

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 38

### Xaden POV

The moment Father caught sight of his mate standing in the doorway, glowering with an uncharacteristic rage that was rarely seen in her, he lost his cold, callous composure as alpha. All of a sudden, the only thing the man before **me** saw was his **wife**.

“Leonora-”

“What in Goddesses’ name are you saying, Arlan?” Mother snapped, barging further into the room. “Do **you** even understand who it is you speak so poorly of?”

I was floored. In all my years, I had never seen her react with such ferocity.

Considering everything, however, I couldn’t help but heave a heavy sigh of relief. If there was anyone in this world who could **talk** some sense through that thick, impervious skull of his anyone who could make him see how irrationally and ignorantly he was behaving, it could only have been her.

Thank you, Mother. Please help me defend Maeve.

“I am well aware of who she is,” Father retorted, albeit lacking the bite he had used with me. “She is the girl our son recklessly impregnated and-”

“You are going to hold that over that poor child’s head? I can hardly believe this is the life she asked for,” she muttered with a dismissive **wave** of her hand. “No woman in their right mind would dream of any of this.”

He narrowed his eyes in deep-rooted suspicion. “You speak as if you know her.”

Mother lifted her chin, boldly **looking** down at him in a way that no one else would dare. “I’ve taken her under my wing,” she proclaimed, maintaining a strong look of pride, despite the deep despair that marred my father’s stoic face. “With my guidance, she will become a Luna princess unlike any you’ve ever seen, great enough to possibly one day surpass me as queen. I will personally see to it that she will not want for anything, nor will she flounder helplessly on her own.”

Her impassioned declaration on behalf of my mate warmed my soul more than words could express. She would never say such things if she did not mean it, especially if it came to her children. I knew right then and there that Maeve would have nothing to worry about.

Even if something were to happen to me, she would be well taken care of

“Why... Father pleaded, “would you get yourself involved with this?”

“And why wouldn’t I? She’s going to marry our son **and**, on top of that, she’s carrying the legacy of our royal bloodline. It’s our responsibility, not only as her king and queen but also as her family, to take care of her!”

“No.” Father was remarkably quick to refute, “our responsibility is to the crown, not to one of your charity cases.”

I swelled **and** bristled with quick, unbridled fury upon hearing his cruel choice of words. Father or not, he would deeply regret using that term to describe Maeve my future mate and the mother of my child—while in my presence.

Mother, however, beat me to it.

“Charity **case?**” she repeated, her gaze steeled. “**That’s** what you think she is to me? So... you mean to say that you doubt my intuition.”

Just like that, I could see the weight of his words fully register in his mind as he realized his hefty mistake. In an instant, the Alpha King **was** rendered a stuttering, babbling mess as he sloppily tried to correct the wrongdoing made against his furious mate.

But Mother was steadfast.

She held her ground like nothing I had ever seen, stronger than even the most committed, trained soldiers in the middle of a tense battle. She would not give in to my father's protests just because he was king

Still, I couldn't believe all of this **was** because of who I wanted to marry.

"Maeve is a wonderful child," Mother said finally, as sincere and doting as ever. "If you cared to spend more than ten seconds. with her, you would see her for who she is. A gentle, yet **powerful** soul who cares deeply for our son."

It seemed to finally sink in that he was fighting a losing battle. Father sighed, his broad shoulders slumping as he rubbed a tired hand over his face, apparently having aged ten years over the last two days.

When he turned to me, I instinctively stiffened.

"I apologize for speaking so harshly about your woman, my son," he said, stunning **me**. "I will give her a fair chance to prove. herself.

I found myself at a loss. He would never say such things unless he meant them, which was both a curse and a blessing for our family.

"Thank you, Father," I murmured.

"But I will tell you this right now," he added with a firm tone of warning. "I had better not learn anything **more** about this girl. that I will not approve of. If I find even a hint of trouble or deceit, this is over."

The moment he uttered those words, **any** hope and optimism I had faltered. My father was still unaware of the truth surrounding Maeve's birth... as was I, for the most part. **All** I knew was that she was Alpha Burton's illegitimate daughter, but I **had** no information on her mother. I had meant what I said to Maeve—that none of it mattered to **me**, but my father was an entirely different situation. If he ever found out that she was not a pure alpha, I would never be allowed to see her again.

Until I could learn the truth about her mother and settle this issue with her family, he had to be kept in the dark. That, I would make absolutely certain of.

I set my jaw. "You won't. I swear to you."

He grunted in tense approval.

Mother echoed her appreciation, smiling at him, and my father softened even further. The sight was incredibly moving—there truly **was** nothing like the effect one's mate had. Instantly, Maeve came to mind, and how she was able to tame the wild, terrifying beast that lurked inside me.

As an alpha prince, I prided myself on the reputation I had garnered. Formidable and terrifying—that **was** what I wanted our enemies to see and fear, and that was **what** I **wanted** my people to rely **on**.

But... I didn't **want** to be like that around Maeve. She'd had enough fear and abuse to last a lifetime and I had no intention of displaying such a side to her. She deserved all the comfort and happiness I could provide her, and I would not give her anything less than that.

She was mine, as I was hers.

Father might have been a stickler for royal protocol, but he adored my mother more than anything.

If he could just see that what Maeve and I had was just as strong... that she **was** not some mistake I was trying to atone for, nor that I was the target of some fictitious grand plan... then maybe he could come to wholeheartedly accept our union. Maybe it would be possible for us all to live together in harmony one day.

If anything, I knew Maeve would love that more than anything. A **chance** at the family she never had.

Maeve POV

I left my lesson with the **Luna Queen** feeling exceptionally well about myself.

It had only been two days since we started this arrangement, but already I could feel my confidence start to build. She truly was the embodiment of kindness and patience. If there was ever any point where I needed help clarifying a rule or practice, she was more than happy to slow down and repeat herself for me.

And she always made sure to simplify things without making me feel like a fool. If it had been Sarah or Victoria, they would have degraded me for **not** being bright enough to learn... but Queen Leonora never said such things.

“There are no such things as stupid questions, my dear,” she would reassure with an encouraging smile. “Every question is an opportunity to become smarter.”

Every conclusion of a lesson had me excited.

I was finally doing something to better myself... and I was finally experiencing a taste of real motherly love.

Any worries I'd had before were absent for once, and I could just focus on how nice everything was now. How amazing everything was turning out to be.

I had just turned a corner, ready to enter the Great Hall, when all of a sudden, I caught sight of a young man struggling with a decent-sized stack of books. He was extremely slender, practically to the point where I thought him sickly or frail, and his skin was pale as if he rarely ventured beyond palace walls.

Was he an omega servant, fetching important books for someone high-ranking?

The moment our eyes met, he stumbled, and all of the unsteady books toppled out of his thin arms.

"Oh-Oh my-" I exclaimed, quickly rushing over to the man. I lowered to my knees and began to help pick up the scattered mess of books, taking him by apparent surprise. "Here, let me help you."

"No, no, it's alright. I got it..."

"Don't be silly," I scolded softly. "This is too much to carry all at once."

"Thank you," he said with a small smile. "Normally, others turn a **blind** eye if they see me in need of assistance."

I balked. "**That's** awful. Why on earth would they **do such** a thing?"

A weight seemed to fall atop his thin shoulders the **moment** those words left my mouth. "Well," he said, avoiding my beseeching gaze as he shifted the books in front of him, "it's not like they would be doing **any** favors for the Alpha **King**. Henry, or Xaden... if it doesn't involve either one of them, no one seems to have any interest. I'm nowhere near noteworthy enough to be on someone's radar."

His words tore painfully **at** my heart. They sounded a lot like something I'd say about myself.

“Why not?” I dared to **press**, overwhelmed with a surprising amount of outrage on this stranger’s behalf. “Anyone and everyone should be **worthy** of kindness and care, no matter if they’re alpha, gamma, or omega.”

“In an ideal world, that would be true. But here, no one cares about the less fortunate. Especially not the **insignificant** and frail **Alpha** Prince.”

His words made me freeze. Did he say what I thought he said?  
An **alpha** prince!

I was already familiar with the eldest son, Xaden—born third in succession—and the youngest, disregarding their little sister, Princess Charlotte. That could have only left me with one other person... and upon **looking** more closely at this man, he was dressed in **rather** nice clothes, made of similar quality as **Xaden’s**.

He was **no omega** servant.

“Are... are you Prince Eric?”