

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 83

Maeve POV

Whenever Xaden kissed me, it was like I was enveloped by my own little slice of heaven. His touch, his voice, his scent... I couldn't get enough of it.

His hands roamed underneath my shirt, spreading across my bare lower back, digging gently into my skin. I shuddered, gasping against his mouth and inadvertently breaking the kiss. His forehead pressed against mine as he caught his breath.

He was so intoxicating... and so mine...

"Do you want to... go to bed?" I asked, peering up at him through my lashes.

Xaden dragged his thumb over my bottom lip, his eyes glued. "I can't even begin to tell you how tempting the thought is," he murmured, his voice dripping with heat and hunger, "but I have so much work left to do. I'm a bit behind today."

"Oh... is there something I can do to help?"

He pressed one more k\*ss, gentle and sweet, before pulling away. "All you need to do is enjoy your afternoon," he said, sweeping my hair behind my shoulder. "Alright?"

All I wanted was to be by his side, but I knew his work was important.

“If I have to,” I murmured, pretending to be reluctant. I helped him adjust the collar of his nice button-up shirt, making sure there weren’t any wrinkles I might’ve caused during our kiss.

“Well, do I look presentable again?” he teased, waiting patiently for me to finish.

Gently, I rubbed my hands down his arms. “As you always do,” I answered, looking up at him. “I’ll see you when you’re done.”

“And not a moment later.” He left a soft kiss against my forehead before turning on his heel and making his way to leave the room.

As I watched him walk away, I once again pulled out my mother’s necklace from its pouch. It was still warm from when he’d held it. I think that was what prompted me to try to talk to him one more time.

“Xaden-” I called out.

**He** slowed to a stop before reaching the door, and looked back at me.

I swallowed, clutching the pouch tightly in my hands. “Are you sure everything’s alright...?”

Xaden smiled, and the sight did wonders to warm me up inside. How beautiful he was, despite his coarse exterior. “Everything’s fine. Don’t you worry.”

And then he was gone.

I wanted to believe him, and I did... to some extent. But there was something different that lingered in his eyes. Something uneasy. Oh, what I would’ve given to know what it was that bothered him so, but if it was something he felt he could share with me, I believed he would.

Xaden wasn’t a liar.

At **least**, not the Xaden I knew.

But **where** on earth did all of that come from...?

**Ever since** the day we'd reclaimed the **necklace** from Moonstone, we hadn't talked about it. I honestly didn't **even** think he remembered it since it had been overshadowed by memories **that were...** less favorable.

**Was** it possible he was only curious? He'd mentioned something about wanting **to** spoil me with **new jewelry**, which was not unheard **of** for him.

Slowly, I raised my fingers **to** touch my lips, still **damp** and tender from that kiss **mere** minutes ago. I **could** still **feel** him there, savoring and treasuring me like I was the most precious thing in **the** world. Like he always did.

Maybe he really did just want to learn more about me, where I came from. Maybe that wasn't such an impossible thing to believe.

At least he was curious enough to ask in the first place, and I had swelled with excitement to be able to talk about my mother with him.

No one had ever wanted to before...

I rubbed my thumb over the curve of the purple gemstone at the pendant's center, along the smooth silver of the thin chain—a gesture I always found soothing to the soul whenever I felt brave enough to hold the necklace.

If Father could see me now... I thought wryly, he would throw a fit.

Wait.

I blinked, as if to awaken myself from some sort of stupor.

Why did such a thought still make me feel so uneasy?

It had only been ingrained in me because of Father and his constant worry about outsiders somehow discovering the truth about me... about the dark

secret of our family. So dark and deep the secret ran, that he even kept me out of it when I was the one trapped at the center of it all.

I... I didn't even know my mother's name... let alone what pack she might have come from. Was this what she'd wanted, or was it all my father's doing?

I let out a short laugh. Even I could hear how ridiculous that was. Of course, only Father could have been so dubious, so cruel to decide such a thing.

Perhaps it really was just another tactic used to control me. To inspire fear inside my heart and to keep me from whatever I pleased. Knowing Father, that was a very real and very likely possibility.

I swallowed, holding onto the pendant ever so tighter, feeling my pulse reverberate throughout the small trinket.

Neither Father nor Victoria could hover over me and dictate the way I lived my life. Not again.

Never again.

More than anything, I just wanted to- Put the necklace on...and wearing-

I disappeared into our private ensuite bathroom and held my gaze strictly on my reflection. Slowly, I reached behind my neck to close the clasp and watched as my mother's necklace, proud in all of its majestic, purple glory, settled against my chest.

It really was beautiful; I thought in the still silence of the bathroom. For a moment, I wondered if this **was** what my mother saw whenever she looked in the mirror.

Was there a chance I bore even the faintest resemblance to her? Was this the only way I could ever truly feel connected to her?

I felt my eyes start to wet. My body, growing warm, trembled with every beat of my heart, and yet, when I pressed my hand against my chest, **it** was as gentle as ever.

And then slowly, I began to feel something odd... like my heart was skipping. Like it was out of sync, trying desperately to intertwine with something I couldn't see. There was a strange rhythm to it, almost as if my pulse was beginning to race, but it didn't feel like it was my own, anymore.

There were two. Two heartbeats inside me—and there was **a** familiarity that I couldn't deny. A name jumped to the forefront of my mind... I **wasn't** sure how and I wasn't sure why, but I knew it to be right.

It **was** Xaden's heartbeat that I was trying to connect with. Xaden's heartbeat that I felt within my own.

And then I felt it.

Something that made the air around me start to tingle. A sort of reverberation that felt like magnets colliding... like an unseen energy was preparing to make itself known. The vibrations grew stronger and stronger, making my hair stand on end. My skin covered with goosebumps. There **was** something familiar about the way the air vibrated.

Almost like, **if** I paid close enough attention. if I really put my all into listening as carefully as possible... I could hear it.

A voice.

That voice. Trying to say something-

With a harsh gasp, I quickly unlatched the clasp of the pendant and pulled it away from my neck.

And, just like that, any trace of the strange sensation that overcame me... the rush of warmth that flooded my senses, swelling inside me like something I had only ever felt in dreams... vanished in an instant. Wide-eyed, I peered

around the room, on the faint chance someone else was in the room with me, but there, of course, I was alone.

That **was** a feeling I'd begun to feel more and more lately... and I... I had no idea why.

Xaden... he's just down the hall...

Could he have felt what happened, too?

Heart pounding, my gaze flickered down the open hallway in the direction of his office. Beyond the ringing in my ears, I could hear his voice, faint but deep and soothing like wondrous music to my soul, emerge from within the room. He was on the phone with someone, evidently still very much engrossed in whatever amount of work he had left to do.

So, it's probably not related to our fated mate bond.

Our bond... I'd never felt it as strong, as palpable as I did just then. It was like our souls were intertwined for those few moments, where I could feel the steady pulse of his heartbeat as clear as my own, the rhythmic inhale and exhale of his lungs slowly becoming in sync with my own...

It took me completely by surprise.

But, at the same time, I'd never felt so whole in my life. Feeling so connected to him, that it was impossible to tell where I ended and he began... it was like coming home after a long journey away.

It was enlightening, yet terrifying.

I wasn't sure what that was, or how it happened, but if this simple, antique necklace was enough to frighten Father...

Then there truly was something more to the necklace—and to my mother—than I could even begin to fathom.

