

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 27

### Xaden **POV**

It had been two days since we visited the Omniscient—and odd—Orenda Gorre, and I still was not sure what to make of everything we had been told.

My mind seemed to race a mile a minute as I tried to process all of this new information. According to the psychic, Maeve and I were so-called “fated mates,” which had always been a fairytale sort of notion for hopeless romantics... and this was why I was somehow able to control my violent heat.

A chill forced its way up my spine **as** I relived those horrible moments.

**Was...** was that also why I had felt so drawn to her from the moment I met her?

My feelings for her were something I **was** not yet able to explain. All I knew was that they were stronger than anything I had ever felt for anyone, and it was as simple as that. Any questions I had never lingered. How was it possible for something as fable as this to suddenly consume everything I thought I knew about us?

With a heavy sigh, I leaned back, rubbing a tired hand through my hair. In the end, none of that mattered. Maeve and our baby were in my life **now**, and I honestly would not have it **any** other way.

What troubled me the most, however, was what Orenda said about Maeve.

What on earth did she mean when she said that Maeve possessed more inside her than she ever thought possible? **And** did that affect the baby-and how.

“Xaden!” a harsh voice suddenly brought me back to reality.

I blinked a few times **to** clear the smoke from my mind and found myself **once** again in the **main** conference room at the Royal Palace. My father sat, displeased, at the head of the table, **and** two of my brothers sat in the accompanying chairs. **Each** of our Betas stood lined up to the side, waiting for any sort of command.

**That’s** right, I remembered. They **summoned** me here.

What a headache.

“Get your mind out of the gutter!” Father scolded. “Or did **you** forget we were in the middle of our weekly conference?”

I pinched the bridge of my nose. “Apologies... I must have lost track of where I was.”

Seated beside me, my youngest brother Lucas—the Fourth Alpha Prince—gazed at me with concern. “Are you alright, Xaden?” he asked gently. “I’ve never seen you space out like that before.”

He was one of the few people in the whole palace who seemed to actually have a heart. “The last few days have been.... hectic,” I admitted, patting an affectionate hand on his back. “But, yes, everything is alright.”

“Ah, yes,” Henry, my eldest brother, remarked. He was not **one** of those few people. “I can only imagine what you’re up to in that lonely little mansion of yours.

I bristled. “I’m not in the mood **for** your-”

“Enough with these childish antics!” Father snapped. “We are here to discuss important business.”

And for a moment, things settled back down.

“As you are all aware, tensions between werewolves and bear shifters are at an all-time high, and it only seems to worsen with every passing day. Henry,” he said, turning to my brother solemnly, “you have men stationed near the border. What do they have to report?”

Henry, however, seemed to have a different idea.

He leaned forward in his chair, a coy smile playing at the corners of his lips. “Actually, Father,” he said, staring **straight** at me as he spoke, “before we begin, I thought I’d mention that I caught wind of a most intriguing and concerning rumor that has begun to circulate throughout the kingdom.”

Warily, I straightened myself. That knowing look in his eye rubbed me the wrong way.

What on earth was he getting at?

“Gossip, Henry?” Lucas questioned in disbelief. “I didn’t think that was how you liked to spend your spare time.”

Father rubbed an exasperated hand over his bearded face, ignoring the growing tension in the room. “Henry, this is not the time, nor place for kingdom gossip,” he grunted. “Push those thoughts aside and let’s continue.”

“I **can** assure you this is no mere gossip, Father. Numerous citizens can attest to the things they have seen regarding our beloved Third Prince Xaden. If you do not believe me, I’d be more than happy to summon witnesses.”

It did **not** slip past me the way my eldest brother blatantly emphasized my status as third in line of succession.

Lately, that happened when he was keen to compete for authority.

“Xaden?” Father repeated with a furrow of his brows, darting his gaze over to me. His attention was piqued **now** that it came to my reputation amid **my** campaign for the throne. “What have you done?”

I opened my mouth to speak but was interrupted by Henry.

“My sources say he has been spotted in different parts of the capital with a mystery girl,” he revealed, **as** casual as can be, though I could see the mirth hidden in his eyes. “No **one knows** who she is or where she came from. Of course, I only bring this up because I worry about you, Xaden.”

He **meant** to make it sound like a scandal: Anything to undermine my name in the race.

“A dalliance, Xaden!” my father bellowed. “At such a crucial time?”

“No, Father-

“You are twenty-three years old! It’s time you start acting like it I’d hoped you’d marry a neighboring princess, or—

“She is no ordinary girl or dalliance—she is going to become my Luna,” I spat, stunning my father into silence with my declaration. “I planned to introduce her to the rest of the family. I only wanted to make her feel at ease before doing so.”

Henry smirked. “Yes, I’m sure you made her feel **very**, very comfortable in your care.”

I slammed my hands on the table. “Don’t talk about her like that!”

“Oh, don’t like that, do you?” he teased. “Then you really should avoid the sorts of things these people are calling her,”

Furious, I prepared to retaliate, but Father spoke up. “Who is this girl, Xaden?” he asked, his features straightening into something unreadable, a

warning that I should consider treading carefully. “Is she at least from a respectable **pack**?”

That was all he cared about.

If I were to mention that she came from Moonstone—a second-class clan in our large kingdom—or that she was illegitimate, he would likely have an aneurysm on the spot. Henry’s own wife, Isabelle, hailed from one of the largest and most renowned packs, Dawnguard Pride, and he believed it to be a perfect match for an Alpha prince.

I didn’t care about any of that. I didn’t want a renowned or prestigious Luna, I wanted Maeve.

“She’s a daughter of Moonstone’s Alpha,” I ultimately responded, ignoring when my father opened his mouth to protest. “But that does not change what I said. She will be my Luna, whether you approve or not.”

“What if I ordered you to stop seeing her?” Father challenged, making me freeze. “What if I ordered you, as your king, to marry someone else?”

“You would regret that in every possible way,” I muttered, low and **serious**. The tension was palpable—thick and so unbearable that a million knives could cut into it and it still would not break. No one, not even my father, would tear her away from me.

He raised an eyebrow, daring me to continue. “Oh? And why is that?”

I stared at him, stone-faced. The truth **was going** to come **out sooner** or later. “Because she’s carrying my baby,”

Father’s jaw dropped the moment those words left my **mouth**. A flurry of **emotions ran** across his face, from shock to confusion to rage. After a delayed pause, he slammed his **hands** on the table and abruptly stood up. “A child out of wedlock?!” he roared. “What on earth were you thinking?!”

“You’re having a **baby**..? Lucas murmured, shocked.

Even Henry looked taken aback by the news, unsure how to react.

Frankly, **this** was going pretty much exactly as I imagined it would. Though, perhaps with a little less blows to the head.

Father continued to rant. “This unknown girl carries the future of the crown! I demand to meet her for myself- immediately!”

I sighed. There was no point in fighting him on that front. Their meeting was inevitable. “Very well,” I relented, getting out of my seat. “I will—‘

“**Sit** down,” Father demanded, and I stopped in my tracks, confused. “You’re not going anywhere.”

“**I was** going to-”

“I will not allow you to leave so you can coach her with ways to win my favor,” he spat. “If I am to meet her, I want to meet her as she is, without any influence from you. That shouldn’t be a problem, is it?”

I clenched my jaw. “Of course not.”

Swiftly, I summoned a nervous Prime Beta Burke to my side. “Contact Maggie. Maeve is to be brought to the palace immediately, I muttered. “Not a moment is to be wasted.”

He nodded. “Yes, sire,” he **said**, preparing to leave, but I stopped him once more.

I leaned in close, indicating that what I had to say next **would** stay only between us. “I need someone to make sure Maeve arrives without issue,” I murmured urgently. “Please, find and inform my young sister Charlotte. She is the only one who can help.