

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 23

Third Person POV

The moment Xaden woke up, he found himself wrapped around Maeve's naked, sleeping body. His **first** instinct was one of **confusion**. The memories of last night evaded **him**.... it seemed they had done something, but no, that didn't feel correct.

He always felt weightless and euphoric after sleeping with her. **This** time, he felt shame.

Slowly prying away from her body, he sat up with a hushed groan and rubbed **his** face. He took a cautious look over the room, and all the details of last night came rushing back.

Her dress was torn to shreds on the bedroom floor.

Pillows and blankets were thrashed about **as** if there had been a struggle.

And, gazing at Maeve's face, he could see red, splotchy skin swollen from crying. Caused by **his** violent, feral actions.

What **have** I done... he thought to himself, horrified and sinking with self-loathing. How **could** he have ever done something like that to her? But then he remembered: that heat did not happen naturally. Someone else had forced that to happen with cruel intent.

Someone who gave them those drinks.. and who drugged Maeve in the alley **that** night.

Fury unlike anything he had ever felt before began to boil within Xaden, thick and black like the depths of hell. Quickly, he threw his clothes on and stormed out of the room, shouting **down** the halls for anyone who would listen to bring the target of his wrath. He was determined to see justice done and he would be damned if he let it go again.

Sarah had been in her room, still in her pajamas looking for an outfit for the day, when **she** heard Xaden's vengeful **shouts** echo through the halls, and that was when she realized that her plan had failed.

All of that work to obtain those Ylang plants, putting up a front to fool her sister and the prince—all of it went down the **drain**.

And Prince **Xaden** knew it was because of her.

But how? How did he fall so deeply for her sister in such a short amount of **time**? She couldn't understand it.

Her heart plummeted as she heard loud footsteps approach her bedroom. Rapidly, she scanned her room for something—a place to hide, or **maybe** a window to escape **from**! But it was too late.

Two large guards burst through her door and hoisted her up by the arms, startling her with a sharp yelp, and lifted her out to the master living room, where Prince **Xaden** stood, waiting for **her**. **The dangerous look** on his **face** sent **a** chill down her spine.

“W–What’s going on, Your Highness?” Sarah asked, feigning innocence.

Xaden, however, was in no amusing mood. “You, Sarah, **have** been **a** very lucky girl up until now.”

She opened her mouth **to** feebly interject.

“You have had more opportunities to redeem your shameless actions than I’d care to count,” he sharply cut her off. “Despite all your misgivings, Maeve

elected to forgive you every time and show you mercy. I made the mistake of trusting that yesterday. But I assure you it will not happen **again.**”

“But-

“What could you possibly have to say now? What would justify drugging an Alpha prince **and** threatening to kill his Luna and child? Please, enlighten me.”

“I-I...”

“For f*ck’s **sake**, speak!” he yelled, frightening everyone in the room. No one had ever seen the fully unleashed rage of: wronged Alpha prince, and what a sight it was to behold. “It may very well be the last time you will ever freely get **to** do so **again.**”

The commotion prompted the rest of the family, including a now-awake Maeve, to rush out and see what was happening.

Maeve’s face switched between **shock** and sadness as she watched the scene unfold.

Sarah’s mouth opened and closed **as** she struggled to find the words. Her mind raced, thinking of different ways **to** talk her way out of this. “Sh—She seduced you, Prince Xaden! That baby is her key to power and she’s going to exploit **you** until she gets **what** she wants!”

“Guards. Get this woman out of my sight.”

“No—I” Sarah screamed, thrashing against the guards’ iron tight grasp. Maeve was abruptly brought back to the day of the birthday party, where a very similar scene occurred. “I was trying to **save** you, Prince Xaden! Maeve is only going to destroy your life with that baby!”

“Dear, **do** something!” Victoria panicked from the sidelines.

Both Sarah and her mother pleaded for Alpha Burton to intervene and save his daughter's life, just as he did last time. They had every reason to believe he would.

However, he purposefully turned away from them both, stunning everyone in the room and avoiding the utter betrayal that unfurled on their faces.

"N-No-Daddy! Daddy!" **Sarah** cried, tears streaming down her reddened face, as **the** guards **took** her away to the dungeon. **Victoria** tried her best to pull them off her daughter, but it was no use.

Sarah would be imprisoned. Indefinitely.

When I woke up that morning, the last thing I expected to see was my **sister** being **carried** away by **Xaden's** guards after the horrible events of **last** night. But what shocked me even more was when Father decided to approach me, instead of run after my sister or console his bawling, crumpled wife.

"Maeve, sweetheart," Father said with a smile that did not quite reach his eyes. "Could I please speak to you privately? I want to hear how you're doing after that whole mess."

My skin crawled. I knew what he really wanted.

Gulping, I nodded. "A-Alright." I reluctantly agreed, though I didn't have any choice in the matter. If he ever asked to meet me in private, I had to go—no questions **asked**. "I'll be right there."

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw **Xaden watch** the encounter unfold carefully.

Father gave **me** a brisk **nod** and left for his office.

And that **was** when Xaden strode up to me, determined. "What did he want?" he asked, glaring at my father's retreating figure with impassioned spite. "No matter what it is, it cannot be **good**."

I didn't doubt that. However, the look on Father's face left no room for debate.

"He wants to talk to me," I admitted, and when he opened his mouth to interject, I was quick to add: "alone."

Xaden shook his head fervently. "I refuse," he said, point-blank, and I glanced nervously in the direction of the office. "I won't let him separate us after everything that he's allowed to happen. He's proven that he cannot be trusted—no one in this damn house can.

"I won't let him get close enough to hurt me."

"I made a vow to you," he said seriously, "to **always** protect you. **Are you asking me to** disregard that vow?"

I gulped, forcing myself to appear strong. "I'm asking you to wait for me... to trust **me**. I need to do this."

Xaden was unconvinced, but once he realized I **wouldn't** back down, he conceded, promising to wait for me right there. With a heavy sigh, I made myself enter Father's office, where he stood expectantly by **his** desk.

"So." he drawled. "How is the life of a Luna treating you?"

As casual a question as it sounded, I knew what he was trying to do. This was a test. He wanted to get as much information as possible to see how close Xaden and I were becoming. He wanted to know if I was letting my guard down.

If I still was a threat to his peaceful life.

I kept my eyes glued to the floor, lowering my head. "I'm not used to everything yet," I admitted. "**But** H—His Highness is patient..."

It felt strange referring to Xaden in such a formal way again. It left a foreign taste in my mouth, to backtrack so severely after how much we had come to

care for each other these last couple of days. But I couldn't let him think we were bonding.

Father frowned. "You have been neglecting your responsibilities," he said, his voice low.

"I didn't—"

"That damn red is starting to show itself," he hissed, pointing an accusatory finger at my hair. The harsh tone in his voice shook me into grabbing my growing roots in fearful disbelief. "You haven't been dyeing your hair like you're supposed to."

Shame pooled inside me. "I—I'm sorry... I've been—"

"What happened to you over the last few days, **Maeve**? You used to be a good, obedient daughter." The disappointment in his words shot a cold chill up my spine. "And now, look at **what** you've become."

Slowly, I raised my gaze to meet that of my father's and saw pure contempt.

"You must truly despise your own family if you are that keen to expose the sin of your birth," he muttered, sharp with the intent to cut me down. "And after all we have done to take care of you."

"I'm not!" I gasped, desperate to try to prove him wrong. "I don't despise—"

"Do you honestly believe Prince Xaden will be so accepting of a half-bred Luna?" Father spat, and I froze.

"Every move he makes and every thought he has is for the good of our great **kingdom**," he continued, relentless and only affirming his point with every breath. "If he becomes the Alpha King, **his** Luna will be a reflection of him and his standards. Imagine his disappointment, then, when he discovers that the beautiful, innocent **woman** he believes he **has** is nothing more **than a** mistake never meant for this world."

He's right, I realized, sinking into myself.

Xaden was more than likely going to become our next king. However much he might have cared for me, he had a responsibility to his people first and foremost.

Father steadily approached me and planted his firm hand on **my** shoulder. "One day, you will **realize** that the only ones you could ever truly trust were us. Because then, at least you knew your place." He squeezed my shoulder—hard, and I suppressed a wince. "And with us, you knew there was nowhere else you could go."

His dark words struck me to my core. It sounded eerily like both a threat and a promise. Knowing him, it very well might **have**

been.

"I—I'm sorry, Father." I whispered. "I'll I w—won't forget again."

"Good," he muttered, releasing me. "Now, go back to your prince. I'm sure he's waiting for you."

And **just** like that, he left the room **and** I was all alone.

The sudden silence **was** deafening. Tears stung the backs of my eyes, my chest burning as I resisted the urge to cry, I couldn't, not with Xaden outside.

I forced myself to smile.

Everything would be okay. right?