

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 20

Xaden POV

Today had been another long day. From early morning until the dead of afternoon, I'd been in and out of the palace. Trapped between meetings **with** government officials and my royal duties **as** Alpha Prince, I hardly **had** any time to myself.

Then again...

When do I ever? I thought snidely.

Still, despite everything, I forced myself to take some time off throughout the day. But not for myself. For her.

For Maeve.

There was something about being by her side—even just being able to see her in front of me with my own eyes—that soothed the restless spirit inside me. Her scent, of course, was mouth-watering and completely mesmerizing, but this **had nothing** to do with my physical attraction to her.

I wanted to be with her. So much so that I would have rather taken passing moments than go hours without ever seeing her.

Never in my life had I ever felt that way about someone but I never wanted to let that feeling go again.

This was why I found myself filled with unusual energy, despite my tedious day, and the car ride to the mansion could not **have** been any longer. The moment we rolled to a stop, I all but threw myself out of the car and bolted up the steps and into the foyer.

Immediately, Maggie was there to greet me... but not Maeve.

“Welcome home, Your Highness,” she said with a low bow.

“Where’s Marve?” I asked, trying to appear nonchalant, but brimming with anticipation. “I’d like to see my Luna.”

My Luna. The words alone made my heart soar.

“Miss Maeve went upstairs to rest in your quarters. She’s had a long day on her feet and her exhaustion finally caught up with her,

Admittedly, my spirits sank a little after hearing that. I’d been looking forward to asking about the rest of her day and the sorts of things she and Maggie had bought at Mona Road—to commit to memory the way her eyes sparkled, the bashful, giddy smiles, the youthful blush against **her** adorable freckled skin.

Still, it **warmed** me up to hear she could relax in her new home.

I nodded. “I’m glad she’s taking it **easy**,” I murmured, shrugging off my **coat**. “I’ll check on her and see how she’s doing.”

“Um...sire, if I may...”

The nerves in her voice made **me** turn around “What is it, Maggie?”

“Something happened in the square that I think you should know about,” she uttered with a grimace. “Miss Maeve seemed a bit reluctant to want to bring it up with you, but I assured her I would handle it”

Unease began to boil inside me. “What happened?”

“She encountered her sister.”

My stomach sank with dread. Alpha Burton had sworn to me he would punish Sarah accordingly, but I should have known. better than to trust that fool and leave Maeve by herself. “Sarah was in the capital? Alone?”

“It appeared so.”

“**Maeve** didn’t get hurt, did she?” I questioned frantically.

Maggie’s eyes widened and she held up her hands in an attempt to placate. “Oh, no, my Lord—nothing happened of the sort at all. But she spoke down on Miss Maeve with especially callous language.

I could only imagine the sort of things she **said**. The tantrum at her birthday party gave me enough hints.

“**Thank** you, Maggie,” I said, tightening my jaw. “I’ll take care of it.”

Once I dismissed her, I rushed to my bedroom and, sure enough, Maeve was curled up on the bed, still in her clothes from earlier, in the middle of what looked like a peaceful nap. I brushed some hair out of her face, unable to help myself, and she hummed, melting into my touch.

Somehow, she had become my whole heart in just a matter of days. And I would be damned if I ever let her experience another day of anguish at the hands of her family ever again.

I needed to know why they all treated her so poorly.

With clenched fists, I left the bedroom and encountered Prime Beta Burke in my study.

“Burke, please find all possible existing records you can that **pertain** to Alpha Burton or his household,” I ordered, feeling a surge of newfound vigor.

“Spare no effort. I want to uncover any secrets they’re hiding.”

I was going to get to the bottom of this, whether Maeve wanted me to or not.

Maeve POV

“Here are the last of the deliveries, Miss Maeve, Maggie **said**, smoothing out the dresses as they lay flat across the bed. “I have to admit, those pretentious boutique workers made good work ensuring everything was wrapped carefully and delicately.”

That’s only because they knew it was a shipment for Xaden, I wanted to say.

Instead, I bit my cheek. There was nothing to be gained from grumbling.

Besides, this was Xaden’s gift to me...and that, alone, filled me up with joy.

True to his word, everything I had tried on from this morning’s shopping trip in the capital was delivered to our doorstep in pristine condition, enclosed in the loveliest boxes and tied with the largest ribbons and bows.

Unpacking everything was a feat in and of itself, but Maggie seemed to find pleasure in revealing the clothes as if they were ancient fossils to be dug **up**. With her infectious excitement, we unearthed everything in what felt like record time, left with a pile of discarded boxes in the corner of the room

And here we were, with the dresses sprawled across the bed. Each one was more exquisite than anything I’d ever seen **at** home.

A slightly sweaty Maggie stared proudly at our handy work. “Prince Xaden indeed made a wise decision to save such beautiful attire for you.

“They really are stunning.” I admitted, glossing over the bed with wide eyes.

And they're all for me!

Evidently, I had a **lot** to live up to if everyone believed I needed such a collection.

"All for his Luna. **But** these clothes won't put themselves away, Maggie announced, swinging open the grand wardrobe. "Let us get started."

Several servants entered the room, assisting the **two** of us as we tediously and carefully organized the wardrobe to accustom every new article of clothing to that of Xaden's. We were quick to learn where some dresses fit and others didn't that some colors clashed horribly with others... but we overcame those hurdles without issue.

It took some time, but once we were finished, it looked like a work of art. I couldn't help but **admire** all of our hard work. Seeing my clothes mixed together with Xaden's...it made the reality of my situation finally start to sink in.

I really was going to live with him from now on. The thought made my heart race.

We were going to be a family. A **real**, loving **family**.

All of a sudden, I felt someone press a kiss against my cheek. Surprised, I whirled around and was met with Xaden's face.

"You're **back**," I said with a smile.

He nodded, smiling back, but some distance in his eyes concerned me.

"Is everything alright?"

"**Maggie** told me about what happened after I left," he **revealed**.

"Oh." I paused, down casting my eyes. "Yes, she did say she would do that."

He sighed. "I cannot believe the nerve of your father," he grumbled. "And after that little groveling display he made at that party. I should **have** known it was all talk—though, I'm sure it didn't take much to sway him either way."

I averted my eyes. "That's how it's always been," I said softly. "I'm used to it."

"It's all in the past now," he declared fervently, grabbing my hands and gently caressing my knuckles. "You don't ever have to see your lecherous sister or father again if that's what you want."

"I don't know if that's possible."

"And why wouldn't it be?"

I bit my lip. "I have to return to Moonstone to pick up some belongings," I admitted.

"Are they items you desperately need?"

I nodded adamantly. "I left a necklace in my room... it's one of my most cherished possessions. I need it back."

He gazed at me, determination straightening his features. "I'll go with you."

That made me hesitate. His presence would undoubtedly be a comfort as I ventured into that unwelcoming, hostile territory. but I couldn't help but feel that it also might complicate things with my family. "I can-

"Please, don't fight me on this," he urged. "I'm not letting you go alone."

His unwavering sober expression prompted me to say yes.

And the subsequent relief that overwhelmed his face was **a** surprise to see. **His** disdain for **Sarah** and the rest of my family was not a secret, but I got the hint that there was something else going on.

“You seem tense.” I murmured. “Did something else happen?”

He let out a breath. “I was able to find the vendor who sold those drinks from that night. Those Ylang shots,” he muttered, bristling with growing agitation, and hearing that name again made me sick, “**are** a plague on our society.”

“What are you going to do?”

“Ban them, if possible. But chances are I’ll only be able to go as far as to restrict its sale. It’s supposed to be used recreationally. for consenting couples,” he said, rubbing the back of his neck, “but it’s being used more and more to target unsuspecting women

That **was** supposed to be used between couples?

I remembered how I felt under the control of that drug—all helpless and desperate for relief, not caring who came my way... I wanted to throw myself at any man who even looked my way. That was a feeling I never wanted to experience again.

And I didn’t want anyone else to ever have to undergo what I went through.

Tersely, I nodded. If anyone could ban those shots, it was Xaden.

But there was one thing that I couldn’t wrap my mind around, no matter how much I tried. When Sarah gave me that drink, she knew **what** it was, what it would do. She watched with malicious pleasure as the Ylang slowly took hold of my mind **and** my body.

How on earth did my little sister know about such a drink?