

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 22

Maeve POV

No, no, no Xaden muttered incoherently, the color draining from his face. “This c–can’t be happening...”

With a furrowed brow, I opened my mouth to **ask what** he meant.

But, all of a sudden. Xaden lunged himself against the door with a loud, pained grunt, and I **gasp**ed, jumping in fright. He tried to pry open the door with all his might, jiggling the handle. **And** when that yielded no results, he threw himself at the floor **again** and **again**, every slam of his body against the door ringing in my ears.

He was like a wild animal trapped in a cage.

What the heck was he doing?! He was going to hurt himself!

My heart pounded and twisted painfully **in** my chest. “Xaden?” I questioned, shaking like a leaf as I approached him. **Worry** crawled up my throat watching him become so distraught. “What’s wrong?”

I lifted my hand to touch him, wanting to comfort him.

And, as soon as he saw me, he swatted my hand away, recoiling sharply from me. “G–Get away from me,” he pleaded, wide- eyed and swirling with black, a low growl emerging from the depths of his throat, and I hesitantly pulled away. “P–Please–

The tortured tone of his voice **was** difficult to hear. “Tell me what’s wrong!” I begged.

“There...there was something in the w–water, he stammered, groaning, keeping as **far** away from me as possible, and I realized with dread that we **had** gone through an eerily similar situation not too long ago... but **now**, the tables had turned. “Sh-She drugged us b–**both** locked the d–door and left...”

The water did taste strange, I recalled **with** a sick feeling.. but I knew what it felt like to lose total control over my body because of an aphrodisiac. And right now, I did not feel any of **that**. In fact, I felt perfectly fine.

“But I’m not in heat,” I said. “Maybe I–I **can** help you somehow-“

“I need you to s–stay **away**,” he **urged** desperately, not looking at **me**. “Y–Your scent is... s–stronger than ever. It’s driving me c-crazy...”

It **was** useless.

If I tried to get close, my scent would only make things worse... and there was no way for me to find help by just cowering in the corner. What the heck did Sarah hope to achieve by doing this again–to both of us this time?!

“T–Try to hold out as long as you can, Xaden,” I pleaded weakly, knowing I was asking a lot from him at the moment.

“I’m trying.. but, God, Maeve” he groaned longingly, clenching his fists against the door, knuckles turning white, “you **smell so** fucking good...”

In any other circumstances, those words would have made me blush, but instead, they filled me with fright. Xaden was one of the most powerful Alphas in the **entire** kingdom. If his drug–induced **heat** took complete **control** over **him**, then there would be nothing anyone could do to stop him.

Putting myself **and** our baby in grave danger.

My heart sank. **That** was her **goal**... that was what she wanted to happen. Her innocent gait was a well-crafted mask of deception. Unbeknownst to our whole family, she knew exactly what would happen if she gave me those Ylang shots, **and she knew** what would happen if she **gave Xaden** and me **those** tainted waters...

She wanted me to suffer and she was willing to put my baby in harm's **way** if it meant she got her way.

"What's going on in there?!" Father hollered from the other side of the door, and for the first time in my life, I found myself somewhat relieved by his presence. I heard him frantically attempt to jiggle the door open. "What were those loud **bangs**?!"

Xaden's **breath** hitched. He went alarmingly still.

"GO AWAY!"

Hearing Father's voice outside the room seemed to **have** triggered something violent within Xaden. All of a sudden, any semblance of composure had vanished from his body without a trace and it was like he gave into his inner beast. He growled and bared his teeth at the door, flexing his fingers as if he was preparing for a fight or...

"LEAVE-US—ALONE!"

I froze. Us...?

And then it hit me. I knew **what** his behavior reminded me of. He was going to protect his immediate territory **from** anything and anyone he perceived to be a threat. And right now, Father was an intruder, a possible threat that could tear me away from Xaden

"Shit..." Father cursed, his voice surprisingly tinged with terror. "I—I'll get the key from Sarah! **You'll** be out soon—"

“Don’t!” I screamed. “That will only make things worse! Just—just leave!”

Xaden snapped his gaze toward me, looking more like a predator on the prowl than the tender man I was coming to know. Before I could register what was happening, he lunged and hurled me on the bed. I landed flat on my back with a startled yelp.

He hovered above me, his hungry, glowing gaze bore intensely into my wide, petrified one. “No one is going to take you away from me,” he growled, low and menacing, striking fear into my **heart**.

I gulped, too paralyzed to move but I forced myself to speak.

“N—No one will take me away from you...” I repeated in the hopes of placating the primal creature inside him. “But.. Xaden, this n—needs to stop...”

A low snarl rumbled from the depths of his chest as he quickly threw off his coat, followed by his shirt.

“X—Xaden, please. you—you know who I—I am... don’t you?”

“You’re mine...” he growled, licking his lips like I was nothing more than a hunk of meat as he grabbed onto the skirt of my dress as tight as he could. No sign of any sort of recognition at all. “All mine...”

And then he started to tear into my dress, pulling it apart by the seams.

“Please, Xaden—stop!” I gasped, tears streaming down my face as I struggled to fight him off. He clawed my dress to shreds.

The sounds of fabric tearing like paper made me shriek in fear, and before I knew it, he was throwing aside the tattered remains of my dress and was attempting to do the same with my bra.

“Remember who you are!”

That did nothing. His eyes were still dilated black and clouded by one thought and one thought only. I couldn't break him out of it!

"D-Do it for me-Maeve!" I cried out in one last attempt, squeezing **my** eyes shut as he wrapped his fingers tightly around the straps of my underwear. "And o-our **baby** boy!"

Suddenly, all movement stopped. All I heard was labored breathing above me.

My name left his mouth in a choked-off whisper. "M-Maeve."

I slowly fluttered my eyes open. Was he awake..?

Without warning, he buried his face into my chest, nuzzling my exposed skin with fragile delicacy, and I failed to suppress my sharp intake of breath, afraid he was still under the effects of his **heat**. But then I felt him tremble.

"I-I'm s-sorry. Maeve." His hot breath brushed against my skin. Within seconds, I felt water seep onto my chest.

He... he was crying.

Xaden rested a shaky hand on top of my abdomen. Quickly, I threw my hand onto his own until I realized he only meant to caress the slight bump that was raised there. The tenderness that flowed through his touch was worlds apart from the violent, uncontrollable creature that was just threatening to ravage me.

"L-Let me hold you." he begged, and it tugged at my heartstrings. "P-Please."

My brain screamed at me to push him away, that he could not be trusted while trapped in his heat. But something inside me felt otherwise. Something that I could not **explain**, and yet could not ignore.

With a quivering breath, I dug my fingers into his tousled hair, holding him close, despite my better judgment. “O–Okay,” I murmured. “It’ll b–be okay.”

And so, we just lay there for what felt like forever, entangled in that mess **of** a bed until his breathing slowly evened out.

What just happened...?