Chapter 1

High Princess Luna Selene of Equestria, Regent of the Night and Avatar of the Moon, slammed her door with all the might that her bloated royal title commanded… Right in her sister's face.

"Luna! Open this door right now! We're not done talking about this!" Celestia's voice rang sternly despite the muffle caused by the thick darkwood door. A few knocks of her hoof and an irritated shout later, and Luna's ears pricked at the sound of the elder alicorn stomping off.

Wiping away angry tears, Luna lifted herself off of the cold polished stone of her bed chambers. She ruffled her wings and steadied her shaking limbs, trying to raise herself above the sheer rage and indignity she felt… It did not work. Luna let out a magically enhanced, inequine scream before blasting away one of her many dressers. Turquoise magic tinged the air as she stomped to look at herself in the mirror… her pitiful, so very ragged self. Dark make-up streaked down her cheeks and muzzle, her normally beautiful turquoise eyes were bloodshot and narrowed with rage, and her light blue hair was sticking every which way, some even stuck to her damp face. Luna resumed her pitiful sobs, letting her wings hang limply from her sides as she allowed any and all decorum to fall away.

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High Princess Celestia Sol of Equestria, Regent of the Day and Avatar of the Sun, did not know what to do about the moody and inconsolable younger sister across the royal castle.

Luna's behavior had only worsened the past few months, and Celestia was entirely clueless as to what could be causing it. The young mare of the night had once been joyous and bubbly, curious and eager… A prankster, a wonderful filly. But now, as she had aged and brought the night for the ponies of Equestria, the lunar alicorn had grown bitter and cold. Celestia had tried everything, from appealing with gifts to holding festivals in her honor! Even sisterly bonding as they once did had not brought Luna out of her funk, and it was only getting worse, to the point Celestia could not even ask her sister to attend balls and perform her duties, beyond the one thing that seemed to bring the younger sister any joy… Tending the night.

Their conflict had reached a head when Luna had intentionally spoiled her sunset summit with a few of the growing noble houses, who had travelled to the fair Everfree Fields castle to visit and find ways they could improve the recently reformed nation of Equestria even more. Luna had attended, begrudgingly. It all seemed well enough, until Lady Primrose had commented about Luna needing to 'smile more', which caused the younger alicorn to hold the noblepony by her neck until Celestia forcefully dispelled her magic. Luna had stormed off, leaving Celestia to apologize and smooth things over before chasing after her wayward, violent sister…

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Luna had never, once in her entire life, crossed horns with Celestia. It scared her, made her feel… wrong. After sobbing away her sorrow, she had taken a good look at herself and wondered one thing,

“What… What am I doing?!” Luna exclaimed, gripping her head to drown out the growing dark thoughts in her mind. Her breathing became shallow, her world turning on its side as the shadows began to move, creeping towards her. Luna screamed, and lit her horn, eyes darting to and fro to try and make sense of what she’d seen. However, just as soon as the hungry shadows had begun crawling like ink in water, Luna blinked and it was just… gone, over. Her panic subsided and she sniffed, lifting herself to her hooves again.

In her hurt, Luna had also hurt others… And the shadows were just the start of it, she knew it.

“What is… happening to me…?” Luna gasped, looking back at where the shadows had begun to slither to her. She was certain then, that something was terribly wrong with her. The dark alicorn stood in one spot for many seconds, before she turned and her horn was aglow. Various items floated in the air, all racing towards a dark blue cloth bag she’d quickly snagged from her wardrobe.

The dark thoughts, the growing bitterness… Luna just- She needed to get *away.* Logic was perhaps not her strong suit in that moment; she had almost attacked her sister during their argument! She had *choked* a noblepony! All Luna knew was that she needed distance… Just for a little while…

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Celestia had waited long enough. The solar alicorn trotted dutifully towards the Night wing of the castle, brows furrowed with determination. This had to stop… Their bickering and fighting had gone on for far too long, and it was time to resolve their differences as sisters did. However, after finally stopping at Luna’s door and knocking, silence reigned. The silent treatment she could handle; she’d just unlock the door’s mechanisms from the inside with her magic… Easy as pie.

Luna was not to be found. In the bed, in the wardrobe, under the desk… Celestia felt a tinge of worry rise in her chest as she nearly tossed everything in the room upside down trying to find that darn alicorn.

“P-Perhaps she went to get a midnight snack…?” Celestia mused aloud, wings twitching nervously. As she turned to look elsewhere, a small sound pricked her ears. She looked down to see a small, slightly damp note paper that had fluttered to the ground. Alighting her horn, Celestia gently picked it up, and read the four words scrawled on it with messy ink.

I love you.

- Luna

Panic had nearly fully set in at the sight of those vague precious few words. This could mean *anything…* With fear for Luna’s safety, she collapsed to her haunches. This was no time for frozen panic, however. Luna *needed* her. The past decade of self-imposed training spurred her back to her

hooves. Celestia quickly got her breathing under control, and sucked in a breath of steadying calm.

“GUARDS! TO ME!”

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Luna had been flying for only a few minutes before she looked behind her to see a sunny golden aura-shield covering the Everfree Fields castle, and teams of pegasi beginning their patrol runs. Luna had to give Celestia credit there; she didn’t expect her sister to know she’d left that soon. Despite the scary scene behind her, Luna was determined. She had to find… whatever it was. Herself, maybe?

At only twenty-five, she was not as strong as her elder sister, not yet. However, Luna was still leagues more powerful than most unicorns that were three times her age, and a mighty flier as well. All three of her magicks would serve her well enough on her sudden journey, and she felt their strength as she willed herself not to go running back to Celestia. This was something Luna had to do herself, without the light of the sun smothering her own gentle beams into shadows.

So, she flew, farther than she had in an entire decade. What was there to doubt? Luna felled the Chaos Lord Discord at only fifteen, and stamped insurrections and rebellions into the mud with her own hooves while her sister slept under her moonlight. She was High Princess Luna Selene of Equestria, Regent of the Night and Avatar of the Moon, and she would find the answers she needed one way or another.

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