

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 51

Maeve POV

All of the white, hot **fury** that possessed my body vanished the moment I had unleashed the burdens of my mind onto the Alpha King. At first, all I felt was weightless, sweet relief upon having said everything I needed so desperately to say.

But then I suddenly found myself freed from the control of that vengeful, restless spirit.

And now, I was awake, forced to deal with the aftermath of my rash actions.

What the hell have I **done**? I thought, horrified. This is not like me!

Alpha King **Arlan's** green eyes gleamed with something dark. "You have some gall, little pup," he muttered. "Though, I am not sure if it was courage or foolishness that inspired you to speak **to** me with such crass."

He took one step toward me and I recoiled with **a** sharp flinch, fearing he wanted to strike me for talking **back**. In the blink of an eye, Xaden bravely planted himself in front of me, still holding onto me with a strong, comforting hand—all in an attempt to shield me from his father's menacing figure.

My body was wracked with tremors, terrified of what might happen.

Please don't let the Alpha King hurt Xaden because of me!

Queen Leonora, however, **was** quick to intervene. “Dear.. it has been a long day, and the night draws near,” she said, wrapping her arm around his. Her gentle, beseeching **touch** seemed to **have** soothed him **in** some way.

“This **is** a matter for another time

After a tense moment, he finally spoke up once more.

“Due to the special circumstances of the evening. I’ll **allow** that little mishap of yours to slide,” King Arlan drawled, looming closer to me with **slow**, foreboding steps that threatened to send me cowering in a corner, “but make no mistake, I will not be so forgiving **a** second time. It would do you well to remember **your place** in the **future**.”

My place...

The words hit me in the chest with a thud. I knew better than anyone where I stood in the chain of command.

What happened tonight was a mere anomaly, I wanted to hope. Much stress culminated from this banquet, and my reaction was simply an unfortunate release of all the stress I had accumulated. Deep down, however, I knew that all of this could have been prevented. and something inside me chose to throw all caution to the wind,

Regardless, I could not afford to let this happen again.

Gulping, I lowered my head. “Y–Yes, Your **Majesty**.”

He stopped **mere** inches away **from** me, so close that I could practically smell his disdain. “You may be my son’s intended... and you may have him wrapped around your dainty little finger, but you **are** still just **a** child,” he hissed, peering down at me like I was more than just a pebble under his shoe, uncaring that his son could hear every word. “And children do not dictate the **ways** of the adult world. Just try, and everything will happen as planned.”

This **was his** warning to me.

No—it was a promise. If I learned what I needed to and respected the king’s rules, then we wouldn’t have any problems.

“Father-

“And you, Xaden-“The harsh, sudden addressal made Xaden stiffen beside me. “Learn to take control of your woman,” he leered, looking me up and down. “Such behavior **from** your future Luna will only cause problems.”

I felt his hand tremble around my arm, which unnerved me. Did he **fear** his father.. or was it what his father said!

Xaden said nothing in response, however, only **staring back at** him with full intensity.

With a passing glare in my direction, Alpha King Arlan **briskly** stormed off, followed by a worried Luna Queen Leonora and smug- looking Isabelle, leaving the two of us braced together in the hallway. As if stuck **in** a trance, we walked back to the car in total, baffled **silence**, processing the events of the evening-

Even in the car, it took the longest time for **one** of us to even muster the energy to **speak**.

Stunned, Xaden let out a breath, rubbing a hand over his mouth. “Maeve what happened in there?” he asked, sounding at a loss.

“I-I don’t know.” I stammered as I **picked** at my hands, overwhelmed with shame and panic. “I don’t know where all of that came from. I swear, I didn’t mean to blow up at your father like that—it just came out, and I couldn’t stop i

Screaming at the Alpha King was the absolute last thing I had thought to achieve tonight, least of all at any point in my life. I had wanted to show the utmost respect and humility that I could in his presence. Not only was he

Xaden's father, but he was the most powerful man in the entire kingdom—if he wanted to, he could **do away** with **me at any** given moment.

But... something had happened to me when I saw Eric sit there while his older brother said those awful things.

While his father did nothing to stop it.

All of a sudden, I was back in that nightmare of a house I grew up in. I **had** found myself sitting **in** Eric's place, with Sarah and Victoria hurling their insults at me instead of Prince Henry. And where King Arlan sat, I saw Alpha Burton blissfully minding his own business, turning a blind eye and deaf ear to what was happening in his house.

I saw my father staring back at me through those **green** apathetic eyes.

And something in me snapped.

I couldn't just play witness to all of that and pretend it never happened. Not when I had dreamed for **years** that someone would defend me the way I did tonight. It wasn't right that I had to stand up to the king in the first place...

But I didn't regret standing up for Eric,

Xaden continued. "Those things you said I could understand talking back to Isabelle, but.. for you to talk like that to my father, of **all** people, too." He turned to gape at me. "I've never seen such a side to you before."

I blanched, suddenly feeling horrified. In daring to insult the alpha king, there **was** a great likelihood that I insulted Xaden in the process too. Familial issues aside, they were still father and son, **and** I very possibly showed him a new side of me that he did not approve of.

"Xaden, I-I- "

And then, in a split second, he was kissing me with passionate fervor in the backseat of the car, taking me by complete surprise. "I was right—he purred

against my mouth, full of adoration, “I just knew you’d blow **us all** away tonight”

“Y–You’re not mad?”

“Mad?” he repeated incredulously with a wicked grin, licking his lips. “What you did was the most fearless thing I’ve ever seen anyone do. Only my mother would dare to **confront** him with such burning tenacity and not give **a** damn about the repercussions. It was about time someone else did.”

This fearless image he seemed to love of me couldn’t have been farther from the truth. I was not proud of myself, by any means. It was merely the reaction of a girl who **was** at the end of her rope.

I was not brave like Xaden. I **was a** coward **lost** in a moment of stupidity and weakness.

“B–But what if he forces us to call off our mating ceremony because of it?”

“Let him try,” he declared. “I **have** every intention of making you mine.” His unwavering determination, admittedly, did little to appease me. I wanted so badly to believe him, but in the end, he was powerless against his father’s almighty will.

My fate rested in the Alpha King’s unforgiving hands tonight.

And my odds were not looking good

THIRD PERSON POV

An out–of–breath Isabelle tried her best to keep up with the long strides of Alpha King Arlan, whose outrage bounced off the **walls** of the palace **walls**. “Your Majesty!” she gasped, maintaining a respectable distance.

“I am utterly appalled at my fellow **Luna** Princess’s **behavior** tonight!”

That Arlan could quite agree with. No one dared to talk back to him like that.

No one.

Except for this girl, for whatever reason.

“I quite think this banquet served its purpose, wouldn’t **you** agree?” Isabelle continued. “We **learned** just what kind of girl Kaden chose for himself. She’s clearly not worthy of marrying into our outstanding bloodline-”

“And I thought I made myself quite clear tonight,” King Arlan snapped, swiftly turning around to face his relentless daughter-in-law, who paled upon seeing the dangerous look in his eyes. “I did not want to hear another word out of you for the rest of the night. Not during the banquet, and not now.

She flinched, a hurt look crossing her eyes

“My decision about whether she stays or not is none of your concern, Isabelle,” he reaffirmed sternly, not caring if he hurt her feelings. “And I refuse to discuss this with you any longer. Goodnight.”

Leaving no **room** for her to say anything more, Isabelle abruptly left with a huff

As King Arlan entered his royal quarters, his wife followed closely behind, her mind awl with concern for both him and her future daughter-in-law,

“Dear,” she prodded gently, “please, don’t be too upset with Maeve. She’s been under a lot of stress-

“Am I to assume that was the result of your teachings?” he asked gruffly, point-blank.

She blinked, looking affronted. “Of course not,” she quickly retorted, before once again growing concerned. “You won’t punish her, will you!”

As much as it pained him to admit it, something happened as she scolded him like he was little more than **a** child. Seeing that unremarkable, shy, pitiful creature who trembled after merely entering a room he **occupied** suddenly turn red with rage and determination, even in the daunting shadow of his royal crown, was a fascinating sight to behold. It was something he never would **have** expected from her.

Not even Henry’s wife had the audacity to confront **him** with such spirit.

By all accounts, he should have been furious and demanded to have her removed from the premises. And if she were anyone else, then it would have happened without question.

But, Arlan was impressed.

“No.” he answered honestly, **much** to the pleasant surprise of his wife. “But make no mistake, **Leonora**.. I will not tolerate such behavior from that girl again. That, you have my word on.”

Impressed or not, Maeve was still nowhere near worthy of marrying **his** son, and he was determined to watch every move she made henceforth with meticulous perception. If she made a mistake, he would be the first to know.

She would have to be very careful from now on.