

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 59

Much to her frustration, the girl decided to show some hesitance. “Maybe I shouldn’t. I’m supposed to be here with my new husband,” the girl muttered thoughtfully, glancing back towards the other side of the banquet hall where a young wolf, surrounded by a small crowd, loudly told his version of the **battle**. “He was one of the soldiers who fought on the border. I have to celebrate with him, too.”

“I didn’t pull you aside for you to worry about the details, Dalia. We are doing this to help her.”

The girl pouted. “My name is Delaney.”

Ugh—potato, tomato, Isabelle jeered internally. “Please,” she insisted. “She needs you.”

And with that final encouragement, the girl ventured toward Maeve, about to be an unwitting pawn

Isabelle’s plan.

Isabelle watched with bated breath, waiting for Delaney to make contact with Maeve, and desperately wanting to see the unabashed glaze of horror that would cross her face when she listened to those horrid tales. But then-

“Isabelle.” Henry intervened, suddenly materializing behind her, taking her by surprise. “Alpha Karl and his wife seek our company. I need you to come with me right now

Isabelle opened her mouth to protest, but the smile plastered on Henry's **face** left no room for debate. With a sinking feeling, she realized she had no choice but to obey. As she walked away with her husband, she put all her hopes and prayers into the will and ability of Xaden's former dalliance.

It was out of Isabelle's hands now

MAEVE POV

The moment I learned that there was going to be another **banquet** held at the royal palace, where our attendance was unfortunately deemed mandatory, my stomach sank with dread.

One week was not enough time for me to mentally recuperate from the events of the last one, after all the dirty tricks that Isabelle had pulled. Not to mention, I was nowhere near ready to face Alpha King Arlan **again**. Any courage that I'd **had** in my body had been all but used up that night.

If given the choice, I would have elected to stay home. Without question

Ob—how nice that sounded right about now. Locking myself **in** my bedroom and letting myself just relax in peace.

But I couldn't be selfish right now,

After all, this banquet was not held in my honor this time.

According to Xaden, this was to celebrate the brave wolves who fought against enemy Bear-Shifter forces and defended what was rightful werewolf territory. I was not clear on many of the details, but it sounded to be a very close battle as in, there had been a strong likelihood that we could have lost.

The thought was terrifying.

That was, if it hadn't been for the alpha heading the charge. Apparently, it was because of his remarkable display of **valiance** on the field that spurred our soldiers to push on, even in the face of defeat.

The power of an alpha is amazing, I couldn't help but think,

I still had yet to learn who that brave alpha was, but as I sat toward the back of the royal banquet hall—the room surprisingly filled with wolves of many different ranks—I had a feeling that I would find out before the afternoon was **over**. As I had gathered, most of those in attendance were either soldiers who had fought in last night's battle or were loved ones of the soldiers.

With that in mind, I was happy to attend and show my support for the brave men and women who kept **us safe** while we slept

It was the least I could do. And all I had to do was be there. I swelled with relief—I didn't have to subject myself to merciless interrogations or anything.

I could enjoy **myself** in **peace**,

“See?” Xaden smiled next to me, his radiating warmth infectious and comforting. This is hardly so bad, isn't it?”

I couldn't help but smile in return. He, admittedly, also contributed a great deal to my agreement to attend. “I admit, I like being able to hide among the crowds. It's an entirely different feeling to be here when I'm not the one in the spotlight.”

“But you look so stunning today,” he murmured, looking me over with heat in his eyes. “Everyone should be able to see you.”

My cheeks grew hot. I didn't think I looked any more pretty than usual. Knowing I would be surrounded by a larger group of people, I decided to opt for a simple, loose, **all**-black dress that exposed my shoulders and half of my back, while hiding my baby bump well enough under its billowy skirt. But

that didn't stop Xaden from gazing at me like I was the most lovely creature in the world.

"You two are **so** adorable." Charlotte drawled from beside us, a teasing smile lighting up her face when I looked away, embarrassed. "But remember, everyone is still **unaware** that you're poised to be Naden's mate-

Xaden frowned at the reminder.

"So you need to maintain discretion in public settings like this, if you want to wait to announce anything **until** after the baby **is** born." she continued.

"There are many here looking for something to **talk** about."

I bit my lip. She was right. That was one of the conditions we had all agreed upon.

"Very well," Kaden huffed, looking displeased, which prompted a giggle unbidden to slip past my throat.

The three of us continued our casual conversation when all of a sudden, the Luna Queen approached us, asking for her son and daughter to accompany her to meet with an acquaintance of theirs.

Despite being ready to go, Xaden and Charlotte stalled, glancing worriedly at me, making me realize they did not want to leave me alone. "Go on, it's alright," I tried to reassure them as I settled in my chair. "I can handle some time by myself"

Even with my approval, it took a few moments for them to relent but they eventually did, promising to return as soon as they were able

And so, I sat at that table alone, enjoying the solitude for **once**.

Here, I could just watch as everyone e once, I was alright with that.

While everyone else mingled with fellow attendees, not paying me any mind. Here, I could be a wallflower and, I was looking **at** everything and nothing all at once, blissfully ignorant of the rest of my surroundings and hopelessly unaware different sets of footsteps were making their way toward my table.

First, I **saw** a young woman with short, curly **hair** stop within feet of my table, preparing to talk, but then...

“Excuse me,” a deep, attractive voice spoke up beside me, unfamiliar, yet kind-sounding. “Is this seat taken?”