

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 18

Maeve POV

“Sire?” Maggie gaped.

My mouth dropped open. He bought everything?

“Y–You bought all of those clothes anyway?” I asked, baffled. That white-haired woman he’d spoken to inside the store must have been the **owner**. “Everything?”

Kaden smirked in response.

“That wasn’t necessary...”

“Of course it was,” he insisted. “You looked marvelous in every single one of those dresses. It would have been a crime to let them gather dust in **that** store.”

I didn’t know what it was like to wear clothes for the sake of fashion. I’d never been allowed the privilege of having the choice. Everything I had ever worn in my life was either my sister’s old, torn hand-me-downs or the uniforms that the omega. servants would wear as they worked around the house.

For me to have **so** many clothes than I knew what to do with didn’t feel **right**

To be honest, I thought they should have gone to someone who actually needed them.

“I couldn’t possibly wear all of that…” I murmured, fidgeting with my fingers.

“Miss Maeve,” Maggie said with a tone that meant she was serious, “you forget that you are His Highness’s intended Luna. Princess. There’s no such thing as having too many clothes.”

Biting my lip, I reluctantly nodded.

Evidently, I had a lot **to** learn when it came **to** the needs and wants of an Alpha Prince’s Luna. I didn’t necessarily agree with what they had to say yet, but I forced myself to take it. This was my chance to live my life and spoil myself for once.

I gazed at Xaden. “Where do you want to go next?”

“I’m afraid I have to leave,” he admitted, somewhat annoyed. “I could only squeeze in enough time to visit you here.”

Xaden looked heavy with guilt. “I’m sorry, Maeve,” he murmured, pulling me into a hug, **and** it felt like I was being embraced by a warm blanket on a cold winter’s night. I sighed, wrapping my arms tightly around him, savoring the feeling of his heartbeat against my cheek and not wanting to let go.

“Please go ahead. You must have so many things to **deal with** everyday.” I whispered.

Before he pulled away, I felt **him** squeeze me one last time. And, looking into his eyes, **I** saw his reluctant pain.

I tried to ignore the dull ache in my chest when I watched him walk **away**. It wouldn’t do me any good to be so clingy… he was a busy man, the best Prince. He had a lot on his plate and he didn’t need me to make things harder on him.

With a quick shake of my head, I forced myself to smile.

“Where should we go now, Maggie?” I asked, turning to her. I felt comfortable enough to defer to her judgment.

She took me by the arm with a knowing sparkle. “Let me lead the **way.**”

Maggie came to a **stop and** pointed across the street. “**That’s** what I want to show you, Miss Maeve”

Curious, I followed the direction of her finger and saw a corner store with large, open windows and various **toys** and **furniture**

on display. Glancing up at the sign overhead, I read the big, bold words: Pampered Pups.

Oh, she had led me to a baby store. I suddenly felt warm inside.

“**Shall** we?” Maggie asked.

I smiled. “Let’s go.”

The moment we entered the store, it was like we were transported to another world. Soft lullabies played overhead as I looked on in awe. surrounded by plush blankets, cozy pillows, and everything nice in between. It **was** a baby’s dream come to life.

I did not know if Father ever spoiled me with such things, but...

I stopped myself.

Spoil? What’s wrong with spoiling my baby?

Babies were born to be spoiled and pampered! Father would have certainly used it against me, though. Another reason for me to become indebted to him. I had no doubt about that.

I refused to be anything like my parents had been to me. I wanted to give my baby the best life he could ever **want**. I could just picture it: my little boy

curled up in a blanket soft as clouds as he slept without a worry in the world.

Because he had someone to protect him.

“Isn’t it adorable, Miss Maeve?” Maggie asked, brimming with pride. “As soon as I heard of the pregnancy, I knew I had to bring you here.”

My mouth had **fallen** open as I tried to take in as **much** as I could at first glance. “It’s bigger than I expected,” I gasped.

How was I supposed to know what I needed to get?

“Hello, ladies, and welcome to Pampered Pups!” A young-looking saleswoman wearing a muted, mint green uniform shirt approached us with a big, bright smile. “How **can** I help you both today?”

I was a nervous wreck. I wanted to see what they offered but I was a little paranoid after that last store.

Calm down. Maeve, I thought, not all salespeople are the same.

After getting an encouraging nod from Maggie, I shyly turned back to the clerk. “Um.. where can I find clothes for baby **boys**?”

“**Ah**, that would be to the right over here. Follow me, please.”

As she led us through the store. I got the chance to gloss over more items. We passed by quite a few cribs and cradles, all of different sizes and shapes, and some cute, little plush toys stacked all together. One small toy caught my eye in particular—a wolf with dark, scraggly fur and big, intense, green eyes.

The wolf bore a slight resemblance to Xaden, I couldn’t help but think, and I fought to resist a grin.

“Is this your first?”

I blinked, startled by the unexpected question. “Pardon...?”

The clerk glanced back at me. “Is this your first baby?” she repeated patiently.

“Oh...yes, Was it that obvious?”

“Just a little.” she said, wrinkling her nose, the comers of her lips lifting with sympathy, “You came in looking a little overwhelmed by everything.”

My face grew red. Her intuition was almost spot on.

“I’ve never shopped for a baby before, I admitted. “All of this **is** very new to me.”

“Don’t worry about it. All first-time parents are nervous,” she kindly reassured. I could sense transparency when she spoke, as if it came from firsthand **experience**, and I felt some nerves start to melt away, like I could trust her judgment. “It’s something you’ll become more comfortable and confident with as the baby gets here.”

“Really?” Hope began to bubble inside me, but I wasn’t quite at ease yet.

The clerk nodded. “Just remember to keep in mind that no parent is perfect, **and** that should not be your goal. All you need is your baby **to** be happy and healthy”

I couldn’t help but think the two were counter-intuitive. If you wanted your baby to be happy, shouldn’t you be the best parent you could be

“How do you do that?” I asked.

“For starters,” she teased as she came to a stop, and pulled up a small, pale blue piece of fabric from a display table, “**you** buy them what they need.”

It was a onesie, I realized, and seeing it only made everything seem more real.

My baby was going to fit into that, one day.

Trembling. I **took** it out of her offering hands and rubbed the soft, delicate cloth between my fingers. It really was the smallest thing...no longer than the length of my forearm. I couldn't believe **something so** small had been one of my worst fears in the beginning.

Tears dripped down my cheeks as a short laugh slipped past my lips. It was ridiculous in hindsight. My baby was nothing to be scared of

He was something I wanted to cherish

I felt Maggie's comforting hand on my back. Meanwhile, the saleswoman looked at me with gentle patience. "Are you alright?" she asked.

Nodding, I wiped my eyes dry. "I want to see more, please."

The saleswoman smiled. "Okay. We have plenty for you to see."

We were in that store for what seemed like hours, looking at all the onesies and toys that we could find. In my mind, I could envision my baby boy wearing each one of those outfits and playing **with** every one of those stuffed animals and games. We ended up buying more than I'd expected, but Maggie was more than happy to carry the bags for me.

As we prepared to leave Mona Road, we had to walk through a farmer's market. The wonderful smell of fresh fruits and all those brightly colored vegetables tickled my senses and I felt my mouth start to water

"Oh-"Maggie suddenly exclaimed, recalling something, "is it alright if we walk around here for a moment, Miss Maeve? I wanted to buy some quality cuts of beef."

I blinked. "Beef?" I repeated. "What for?"

"For you and the baby, of course! It's rich in proteins **and** nutrients that will help the little one stay strong and healthy."

The doctor's words from that morning suddenly flashed in my mind...but what Maggie **had** said sounded awfully appealing to me. As long as I ate foods that benefited my baby, everything would be fine.

I think.

Regardless, I gave Maggie my approval and followed her further into the market. Once we reached the butchery section of the market, however, I was hit with the strong scents of fish and cured meats...and...and blood, and I felt my stomach start to Twist.

I needed to leave.

"Maggie," I mumbled, feeling sick, "I can't stay here. I-I need fresh air..."

She quickly turned around and gasped. "Miss Maeve, you've gone green," she winced "Please, don't worry about me. Go rest **and** I'll find **you** once I'm done here"

That was **all** I needed to hear.

I quickly rushed away as **soon** as I could and found a bench to rest some distance away. Taking long deep breaths **in** and out... and in and out...seemed to help, thankfully, so I could avoid throwing up in front of all of Mona **Road**.

I had just **straightened** myself up, when all of a sudden...

"Well, well, well," a snide voice drawled, **and** my skin crawled **with** apprehension. "Look what the wolves dragged in"

I didn't need to turn around to see who that voice belonged to. But I couldn't understand. She was supposed to be confined to the Moonstone estate after that catastrophic meltdown at her birthday party.

What was Sarah doing in the **capital**?