

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 71

THIRD PERSON POV

She hadn't been **seen**.

It was close.. so, so close, but she **managed** to stay hidden.

Hiding around the corner of a beauty salon, Bella's heart pounded frantically against her chest as she watched a dreadfully familiar- looking girl walk down the sidewalk of the ever-popular Mona Road

All this plotting and communicating with Luna Victoria was taking a toll on Bella's precious mental health, so she'd decided to take a much-deserved shopping trip to treat herself for all her hard work. A few hours later and a few thousand dollars spent, thanks to her father's credit card, she was blissfully minding her own business in search of her next stop to splurge and shop the rest of her heart out... when it happened

The moment her dainty shoulder had been all but rammed **into**, almost throwing her to the ground and soiling all of the new, gorgeous -and expensive-outfits she'd bought, she shook with boiling rage. How could anyone dare to smack into her like that?!

Clearly, they either had no clue who she was or simply thought themselves better than her.

Whoever this person was would pay dearly for that grave mistake.

She'd swung her head in the direction of the lowlife responsible for the crime, ready to give them hell until she caught sight of dull, black hair that

dangled from this person's head. pale skin muddied with those hideous impurities called freckles.. and then, she heard that voice

That quiet, insecure voice that grated against her delicate eardrums like broken glass against a chalkboard.

That was a voice she would never forget.

But before she could take a moment to really take in the girl's face, to confirm if it was **in** fact who she thought it was, it was too late. The girl had already dipped her head in a pathetic attempt to apologize and returned to scurrying down the **sidewalk** without another word.

Stunned. Bella **had** slipped behind the corner of the nearest building and kept her eyes firmly locked on that girl's retreating figure. She watched **as** she met up with another young woman further down the street, appearing similar in age to that of Bella, with heavy eye makeup and a large sunhat obscuring the color of her hair. It was too far for her to clearly make out the face of this new girl, but there was something oddly familiar about her as well.

Something that she couldn't quite pinpoint yet.

But then, as if by some miracle of providence, the girl that knocked into Bella turned around, glancing around **in** her direction. And her heart felt ready to burst and drop at the same time.

That face.. it could only have belonged to her little plaything.

That damned Maudy Mae

So she was still in the capital, then. From what Bella recalled, that brat had never been the type to venture far beyond her territory, which told her that she had to have been in close proximity to the capital, if not living here, or knew somebody that could bring her **here**.

But the point was, she was here. And Bella was here. Perhaps she no longer needed to scheme her way into Princess Charlotte's circle.

Maybe this was her chance to get whatever information she needed.

Quickly, she pulled out her cell phone and dialed the number of her partner in crime. If there **was** anyone who could advise her on what she needed to **do**, it was the proud and conniving **Luna** of Moonstone, herself.

And it wasn't long before her posh, refined voice buzzed through the phone. "Bella. What is it!"

"I'm sorry for bothering you, Luna, but she.. I-

"Look," Victoria sharply cut Bella off. The vague sound of items being stuffed into a purse could be heard over the phone. "If you mean to waste my time, then we should really reschedule that for another day. Fin getting ready to visit Sarah."

Bella's heart lurched. "No, please, this is important!" she insisted in hushed tones, clutching her cell phone for dear life. "I-I think I saw Maeve.

All of a sudden, the line filled with a tense silence. And for a moment, she worried the call went dead, until the Luna spoke up once more.

"Are you absolutely sure?"

Bella's mouth opened, poised **to** answer, but it **was** like her throat closed up. **Was** she confident that she saw Maeve? It certainly looked like her **and** sounded like her but the dirty, little creature that lingered in **her** memories had never been so cheerful as the girl she saw walk down the street.

Frankly, she could not recall even the slightest **instance** where Maeve smiled or fully lifted her eyes in her presence. Part of her didn't think it was even possible for someone like her.

But the resemblance was so uncanny along with the fact that she was accompanied by that heavyset woman who also looked so very familiar.. whom she had met that fateful afternoon in Prince Xaden's mansion **those** weeks ago.

It had to be her.

"Bella, if you are not certain, then I implore you to

"It's her," Bella blurted out, despite still struggling to come to terms with what she'd seen with her own eyes, still trying desperately to replay those quick moments to **analyze** those features even more. "She was in the company of Prince Xaden's housekeeper. I'd recognize those two anywhere. But

"But!" Victoria repeated. Her impatience spoke louder than **anything** else. "For goodness' sake, spit it out."

"There was **a** third girl," Bella admitted sheepishly, feeling conflicted. "A girl I can't quite place. She has a face that I feel like I've seen before.

There was **a** pregnant pause before Victoria spoke up again. "Is there a chance it was someone close to the royal family? Could it even have been the princess, herself?"

"I'm.. not sure," Bella said, biting her lip. "Does it matter if it was her?"

"Of course, it does, Victoria spat. "If there's even the slightest **chance** that **it** could be **her**, then you should verify that as soon **as** possible. If it's, in fact, the princess, then that means Prince Xaden is still with Marve

That was a good point. It would prove that Princess Charlotte had been lying before, in order to keep her brother's affair a secret.

"Well?" The Luna prodded. "What else did you see? How far along did that wench look to you?"

Bella's throat ran dry as something sank inside her. Maeve's pregnancy was crucial knowledge that they all needed. The closer she got to giving birth to that accursed pup, the more grave their chances were to succeed.

Once **that** brat was born, it would be virtually impossible to separate Maeve and Prince Xaden

"It all happened so quickly," she said weakly as her hand trembled around the cell phone. "She was gone before I was able to get a good **look** at her-

There was a sharp, irritated huff of breath over the phone. "For the love of Victoria began before she cut herself off and composed herself. "Are they still there, at least!"

"Yes!" Bella exclaimed, unable to hide her relief as she peered down the street in the direction the three women had gone. "**I saw** them enter a boutique just up the street. They're still inside, I swear."

"Good," the Luna replied briskly "Then we still have a chance"

"What should-?"

"Follow them, of course, Victoria ordered without a moment's hesitation, which Bella was careful to heed, "but make sure to keep a low **profile**. Soon enough, they'll lower their guard and speak freely. Find out what you can. We need to ensure that no mating ceremony has taken place yet."

Bella swallowed hard, nodding her head. The weight of everything fell on her shoulders now. For all they knew, they would never get a chance like this again. "I understand, Luna."

"We're counting on you, Bella. Do not disappoint us."