

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 56

### XADEN POV

**Maeve's** eyes widened. "What does that mean?" she asked, leaning closer and squeezing my hand. I could feel tremors **shake** her body. "You'll be going off to war..?"

Truthfully, that was **a** question I was not able to answer at that time.

I wanted more than anything to reassure her, to dissuade her worries with confidence and say that would never happen, but I found myself unable to. Especially after that sudden meeting I had just left with my father and brothers. The things we were learning the harsh chaos of the battle...

It all seemed too real to deny.

A few hours earlier...

I was running

I wasn't Sure what exactly was happening **or** why I **had** been summoned to Father's office so suddenly, but still. I was running

The urgency Royal Beta Samson's voice was impossible for me to just ignore. Having served alongside my father for as long **as** I could remember, he was normally a very stoic man, speaking only when addressed and always lurking in the very prominent shadow of his superior. He never broke his composure unless something **was** wrong

The moment I burst into Father's office, I immediately noticed he was already flanked on either side by Henry and **Lucas**, all wearing varying looks of worry and anger as they hovered impatiently over his buzzing **radio**.

They did not pay attention to my entry, enthralled by the chaotic sounds of a heated battle that emerged from the other side of the line, The loud howls of our troops as they clashed against the deep roars of their opposing bear forces. Within seconds, I found myself listening in, as well, planting myself opposite them as we lost ourselves for what felt like hours, just listening to our men fight and defend our land.

It was some time before we heard a long howl. A howl of triumph.

-We did it, Your Majesty, the exhausted voice of the commanding alpha bellowed, a slight tinge of pain detected within. "We-We pushed the enemy back.. all despite their unending **stamina**, I'll have to summon for a healer. we need the help"

And with that, the line cut dead. The battle was over for now.

"It's getting worse, Lucas muttered, glancing worriedly between everyone.  
"Far faster than we're ready for

I met his gaze. "They're going to lead us **into** an outright war"

"Then we should call their bluff," Henry suddenly said, taking on a dangerously eager tone, forcing all of us to look at him. "If those pathetic cubs are that antsy to fight, then let's take the fight to them. Show them what happens to intruders who dare to **try** to play around in the wolves' lair."

"Are you insane!" I snapped. "We have no clue about what rests beyond their borders. For all we know, they might be expecting us to **push** in retaliation, and we could lead our men into **a** trap"

“We cannot just allow them to attack us like this, either!” Lucas pushed with fervor, a fire burning bright within his normally kind hazel eyes. “That’s our men on the line—their lives at stake, while we’re all nice and cozy in the safety of our palace walls! We owe it to them to take a stand!”

It **was always** a surprise to see the effect that battle had on my younger brother. He was practically known for being one of the more gentle of us alpha princes, and for good reason. While we had all fought in battle at some point during our tenures as alpha princes, he was the only one to readily help with volunteer or charity work around the kingdom at any chance he could find, always insisting on doing whatever he could to better the lives of our subjects.

Lucas took his privilege very seriously, more so than the rest of us. One might never expect him to be so impulsive when it came to war and justice.

“Don’t underestimate our **forces**,” Henry insisted, joining forces with Lucas against me. “Not only do we have the strength in numbers, but we also outweigh them in nearly everything else. Speed, dexterity, courage, and most importantly, spirit. We **can** take them on—we just have to stand strong!”

They both made excellent points

In any other case, I would have agreed with them

However, this was the closest we had gotten to all-out war with our neighbor in our many years of tension. If we didn’t play our cards carefully, then we would lose before it even fully started. And I was not willing to accept more losses than was necessary

“Spirit won’t keep our men safe!” I rebuked. “We shouldn’t put all those lives on the line if we don’t have a plan.”

**Both** of my brothers looked ready to protest some more until Father cut them off. “**Xaden** is right,” he admitted. “We need to be **careful** with how we approach this. We cannot risk making even the slightest **error**

Lucas looked frustrated. “But why?” he pressed. “Why are we being so careful all of a sudden?”

Father’s face marred with wariness, forcing us into silence. “There’s something strange about what’s been happening,” he noted slowly, as if lost in thought. “The Bear Shifters they seem to have become more bold with their attacks as of late.

Henry’s brow furrowed. “Perhaps that king of theirs hired a new a new commander.”

“No, this has nothing to do with leadership.” Father dismissed him. “Their tactics have changed. They’re becoming more and more unpredictable. Not only that, but they were somehow able to find the exact location of our patrol camp within days of us setting up there.” Judging by the resolute tone of his voice, he seemed to already have a good theory lined up

“What do you think is happening, Father?” I prodded.

“I think we need to look into the possibility that we might have a mole somewhere in our ranks.”

That revelation seemed to freeze the room. I felt a cold chill run up my spine. A spy it unfortunately made sense. But if it **was** true, then several questions remained that needed to be answered.

Who would do such a thing? And why?

“A mole!” Lucas balked after a **long** moment. “You think one of our men is helping the enemy?”

Father gazed at each of us solemnly. “We need to be prepared for anything,” he muttered. “Enemies can be found anywhere, not just beyond our borders.”

“Xaden I...”

**Maeve's** frightened voice brought me **back** to the present. She was still waiting for my answer.

Clenching my jaw, swallowing any reservations that lingered with in me, I faced her once more. "We won't let it get that far," I ultimately said with as much steeled resolve as I could muster, forcing myself to believe my own words. "My father, brothers, and I will stop them at every turn."

Her bottom lip quivered, tugging at my heartstrings. "I don't want you to fight." she whispered, weakly trying to hide the emotion that saturated her voice. "Please if it comes **to** the precipice of war- please, don't fight, **and** stay with me," she begged, pulling my hand to her lips, her soft skin brushing against my knuckles.

I couldn't even begin to describe how tempting the **idea** was

But I had so much more to lose now.

If war broke out **and** put M

Maeve and our son in danger because I refused to intervene, I would never be able to forgive myself.

"I will do what's necessary to protect you," I vowed, trying my best to ignore her feeble protests. "No matter what."

That was not what she wanted to hear. Instantly, her face crumpled and her head fell, an attempt to hide her emotions from me.

"But that's neither here nor there right now," I said, trying to comfort her, pulling her back up so I could look her in those beautiful eyes of hers. "All we have to worry about now is holding up that banquet for our soldiers. As an alpha prince, my attendance tomorrow afternoon is required. but I would love it if you'd join me. I entreated her, hoping for another **chance** to **have** her at my **side**.

The hesitancy on her face was clear as day, I knew she had concerns following that last banquet, but I was admittedly feeling a little selfish.

**Having** her around would erode **any** anxiety I had.

It took a few moments before she ultimately sighed with a nod. “Okay, I’ll go with you tomorrow.”