bewildered, the curly-haired girl followed Isabelle’s painted finger to the silhouette of Maeve, who was still lost in her conversation with Xaden and Charlotte, blissfully unaware she was the target of yet another plot

“She does look nice, I guess... she admitted. “But I already have lots of friends.”

“Well... not so much to make friends, per se, Isabelle drawled, suddenly taking on a deep expression of sympathy, enticing the girl to draw closer to her, “You see, she really wants Prince Xaden to like her, but she does not know what to do. You used to visit with him from time to time, didn’t you?”

The girl’s slight blush in response told her everything she needed to know.

However much **Xaden** tried to pretend he was chivalrous and righteous when it came to his feelings for Marve, Isabelle was more than aware of **his** frequent dalliances in the past. There had been many a time when she encountered lovestruck alpha daughters either outside the palace gates or out in the capital, asking to see the **prince** and demanding why he never called them again

And there had been a few instances where she'd **accidentally** caught fleeting glimpses of faint bruises scattered across **his** neck.

"Oh—yes," she stammered "Only a few times, though."

"Exactly! So, you should go over there and tell her all of the things you did to get him to like you."

The girl's eyes brightened. "Oh, you **mean** like how I..."

"I don't need the details, please," Isabelle quickly cut her off with a tight smile. "But do make sure to tell her everything. I'm sure she would greatly appreciate all the **advice** you have to offer her."

Glancing back toward Maeve, Isabelle suddenly realized that Xaden and Charlotte were getting out of their seats, leaving her all alone. Her heart leaped into her throat.

This was it!

"Go now," Isabelle urged, nudging the girl forward. "She's all alone."