

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 19

Maeve POV

It was like I was trapped in a nightmare,

Saraly was not in confinement. She was not locked up on Moonstone grounds like Father **had** sworn she would be to Xaden. She was not supposed to be anywhere near me and yet here she was, less than twenty feet away and looking as real as the ground beneath me and the air that halted in my throat

I did not want to see her ever again. And I thought she felt the same way.

She frowned. “You didn’t seriously just freeze on me, did you?”

“What are you doing here?”

“What, this is the greeting I get from my own big sister?” She dared to look affronted, feigning innocence. “How rude. And here I was, daring to worry about you these last couple of days, all alone in that big, shiny, old **palace.**”

That was a lie if I ever heard one. I kept my guard up. I could not trust Sarah as far as I could throw her,

“L... I wasn’t aware you thought of me like that.” I stammered.

“That hurts, Maeve. There’s nothing wrong with **a** little bit of sisterly rivalry.”

Sisterly rivalry? Is that what she calls the hell she put me through?

Disgruntled. I turned my focus to the rest of her body. Nothing about her appearance indicated that she had ever been confined—her hair was nicely curled against her shoulders, her skin was nice and **clean** and free of any dark undereye circles, and she wore one of her favorite pink dresses. Not only that, but she had **a** couple of shopping bags in hand as I **did**, all from her usual boutiques.

This was just like another day in the capital for her.

“You’re out shopping?” I asked in disbelief.

Sarah grinned. “Isn’t it great?” she beamed. “Father didn’t have the heart to keep me locked up at home all that time, and once he saw how sad it made Mother and I, he let me go. He even **said** I could visit the capital to make myself feel better”

I was stunned, feeling nauseous and bitter.

Of course, all it took was some tears from his precious daughter and she could gallivant however she desired, **even** after embarrassing him in public as she did.

Even so much as talking back would have earned me a night in solitary confinement,

All of a sudden, Sarah exploded with laughter

I regarded her warily. “What’s so funny?”

“Look at that dull thing you’re wearing,” she exclaimed, gesturing to my outfit with a sneer. “That’s no better than **what** you wore in Moonstone all those **years**—no respectable woman of status would dare to be caught wearing something so plain in public. So... even after all that trouble you caused at my birthday **party**, you really did end up Prince Xaden’s servant, after all,”

I **wasn't** sure if she meant to lower my spirits or if she genuinely believed what she said.

"You know, I would feel sorry," Sarah drawled, "but I **think** this is a good way for you to atone for your wrongdoings."

"What happened was not my fault."

Contempt sprawled across her face, hidden behind a polite smile. "You can think what you want. It doesn't make it any less true." I bristled with frustration. Talking with her did not do me any **favours**, nor had it ever.

"Father is going to be disappointed," she **continued**, sounding falsely downhearted. "He was so sure you were going to become Prince Xaden's Luna, so he thought to move all your things at home into a much nicer room." She shrugged casually. "I guess I'll have to tell him it **was** all for naught.

I had enough. "I am no one's servant," I said firmly, but shook **where** I stood. "Not for you or anyone else."

With an exaggerated look of bafflement, Sarah made a show of peering around the square. "Well, I certainly don't see the Alpha Prince anywhere. I thought that **after** that whole display, he'd be stuck to your side like glue."

"He **has** important things to do." I insisted, wanting to defend Xaden.

"Yes, find as many excuses as you want," she **said**, trying to appear sad for me, and I felt mild doubt start to creep in. "But it looks like you were tossed away like—"

"I'm all done, Miss Maeve."

Maggie's sudden interruption was the greatest blessing I could have asked for in that moment. I turned to greet her, thankful for her presence.

Approaching with a basket full of produce and a few **hunks** of wrapped meat, she stared curiously at Sarah. “Do you know this **woman**?” Maggie asked me.

I bit my lip. “She...”

Sarah looked astonished. “Unbelievable,” she scoffed with a grin. “He even **assigned** you a babysitter to ensure you don’t **run away**?”

I **flinched**. I didn’t want to believe her... I **didn’t**. I couldn’t.

“You have some nerve, young lady!” Maggie scolded, appalled by my sister’s behavior, tucking **me** behind her short frame. I was so relieved I had someone on my side—it helped me realize Sarah’s way of treating me was cruel, unusual, and something I should not stand for. “How dare you address Prince Xaden’s Luna in such a manner!”

The haughty look on **Sarah’s** face fell. “What did she call you...?”

Maggie stood **tall** and proud. “Miss Maeve is our Luna,” she repeated.

“You don’t know **what** you’re saying,” Sarah retorted, quiet and conflicted.

“For your information, I have had the pleasure of serving His Royal Highness for over a decade. I can read that man like the back of my hand. I know when something genuinely takes his interest or if it’s nothing more than just a passing fancy.”

In light of Sarah’s stunned silence, Maggie continued to speak.

“He treasures Miss Maeve more than anything else in the world,” she praised with the passion of the gospels. “He wants only the best for her, whether it be clothes, **food**, or treatment. And you’d best pray that the Moon Goddess protects the poor soul who **dares** to hurt her in any **way**.”

I couldn’t read the look on Sarah’s face. I got the sense that that only meant trouble further down the line.

And, just like at her party, I was swarmed with guilt that I **couldn't** justify.

Maggie gently grabbed my arm to usher me away, "Let's go, Miss Maeve," she said firmly. "We have better places to be."

The last thing I saw as I tersely departed the market with Maggie was my sister, a lost look in her dazed eyes and her bags of clothes fallen in heaps on the ground.

Third Person POV

As Maeve and Maggie left the vicinity of the farmer's market, both on edge and lost in their private thoughts and conversation following that surprise **encounter**, **Sarah** stood alone, surrounded by the hustle and bustle of fellow shoppers and merchants.

To an outsider, this looked like any ordinary scene in the **capital**.

What everyone was blissfully unaware of, however, was the unbridled rage that flared within that lone e girl. Blind and lost in her loathing, she was oblivious to the existence of anyone else in that market.

All she could see was a servant girl who got more than she deserved.

A servant girl who stole the life **that Sarah** believed she should have had.

She could not fathom it—how was it possible for a lowly, illegitimate burden such as Maeve to have such good luck?

Sarah had tried everything in her power to ensure she had the best chance to impress Prince Xaden by taking out her competition, but she had never foreseen that the Alpha Prince himself would be the one to put a stop to her plan.

All because Maeve had seduced him that night.

And now, because of that night, she was set to become the next Luna Princess—a crown that **Sarah** believed was her due right.

None of this would have happened if it hadn't been for that pregnancy. Without the baby in the way, she knew that Xaden would never have protected **Maeve** as fiercely as he did. And **that** baby was the only thing that tied Maeve to Sarah's self-proclaimed destiny as the Alpha Prince's cherished Luna

If the baby were out of the picture, everything would go back to how it should have been.

Sarah was ready to take what was rightfully hers, no matter who stood in her way.