

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 24

Maeve POV

The drive back to the mansion was... eerily quiet. Whenever I **snuck** a peek at Xaden, I could tell that he was lost in his mind, mulling over again and again about what had happened yesterday.

His eyes, normally strong and alert, were glazed over with restrained emotion. He looked like he had just woken up from a nightmare. The vengeful and unforgiving Alpha Prince from that morning was long gone... replaced by a scared, exhausted **young** man who looked like he needed a hug.

Guilt weighed down on my shoulders. This was all my fault.

I should have been more insistent about going alone. For as long as I could remember, I had endured their abuse all on my own—no one was ever there to comfort me, to hold me, to protect me. Going without Xaden **would** have been more nerve- wracking, admittedly, but I'd rather have gone through the torment myself than put him through even a second of it.

He did not have to experience any of what happened.

But he did because of me.

I leaned into him, nuzzling my face against his shoulder. "I'm sorry about yesterday..." I whispered, feeling as he went still under my touch. "I'm so sorry."

Xaden swallowed hard. “How can you stand to be near me after what I did?”

“It wasn’t you. It was the aphrodisiac.”

“Don’t try to make me feel better,” he muttered stiffly. “Not when I almost-

“**Xaden,**” I said, as sternly as I could muster. “Don’t torture yourself like that. None of it was your fault.”

“It **doesn’t** matter if it was or not. I should have-

Immediately, I wrapped my arms around him. It would not do any good for him to dwell on what could have happened or what almost happened yesterday, and I did not want him to drown himself in the endless sea of what-ifs. I pulled away to caress the sides of his face. “We’re okay,” I promised. “Both of us.”

That seemed to release **something** inside him. As **soon** as the words left my mouth, he crumpled into my arms with a strangled gasp. I didn’t enjoy seeing him **so** distraught—I wanted to hold him until he could no longer bear my touch.

“It should not have happened..” he murmured, once he had calmed down a bit.

My jaw clenched. “There was no way to guess **Sarah** would actually be reckless enough to pull a stunt like that again. If there’s anyone to blame, it’s-

“No..” he said, pulling away slightly to look me in the eyes, and I could see how serious he was. “I mean that you shouldn’t have been able to snap me out of it. It’s impossible to awaken from a heat like that.”

I bit my lip. I gathered **as** much, but it really sunk in just how much trouble I could have been in yesterday.

“What do you **want** to do?” I asked.

Xaden straightened himself up. "I'm going to call the doctor," he said without a hitch, looking determined as ever. "I want to be fully sure that you and the baby are alright. And... I need to **know** what's going on."

With a thick swallow, I nodded. "Okay," I whispered, burrowing into him and sighing in relief when he tightened his arms around me.

And we did not let go until the car pulled to a stop in front of the mansion.

Xaden POV

It was not long before the doctor arrived with his medical bag and an ultrasound machine, just like before. This time, we were

accompanied **not** by Doctor Pearce from a few days ago, but by a new attendant.

I didn't care. I just wanted someone competent to **help**.

He bowed before me. "Doctor **Russell**, at your service, Your Highness. What can I do for you?"

"Check my Luna and her baby," I said urgently, gesturing towards Maeve, who reclined on an armchair in our **bedroom**. "Please. I cannot rest until that is done."

"Of course." He nodded. "However, before I can diagnose properly, I will need as much information as you can supply."

I took a deep breath but relented. "Do whatever you need to do, please."

Without wasting another second, Doctor Russell **turned** on the machine and lubricated Maeve's abdomen with the same blue jelly **as last** time. As he rubbed the wand along **her** slick skin, he began to ask the routine questions.

"Have you experienced any unusual symptoms with your pregnancy?"

Maeve opened her mouth to say something but faltered, seemingly thinking something over. "Two days ago, I felt some restlessness from the baby that was a little strange..." she admitted, referring **to** our visit with Doctor Pearce, "but another doctor came and said everything appeared to be fine."

"Have you felt **anything** similar since!"

She shook her head **no**.

"Any pain or discomfort?" he prodded.

Again, she indicated that she did not.

"Is there any chance the baby experienced some sort of trauma in utero?"

Her eyes flashed instantly toward **me** once those words left Doctor Russell's mouth, and I could not help but stiffen and avert **my** eyes.

"It's a possibility," she slowly admitted, "but the baby hasn't reacted to it," she was quick to add once she saw the doctor's eyebrows raise in concern. "That could mean he's okay right, Doctor Russell?"

I was hoping for some quick reassurance, but his reluctance to answer filled me with even more unease.

He offered a tight-lipped smile. "**Allow** me to continue with the test before I say anything further about your baby," he said gently.

I had no choice but to comply and wait, fidgeting with anxet...

everything might not really be alright.

I had been rough yesterday, yes... but I did not remember if I hurt her belly at any point. But maybe I did not need to touch her to cause harm. What if the stress from the ordeal was too much for our baby or what if she got hurt when I threw her onto the bed?

God, what would I do if something was wrong?

The machine released **a** small beep **and** Doctor Russell **took** a minute to scan the results of the test. I **sat** with bated breath until he spoke again. "You'll both be happy to hear that there is nothing wrong with your baby," he said with a kind smile. "All vitals are looking good, and his heartbeat is as powerful as ever."

And with those few words, I felt the weight of a thousand worlds lift from my shoulders.

"However, I must say.. the size of your baby is rather-

"We're aware he's big," I cut him off dismissively, before practically crumpling onto the bed in relief. Thank goodness everything is fine," I sighed. I would never have forgiven myself **if** something had happened.

Doctor Russell's expression of bafflement was almost comical. "But-"

Maeve waved a hand to silence him, taking over. "We already discussed that during our last consultation," she tiredly

explained, rubbing her other hand along the side of her small belly with contentment. "He's big, but healthy and that's all we **care** about."

The doctor's disagreement was written plain as day on his face, but he didn't bring it up again. "Might I inquire what happened to cause such concern?" he asked **instead**.

This was it.

I dreaded having to recount the events of last night, but it needed to be done. I needed to know if there was any chance what happened was normal. “I..“I began hesitantly, “went into heat yesterday, triggered by her **scent**... and I was worried my actions might have impacted the baby somehow.”

“Ah,” he exclaimed, taken aback by my words, “Well... normally, that should not happen if your Luna is already pregnant. How did she-?”

“Certain complications arose, Doctor,” I said, firmly cutting him off. He did not need to know the technicalities. “Do not change the subject.”

“I apologize, Your Highness”

“It was... a nightmare, I admitted. “It was like I had become a beast and all I could think of was to take her.”

Doctor Russell seemed to take pity on me. “That sounds like quite a predicament. Are the two of you alright? Shall I make a referral for a counselor-?”

“There lies the problem. I stopped it.”

He paused. “What?”

Saying all of this out loud made me realize just how crazy it all sounded. If I weren’t scared out of my mind, I would have laughed. “I don’t know how... but somehow, I was able to awaken from my heat and calm down before anything happened.”

“**And** when you say “awaken?”

“I mean I regained some sort of control over myself. It was like I overpowered **my** heat and just wanted to hold and protect her.

His eyebrows creased as he contemplated everything I told him. “I must admit,” he winced, “that sounds very peculiar, and out of my realm of

expertise. Nothing **about** what you explained has ever been proven or tested.”

My **heart** sank. This doctor was our chance for answers, but now he was saying he was unable to do just that.

“W–What are we supposed to do now?” I stammered in frustration, feeling lost, “Pretend it never happened?”

Doctor Russell raised his hands in an attempt to placate. “No, no, certainly not, Your Highness. All I’m saying is, this sounds like something Orenda Gorre could help with.”

I straightened up in shock.

That was **a** name I was familiar with. Every Alpha’s daughter I’d ever met, all arranged by my father to potentially find my **Luna**, would sing their praises about the woman, their eyes glowing with adoration as they recounted the mystifying things this woman would say. But I was dumbfounded.

Orenda Gorre—better known as the Omniscient Orenda Gorre—**was** a psychic.

Just how was a psychic supposed to help us?