

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 65

### THIRD PERSON **POV**

Heavy footsteps strode into the threshold of a certain packhouse, somewhere beyond the walls of the capital. Long, slow, and creaking with exhaustion in every step. It had been quite an eventful day—not to mention, week—for Nicholas, and he was sure this was only just the beginning.

That night on the border that night had, admittedly, been hell.

He was no stranger to battle, but at the same time, he'd never fought when nearly every possible odd had been stacked to the skies against him. It had begun a mere patrol, which, according to protocol, meant that they could only **have** so many men and, to top it off, they had been caught off guard by **a** multitude of those hulking shifters lurking in the shadows.

Tonight, should have been a breeze compared **to** surviving that ambush. Who would have thought it would leave wounds that stung far worse?

As Nicholas ventured further into the lavishly decorated foyer, he was greeted by an omega servant. "Welcome back home, my Master-oh," they trailed off as their gaze lowered. "It appears to be time to redress your wound."

He blinked, glancing down at his abdomen where, sure enough, droplets of blood had begun to seep through his gauze. A small trinket he received

during the battle, where a sly bear snuck a lucky shot with a powerful swipe of his massive paw while he had been distracted.

“Oh... I hadn’t realized,” he said, still partially distracted as he rolled his shirt further up his toned torso while the servant quickly gathered the necessary first aid from a nearby closet. “My mind still seems to be stuck at the banquet.”

“I’m sure you were marvelous this afternoon, Master Nicholas,” the servant praised with pride as they carefully unwound the bandage. “Though, in that sense, it must have been just like any other banquet you’ve attended”

Any other banquet... Nicholas mused, holding out his arm while the servant redressed **his** wound. Indeed, that **was** how it had begun- just like any other banquet.

From the time he stepped foot inside the palace, he had been cornered into conversations with fellow alphas to discuss either what had happened on the border or their thoughts on what to expect from their enemy in the future. It had been important work, indeed, but there was only so much talk a man could take before it got tedious. So, he could not help it when his eyes began to wander the room

Time almost seemed to stop, however, the moment he laid eyes on this black-haired girl sitting **all** alone in the middle of that banquet hall. From afar, he could see her light eyes glow with this refreshing innocence unlike anything he’d seen in other women.

He was not a teenager. Not to mention, alpha blood coursed through his twenty-five-year-old body. He was supposed to be a force to be reckoned with

There were all of his accomplishments, back **in** academia and on the battlefield, which had now garnered not only the attention of his fellow soldiers but that of the royal family, as well. All of his hard work to make **a** name for himself, entirely separate from that of the glowing

patronage of his esteemed pack. He wanted to be an alpha worthy of the title, not just in blood, but a man others could look up

But now it seemed that all that hard **work**, all those hours of study and training was a complete waste of his time and effort. He was despicable  
Pathetic

Because here he was—smitten by a woman who already had a fiancé.

Nicholas was appalled with himself, grunting as he practically collapsed into a blue, tufted wingback armchair once the servant finished. Utterly disgusted. This couldn't be what he amounted to

Growing up the son of a widely renowned alpha in the Werewolf Kingdom, he'd known his father regaled in the attention it brought him from all corners of the land. He was someone to be covered by anyone and everyone—all alphas envied him. and all women adored him, and for good **reason**.

In his youth, his **father** was quite a force to be reckoned with, beholding strength and ambition nearly rivaling that of the royal family. Even the almighty Alpha King himself had no choice but **to** acknowledge this, which led him to become alpha to one of the most prominent and largest **packs** in the entire kingdom

His father, despite all of his outstanding qualities, **had** one fatal flaw that Nicholas could never find in himself to forgive.

No matter how happy he might have been in his family life. he could never seem to be fully satisfied. He was always looking for something, which kept him away from home quite often when Nicholas was but a toddler... more often than **anyone** would like to admit He would have given anything to have his father around, to have those memories **and** that relationship to think back on, but there would always be this empty spot where his father was supposed to be.

If it was in his power, Nicholas wanted to never be the cause of a family torn apart.

“There he is!” an aged, masculine **voice**, seasoned with years of experience, exclaimed from **afar** as he descended the grand staircase. “The man of the hour!”

He **was** a tall, broad-shouldered alpha who carried himself with pride and decorum unmatched by nearly anyone. It was apparent just by looking at him, with his sleek silvered hair and strong icy blue eyes that he was a force of nature, even in his older age. It would’ve been easy to guess just how formidable he might’ve been in **his** youth.

With sure, steady steps, the older alpha settled behind the chair Nicholas sat in. “Now, tell me, dear boy,” he said with an expectant **arch** of his brow, “how did it feel to be celebrated by the most powerful alpha in the entire kingdom?”

However, there was no response.

He cleared his throat. “Nicholas.”

“Oh–Father,” the young alpha stammered with a start, as if he had only just realized the older man’s presence at that moment. “Forgive me. I’m a little out of sorts at the moment. The banquet went well

The older man let out a baffled guffaw. “My son–out of sorts?” he repeated with a loud boom of his voice. “How **unheard** of What on earth could possibly have gotten you, of all people, so rattled?”

Nicholas suppressed a sigh. “I met someone today.”

There was a brief silence before his father spoke up.

“Someone?”

“A girl—at the banquet,” the young alpha continued. “She was...” he trailed off, wanting to sing every possible praise of her and not knowing where to start, but then he remembered himself and precisely why he could not do just that

“It doesn’t matter,” Nicholas muttered, trying with all his might to ignore the dull ache that panged in his chest and hopelessly failing. “I never caught her name, and she’s already promised to someone else

Maybe he should consider himself lucky **that** he never learned her name. Because then he would have yet another thing to mull over, apart from her lovely, delicate features.

He did not need another distraction.

All of a sudden, his father clapped a firm hand over Nicholas’s shoulder, squeezing in an attempt of reassurance. “Perhaps this was for **the** best,” he said, apparently either ignorant to the slight pain his son felt or trying his utmost to distract him from such thoughts. “After all, you mustn’t forget, there is still a girl out there waiting in the wings to meet you one of these days.”

The sudden reminder nearly jolted Nicholas **with a** start

“If all goes well on that front,” his father continued, pulling away, “you will forget all about that girl and soon have a wife of your own.”

Nicholas frowned pensively. Of course, how could he have forgotten?

For years, his father had teased Nicholas with the arrival of this mysterious girl. This girl who, by **all** accounts, could very well have been the perfect wife for him, for all he knew. And if there was anyone who knew what would be best for his future, it was his brilliant alpha father. But every time he would ask when he would be allowed to meet this potential future mate of his, he would always get the same answer

“Only when she is ready to meet you.”

It was the most cryptic answer his father could have possibly supplied him, and it always left Nicholas with more questions than answers

Why did their meeting hinge on her being ready? What was it about her that needed to be ready? Why couldn't they at least speak over the phone before their actual meeting, so they could see if all this waiting was a waste of time or not?

What if all of the hype surrounding their **supposed** arrangement only resulted in disappointment? Maybe she **had** a dreadful personality or hated all the things he loved.

Or worse... what if she did not think Nicholas was enough?

Just thinking about all of this made his temples throb.

Unbidden, his mind flashed back to the memory of the black-haired girl he'd met that day. She was reserved, yes, he could see that much, but when she did speak, her eyes glimmered with a bright curiosity that was lovely to behold. She seemed to want to learn more about him without trying to impress him. For goodness sake, she did not know who he was for the first half of their conversation and still spoke to him with kindness

She was genuine. A breath of fresh air in the stuffy room that was high society, and it **was** the first time he had felt something when speaking with a woman.

But she's going to be married—Nicholas had to keep reminding himself. She's a woman that I can never have.

As he rubbed at his temple with a frustrated huff, he rose from his chair. “Thank you, Father,” he allowed stiffly. “Perhaps this will, indeed, be the year that we can finally meet.”