

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 30

Maeve POV

The moment I entered the room, everyone's eyes were suddenly on me,

It almost felt like another scene from one of those romantic fairytales I liked to read, where everyone turned to gawk at the newcomer princess **who** wore the most beautiful **dress in** the entire castle.

Perhaps if I had more confidence in myself, I would share that feeling. Or perhaps if I were modeling the dress for Xaden alone, I would feel worthy of being called his princess.

But it was hard to feel beautiful when the room was half-filled with critical stares.

There was no room for error here. I **was** summoned so the royal family could see just what sort of woman Xaden entangled himself with. But, upon glancing at him, I saw nothing but relief and adoration written across his face.

He believed in me right now. and that gave me the little courage I needed.

I took a shaky deep breath, curtsying as best I could. "Y-Your Majesty..." I greeted, soft but clear. "I'm honored to meet you."

This **was** my first-time meeting Alpha King Arlan, **and** as I took him in for the first time, I understood perfectly how he earned the title. Father used to always sing his praises about the greatness of our king, whether it be in the

heat of battle or the calm of diplomacy, and how he always commanded the room, no matter what he did. All King **Arlan** did was sit in his chair in that conference room and I was shaking where I stood.

“So,” the king muttered, scanning me over with green eyes similar to Xaden’s “The girl of the hour finally arrives.”

I blushed. What did he mean by that?

Xaden quickly approached me and rested his hand, warm and comforting, on the small of my back. And I felt like, with him beside me, I could conquer anything. “This is Maeve,” he said without wavering. “My future **Luna.**”

I smiled politely, but it quickly dropped when the king’s stare intensified. “I have heard many things about you over the last hour,” he said, taking on a cold, calculated tone that chilled me. “Much of it has not been good”

My stomach plummeted. What could he have heard about me?

“I—Is there something I can—“

“Indeed!” Isabelle spoke up, suddenly making her presence known, and I stiffened. “Now that she’s here, she can demonstrate for herself the extent of her etiquette skills. That will show if she’s worthy of the title of Luna or not.”

Xaden attempted to protest. “Isabelle—“

“When answering palace summons,” she began, intent on testing how deeply she could humiliate me, “is it preferred to show up early or prompt and on time?”

Nervously, I bit my lip. Maggie hadn’t covered that in her impromptu lesson. “Um... early...?”

Isabelle smirked. “That’s incorrect. You should never show up earlier than you are asked to. That’s considered disrespectful of the other party’s time.”

The king huffed in a show of blatant disapproval, making **me** sink into myself.

Xaden tightened his hold on me. “Isabelle, that’s-”

But she ignored him, continuing to **ask** questions that only one would know if they truly had the knowledge or etiquette **experience**. She knew better **than** anyone else here **how** little I was able to attend such grand events, and she took advantage of that. With every question she **asked**, she only proved her point, showing just how incapable I was.

I would only embarrass Xaden if I became his Luna.

Humiliated tears prickled in my eyes as I dug my fingers into the skirt of my dress.

“Isabelle, that’s enough!” Xaden roared from beside me.

Unfazed, she shrugged. “I’ve made my point, I’m only looking **out** for you, dear—you should find someone who actually knows a thing or two about etiquette.”

A loud huff from Charlotte surprised the room. “Honestly, Isabelle,” she scolded. “You’re one to talk about etiquette.”

Isabelle dared to look affronted. “Excuse me?”

Briskly, Charlotte left the room for a few seconds and returned with my stomped-on dress in hand, and upon seeing the dress, Isabelle turned ashen. “I found this girl, anxiety-ridden and moments away from tears, wearing this mess of a dress in the bathroom,” she confronted. “Is that what you would call “etiquette?”

The revelation seemed to have further infuriated Xaden. I could feel his anger roll off him in hot waves, but I latched onto his **arm**, both to keep him close and to calm him down.

Isabelle stuck her chin up, trying to put on a brave face. “Are you trying to **say that** I somehow am at fault for ruining that dress? It’s just dirt.”

Charlotte held up the dress to show off the shoe prints more closely, were upon closer inspection, faint heart-shaped **soles** could be seen in the dirt patterns. “Nobody else in the palace wears high heels with heart-shaped soles patterns like this. At **least**, no one but you”

That stunned Isabelle into silence.

I couldn’t help but feel impressed by how observant Princess Charlotte was. Even I had no idea her shoes left such a mark.

The eldest Alpha Prince looked shocked. “Did you do that, Isabelle?”

“No!” Isabelle insisted fiercely. “What reason would I possibly have to sabotage the dress of Xaden’s little lover?”

“You tell me,” Charlotte said with a frown. “I can hardly believe your criticisms of her come from a good place.”

“That shoe print did not come from me! I hold nothing against this girl!”

“No, Isabelle,” a young man spoke up with a frown. Judging by his youthful appearance and physical similarities to Xaden, I deduced him to be Lucas, the Fourth Prince. “All you’ve done since we’ve **gathered** here is ridicule and mock this poor girl. when she only came here to answer our summons. I refuse to believe your intentions to be anything but hostile.”

Seeing how the princess and her elder brother were so willing to stand up for me, despite not even really knowing who I was, was like nothing I had ever experienced. Xaden did so because of **his** feelings for me, and Maggie possibly did so out of loyalty to Xaden, but these two had no attachments to me at all.

I was incredibly touched.

“Isabelle.” Henry gaped. “I had no idea you were capable of being so childish.”

“You’re taking their side?” she snapped, wide-eyed with betrayal. “Ever since yesterday, all you’ve done is prattle on and on about those blasted capital rumors you’d heard from your Prime Beta.”

“I brought those up because I enjoy getting under my little brother’s skin!” he retorted, pointing a finger at Xaden. “We are in the middle of the race of our **lives** and I need whatever leverage I can-”

“You’re my husband! You’re supposed to defend me!”

“How the hell do you expect me to justify actions capable of a five-year-old?!”

“You bast-“

“That is ENOUGH, you two!” Alpha King Arlan bellowed with a powerful slam **of** his large hands on the table, startling the arguing couple into silence and making me jump in fright. “Leave the room at once! This is no place for **your** marital **spats!**” With Isabelle on the verge of tears and Prince Henry red from outrage, they stormed out of the room without another word.

The Alpha King exhaled in frustrated exhaustion, **rubbing** a tired hand over his statuesque face. “Xaden,” he said suddenly, catching both his and my attention. “**This** was hardly the ideal meeting... but what’s done is done and I will take everything that transpired into consideration. I take it that you will not change your mind about this?”

Xaden held onto my hand. “No, I will not.”

“Then this girl will become your Luna?”

“The sooner, the better,” he **said**, without a trace of any doubt in his voice. It warmed me up inside. “I **want** to be mated to her **as soon as** we are able, **and** not a moment later.”

“That will take time that you do not **have**,” the king warned. “There is still the matter of planning the mating ceremony for the kingdom to witness. I believe it best to postpone holding the ceremony for the time being

I glanced anxiously between them. A public mating ceremony?

Xaden stiffened beside me. “Father-”

“People are already talking enough about your surprise little appearance in the capital,” the king said sharply. “How do you think they’ll react when they find out you’re also expecting a baby together?”

My heart stopped. He already knew about the pregnancy?!

Feeling uncomfortable, my gaze cast downwards and I wanted nothing more than to hide. This was supposed to be his first impression of me, and straight off the bat, he believed me to be ill-mannered and was already aware of my pre-marital pregnancy.

I felt hopeless. There was no possible way for me to salvage my image.

“What does it matter what the people think?” Xaden questioned impatiently. “She’s going to be my Luna, not theirs.”

The Alpha King frowned. “Do you think this girl is just as willing to forsake the privacy of her pregnancy to appease your impatient soul?”

Surprisingly, I **was** relieved he spoke up for me at that moment. I did not want to share this with the world. I wanted to live out this pregnancy in **peace**, and when Xaden looked at me, he seemed to suddenly realize that it wasn’t just his desires that needed to be met.

“I understand.” he responded gently. “We’ll wait with the ceremony, then.”

Since learning he wanted me to become his Luna, I knew Xaden and I would marry at some point, but I wasn’t expecting any of this. A mating ceremony between the esteemed Third **Alpha** Prince **and** his intended for the entire Werewolf Kingdom to pay witness to. **And now**, it seemed that a tentative date had been set.

The reality of the situation was beginning to sink in.

Oh God, could I really do this?