

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 70

### MAEVE POV

“I’ve never been out without being recognized before, Charlotte said, strolling down the sidewalk of a busy Mona Road with a face-splitting grin as she eagerly took in all the sights. “It’s like I’m an entirely different person!”

And, as far as the public was concerned, she was.

After the bizarre request she’d made back at the mansion, Maggie seemed at a loss but was quick to do what she could for the alpha princess. It took some time, but she was able to conjure up a light, wide-brimmed **sunhat** that suited Charlotte beautifully. That paired with a lovely white sundress from my wardrobe and deliberately heavy makeup to hide her face, drastically transformed her right before our eyes

Soon enough, Princess Charlotte had become Peasant Cora, her new self-proclaimed alter ego. And she was enjoying every second of it.

Despite it all, I could not stop my own smile from forming. Although Charlotte was indeed the **crown** princess of our kingdom and oftentimes carried wisdom beyond her years, it was moments like this when I remembered that she was only nineteen years old.

She **was** still a child in so many ways. Her glee was so endearing and so sad, at the same time. As a princess, I could imagine she must not get a lot of moments to just enjoy herself. It even reminded me of the old days when getting to leave Moonstone would happen only once in a blue moon.

So, I was more than happy to do what I could for her. Anything to keep her from feeling even a pinch of what I'd felt growing up.

Maggie, on the other hand, was more of a nervous wreck than anything. While the princess and I strolled along Mona Road without much of a care in the world, she was more occupied with her new self-imposed job as a bodyguard.

"Oh-" she fretted with a deep grimace marring her aged face as she struggled to keep up with the two of us, "please don't stray too far, Your Hi-I mean- "

"What's there to worry about, Maggie?" Charlotte pressed, spinning around in the middle of the sidewalk like she'd entered a wondrous new world and letting her dress flow around her body. "I'm just an ordinary citizen named Cora, **minding** my own **business** in our beautiful capital city!"

Maggie looked keen to protest but thought against it, seeming to acknowledge the packs of strangers that surrounded us on all fronts.

Before long, we stumbled upon a quaint-looking clothing boutique that catered to all avenues of women's fashion, ranging from teenage **apparel** to maternity wear, which immediately sparked my interest

The three of us searched the **racks** until I managed to single out a dress, Emerald green, reaching just above the waistline past the knees with a ribbon sash.

Within minutes, I emerged from the dressing room wearing the dress, feeling pretty, but when I turned around to get feedback from my companions, I received **half** uncertainty, half jubilation. **Maggie's** eyes lit up once she **saw** me, like **always**, but Charlotte's lack of a bright reaction left much to be desired.

I tried to hide my grimace, scrunching the skirt between my hands. "It's ugly... isn't it?" I asked, feeling a little self-conscious.

“Not at all, **Miss Maeve!**” Maggie exclaimed, quickly waving her hands up to placate me. “You look gorgeous in that dress!”

Her impassioned declaration prompted a meek smile to settle on my face. It did help a little, but at the same time, I thought she might have been somewhat **biased**, considering she technically worked for me and **saw** me every day.

Charlotte nodded adamantly. “Maggie’s right,” she affirmed. “There’s nothing wrong with you or the dress at all. But..”

“**It’s just so formal.**” Charlotte trailed off, waving her hand through the air as she struggled to come up with a more appropriate word.”

I blinked. Formal? I’d thought that **was a good** thing, especially considering the family I would soon be marrying into.

“Do you know what I mean?” she asked, gazing at me worriedly as she **stepped** closer to me. “You’re a beautiful, young woman in what **are** supposed to be the best years of your life and **yes**, you look amazing in that dress, but you can do so much better! I think you would shine in something more trendy among girls our age,” she said, stepping towards a rack of clothes and pulling out a dress, “-like this.”

I trailed after her to take a closer look at the dress.

It was surprisingly simple. A maroon, plaid overall dress layered on top of a long-sleeved black dress—a pairing which I hadn’t thought to consider, but also looked quite stylish on the hanger. It was something even my sister would’ve never dared to try **on**, only ever wanting clothes that befit a princess,

Would something like this look **nice** on me?

Charlotte **and** Maggie seemed curious to find out... and so was I. Driven by my inner girl, I grabbed the dress from Charlotte's offering hands and disappeared into the changing room once again.

It wasn't long before I reemerged from the room, and I couldn't take my eyes off myself

Not only was it comfortable to wear and incredibly soft to the touch... but I looked **like** an actual twenty-year-old girl for perhaps the first time in my life. Not a servant, Luna Princess-to-be, nor an expecting mother.

**A** normal girl. My heart skipped a beat. I never thought I'd use those words to describe myself.

Grinning. I turned to Charlotte and Maggie, who wore similar **looks** of awe and glee. "I love it! Let's find more."

It must have been close to an hour or two, but it felt like mere minutes before we left the store, arms full of shopping bags. Maggie needed a moment to organize all the bags to be able to carry comfortably, so I was **fine** to wait.

However, Charlotte, in all her excitement, took off running down the crowded sidewalk, all but making me panic and run after her.

"Ch-Cora! Please, slow-" All of a sudden, my shoulder caught against that of an unfortunate passerby, making me stumble momentarily. In my haste, I'd failed to pay attention to where I was going.

"Oh-" I gasped, briskly dipping my head at the startled person whose shoulder I'd bumped. "I'm terribly sorry about that-"

But because I was in a hurry to catch up with an overzealous Charlotte in the middle of a crowded street, I couldn't tarry around with strangers. I had no choice but to avoid further contact with the stranger, not meeting their gaze or offering more as far as apologies went, **and** continued to run after the disguised princess.

If karma was real, it would come after me somehow, but I couldn't care.

I just needed to catch up with Charlotte!

I panted, struggling to catch my breath as I came to a stop next to the princess, who had stopped by another storefront. "You really should be careful in large public spaces like this. There's only so much Maggie or I can do if something were actually to happen."

Despite herself, Charlotte rolled her eyes at me playfully. "You really are starting to sound like a concerned big sister," she drawled with a teasing grin, and her comment **made** my heart skip **a** beat. It was the first time anyone had said that to her, and the first time I truly felt **like** a protective big sister.

**It was** such a wonderful, enlightening feeling.

"You don't need to worry about me so much, Maeve," she declared with mirth. "I am related to Xaden, after all.."

As she spoke, her voice slowly began to fade away, while my attention was diverted elsewhere.

I began to feel a small prickle in the back of my mind... a cold chill crawling up my spine in warning—something restless and **uneasy**, as if someone was watching me from behind. I recalled with dread that this felt very similar to that one morning in the palace after my first banquet

Similar to that morning when I had somehow managed to sense Isabelle's malicious presence before she showed **up**.

Was she here!

Holding my breath, I briskly turned around. Quickly, I scanned every passing face that I could see, **every** nearby shop window where people might be lurking, but the street came up clean. It was **a** completely ordinary scene.

Had I imagined it? Of course, it was entirely within the realm of possibility, but I couldn't **just** ignore my instinct. Not when it had been right the last time.

"Maeve," Charlotte's gentle voice spoke up, sounding a little worried. "Is everything okay?"

Warily, I glanced around the street one last time, but it was all for naught. I couldn't see anyone suspicious, nor a face that I would recognize. "Y-Yeah.." I muttered, distracted, until I felt her concerned hand touch my arm.

"**Maeve?**" Charlotte pressed.

I needed to stop. Take a breath and relax. No one was there.

"I'm sorry." I said, turning back **to** her with a small smile. "I just thought I dropped something from one of my bags, but everything's

I didn't want to lie to her, but this day in the capital had brought out such happiness in Charlotte that I didn't have the heart to frighten her with something that I couldn't fully explain. For all I **knew**, it could've been instinct, but it also **very** well could just **have** been an everyday case of paranoia.

Charlotte blinked. "Oh!" She took the opportunity to peer up **and** down the sidewalk, as well. "But nothing fell, right?"

I shook my head.

"What a relief! One less hassle for us all!"

All of a sudden, we heard harsh, ragged panting slowly approach us. Glancing behind us, a visibly out-of-breath Maggie came rushing over **as** quickly **as** she could whilst carrying **a** small load of bags.

“My word “she choked **out**, prompting Charlotte and I to try to **hide our smiles**, borne out **of** sympathy and slight amusement. “You ladies must remember **that I** am not quite as young as I used to be.”

“I’m sorry, Maggie, I apologized in earnest. “Are you alright?”

Her **face** reddened, although I wasn’t sure if it was because she’d overexerted herself or if it was embarrassment on her part. “Quite so,” she said. When Charlotte took **advantage** of the moment to snag a bag or two from the housekeeper’s hands, she feebly tried to protest

Charlotte, though, was not having it I want to carry these, she insisted, “and you are not to stop me

It was an order, and Maggie had no choice but to reluctantly obey. It was the only order Charlotte would make the entire outing.

As the three of us became engrossed in **conversation, moving** on to visit another shop, my paranoia eventually **faded** away. This was my first outing with people I considered my trends and I was having the time of my life.