

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 73

### THIRD PERSON POV

If Royal Beta Samson was taken **aback** by the question, he showed no sign of it

Years of serving the Alpha King **had** enabled him to master his mask of stole neutrality. No matter how wild the reporter's question might have driven viewers, they would not be able to catch the seasoned beta **slip** up, under any circumstance,

Though, that was not to say he did not get irritated by any bothersome press.

"Are there any questions that pertain to the border report?" he emphasized, ignoring the eager and bold reporter and once **again** scanning the sea of press in the hopes of receiving a different question to answer

However, she was steadfast "Oh, please, Mister Samson! This is no mere teenage gossip the very legacy of our kingdom is on the line! Everyone wants to know if Prince Xaden has taken a lover amid his campaign for the throne!"

"There are no statements to be made at this time about any alleged mystery woman." Samson enunciated, sounding almost robotic, yet stern as he spoke. "If no one else **has** anything different to contribute, then we shall move on with the briefing."

But then another reporter rose to his feet. “Royal Beta Samson, why maintain the secrecy surrounding this woman? If she is his Luna, then why will the royal **family** not make an official announcement?”

It was subtle, but a nerve in Samson’s jaw tightened.

The press was especially incessant this time, which was not particularly unusual but was always something even the most seasoned of speakers loathed to deal with.

Meanwhile, Alpha King Arlan and Luna Queen Leonora watched the press conference from the safety and security of their elaborate viewing room inside the palace. As Samson proceeded in his attempts to control the briefing, a vast array of emotions swept across both of their faces.

Leonora, ever the perfect picture of **grace** and dignity, tried her best to hide her chagrin but was utterly failing. “This **is a** disaster...” she muttered from behind her **hand**.

Arlan grunted in agreement, crossing his arms over his broad chest. “Those vultures they call reporters are relentless. But Samson will not falter to the likes of them. He can hold his own and preserve the sanctity of our household all at once.”

Leonora shook her head. “I’m not worried about him,” she admitted. I’m **worried** about our son and Maeve.”

A deep frown settled on his face.

As much as he would have liked to reassure her that their son would not do anything foolish, he knew better. Xaden—however a brilliant force of nature he was—was also capable of being incredibly headstrong and reckless... if his recent private life was any indication.

Arlan needed to check in with the boy. The sooner the better.

And then, by some stroke of luck, the familiar figure of his third son came into view from the far end of the corridor. Xaden appeared to be distracted, however, wiping his face and forehead with a towel **as** he kept walking.

It seemed he was going to leave without a word.

Without a moment to lose, Arlan ruse to his feet. “Xaden—stop right there,” he demanded, to which his son came to a reluctant stop.

The twenty-three-year-old was covered from head to toe in a thin layer of sweat—having come from the direction of the palace training room, Arlan realized. As Xaden turned to face the king, dark hair clinging to his wet forehead, his discontent was plain as day.

Despite this, he slowly entered the room. “Yes, Father?”

Arlan **steadily** approached **his** son, looking stern. “I certainly hope you haven’t fallen back on your promise to me.”

Promise?”

“Yes. **About** waiting to reveal your mate to the world until after the pup has been born” The Alpha King raised an eyebrow at his son, who—unsurprisingly—was becoming increasingly agitated with every passing second. “Need I remind you of the stakes at hand!”

XADEN POV

**No**—not an answer. That meant I had some sort of say in the matter.

No. He waited for my cooperation. An agreement that I would obey him unconditionally, without protest.

I let out an exasperated, impatient huff of breath, shoving my **dark**, sweat-soaked hair out of my face. Those words I'd been hearing too much of over the last few days echoed throughout my mind like a broken record.

I was fucking sick of it.

Exactly how many more times would I to be told to keep her a secret?

During **our** impromptu tryst at the banquet, I'd been more than ready to mark Maeve in that hallway right then and there. After that show with Nicholas, when he'd decided to be foolish enough and say **such** things about Maeve—my mate, and the mother of my unborn child—in front of me. daring to insinuate that I was too weak to claim her for myself, something in me snapped.

That reckless alpha had dared to try to assert himself over me. To **take** what belonged to me and me alone.

My inner wolf was thrashing about and threatening to break free, enraged and determined to make his mark.

But when Maeve cut me off, admitting her fears aloud for the first time, I gave her my wholehearted attention. I took in every quiver of her voice, every tremble her body made as she confided in me, **and** my steeled resolve that had been impenetrable mere moments before had crumbled to pieces. I couldn't go through with **it** anymore.. despite how much every fiber of my being yearned to do it.

I refused to contribute to or worsen those fears in any way. So, when I'd promised her that we would wait, I meant it.

And I had absolutely no intention whatsoever of breaking that promise.

But—oh—how it hurt.

Every drop of my alpha blood cried out with the primal urge to claim my mate. I needed the entire world to see who she belonged to, that she was mine in every possible way. But I kept myself in check.. for her.

I would do anything for her. Anything to see her smile and live her life in peace.

My father, on the other hand, never asked for this out of the kindness or purity of his heart.

Although he'd promised he would give Maeve a chance, I was fully aware that he was taking advantage of her reserved nature to keep her in the **dark** as much as possible for his selfish gain. Because of that, I had half a mind to tell him off.

But I couldn't. Not when I promised Marve

"I get it." I ultimately snapped, ignoring the blatant offense that spread over my father's **face**. "Anything about Maeve and the baby is to be kept under lock and key. I don't understand why everyone feels the need to remind me every day."

His eyes narrowed. "Maybe it's because everyone knows you so well," he jabbed not so kindly, making me bristle. "Maybe everyone knows just how impulsive **and** stubborn you get when it comes to things you think you want."

My nostrils flared. I didn't need to take any of this from him. I prepared to square up to him, until

"Xaden—please," my mother suddenly intervened, making me stall.

I was taken aback. She was **on** his side?

Stunned, I turned my attention over to her, where she sat on the lounge. There was a yearning, imploring tinge to her face as she gazed at me, which

helped ebb away my growing irritation. She was not one to condescend like my father. If she ever had something to say, it **was** always in earnest.

“We’re being serious,” she said. “Please tell us you have been waiting to share your relationship with Maeve.”

I frowned, suddenly becoming heavy with a bad feeling. “What’s going on?”

Father cleared his throat. “Perhaps this will be sufficient explanation enough,” he muttered, gesturing to the television

Frowning. I turned my attention toward the television. Onscreen was Royal Beta Samson, who appeared to be in the middle of holding a press conference. Momentarily, I was puzzled. He was quite excellent when it came to addressing and handling the press, so I **wasn’t** sure why this **one was** so important.

But my confusion was short-lived.

“Beta Samson, is it true that Prince Xaden’s mystery girl is for hire? Is that why the royal family refuses to acknowledge her?”

My heart dropped. Whether they knew her name or not, this press conference was about Maeve

As the minutes ticked by, I watched furiously as reporters spewed more and more of their crude questions and assumptions, calling her a gold digger and a prostitute, among other things, and calling into question the true nature of our involvement.

Now I understood what Henry meant all that time ago,

Hearing these people talk about Maeve like this made my blood boil,

“Now, Kaden,” Father spoke up, snapping me **back** to the harsh reality I found myself in. His prominent presence stood mere feet away from me as

he carefully examined my reaction. “Do you understand the gravity of the situation?”

For a moment. I was at a loss for words. My mind and body were torn with conflicting feelings of fury and the desire to rush to Marve’s side and protect her.

All of a sudden, in all seemed to make sense now, and I wanted to chastise myself for being so bland and stupid and reckless.

I had never really given a damn what the press said about me before—I could handle whatever gossip or speculation they decided to throw at me. I knew what was fact from fiction, and had a lifetime of training myself how to navigate annoying paparazzi.

But Maeve never asked for any of **this**. She was not yet acclimated to this sort of life like I was, but was willingly stepping into the wolves den so we could be together. And this **was** not limited to two people gossiping amongst themselves in **a park** anymore, she **was** beginning to capture national attention.

It was easier to control a **few** ignorant gossipers. It was not so easy when the entire fucking press was involved.

Of course, Maeve must be fucking terrified. No wonder she wanted to **wait**.

Guilt gnawed at me. How could I have been so selfish?

Swallowing back my nerves **and** my pride. I let my gaze flicker over the concerned **face** of my mother before I finally locked eyes with my father. “I understand completely,” I said softly. “No one will know about Maeve before the mating ceremony.

“Do I have your word on that?” Father held his hand out expectantly.

I knew very well he only asked this to keep our reputation **clean** and honorable. He didn't care about Marve's well-being one way or the other, but that didn't matter to me at that moment.

Setting my jaw, I nodded, taking him firmly by the hand. "On my honor as an alpha."