

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 85

Third Person POV

The moment Xaden and Burke left Moonstone's packhouse, Burton shut the doors behind them. He leaned against the frame with a heavy sigh of relief, close to collapsing but using every bit of his energy to maintain his alpha composure.

"Now..." he muttered, turning to face Victoria, who watched from the window as Xaden's car drove away, "do you understand just how grave the stakes are for us?"

The alpha was met with blaring silence from his luna.

"I'm not playing, Victoria," Burton said sternly. "Prince Xaden is not a forgiving man, especially after what Sarah did. If he even suspects that something is awry, he... he..." he tried to continue his train of thought, but the mere thought of the prince's threat coming to fruition made his throat run dry.

And that necklace... that damn necklace. He should've done away with-it years ago. But there was nothing more he could do about it.

After all, Xaden would never learn the truth.

It was then that Victoria met her mate's gaze. "I know better than anyone," she slowly answered, "that His Highness does not joke about punishments."

He sighed softly, stepping forward to touch her on her back.

“I know it’s difficult to move on, but perhaps it’s for the best,” he said, thinking it would somehow ease his wife’s concerns. Unbeknownst to him, it had the opposite effect. “Perhaps in time, Prince Xaden will be more receptive to the idea of freeing our daughter. We just need to be patient.”

Victoria hummed, turning back to the window. It wasn’t until Burton walked away that she snuck a peek at him once more.

But this was never about us, she thought, glaring a hole into her husband’s retreating figure. You only worry about yourself.

It was a truth she found herself believing with every passing day... and a truth she had been blind to until the day their family fell apart. The day his true colors began to show themselves.

But she didn’t need him. She would find a way to save her daughter, one way or the other. As long as there was a chance, Victoria was determined to take it.

MAEVE POV

It’s interesting how plans can change once you get a little perspective.

Initially, all I wanted–no.... all I needed was to survive this pregnancy with as little outside help as possible. The less people who knew about me, the better. Anything that prolonged the peace before total chaos could break **loose**.

But my **heart**–to–heart with Xaden two days ago had inspired me. I needed the reminder that I was not the only one whose **needs** had to be considered.

I had a growing baby to look after.

And this was how I found myself keeping busy in the drawing room, perched on a lush armchair and practically glued to the phone as I spoke with different clinics in the capital, all in search of the perfect doctor to take care of me and my baby.

This was it. My first real test as a mother, and I needed to do right by my son.

“You’re... not taking any more patients?” I asked, taken aback by what I was hearing over the phone. “But I’m in desperate need of a doctor. I’m pregnant with my first baby and I have no idea what I’m doing. Can you please make an exception?”

Well... trying to find the perfect doctor, at least. Trying and failing.

“I apologize, dear,” a shrill voice drawled on the other line, sounding like she’d rather be anywhere but in that call with me, “but there’s nothing I can do. All of our doctors are currently fully booked and are at full capacity. We don’t have the room to accept new patients.”

I knew the receptionist wasn’t telling me the whole truth. I researched every single one of these clinics. This one, in particular, primarily tended to women from the highest-ranking alpha families. I’d written their information down in the hopes that maybe they would make an exception once they realized just how helpless I was.

But, as it turned out, they would not accept a girl who did not match their apparent qualifications.

Not that they would ever admit that to a prospective client.

“I... understand,” I said, silently crossing out the name of the clinic with a prominent black line. “Thank you for your time.”

With the swift click of a button, the call came to an end.

I huffed. “Another refusal. I didn’t think finding decent healthcare outside of the palace would be so difficult.” I caressed my small bump, letting my head rest against my palm as I talked to the baby inside. “I knew things would get more complicated now that you’re coming, but I guess I never realized... just how lonely it can be sometimes.”

He was quiet today, but he was in there. He could hear me and knew his mama was talking to him, even if he had no idea what I was saying.

I smiled a little. “But don’t you worry your little head,” I murmured, not knowing, not caring if anyone heard me talking to what was otherwise an empty room. “I might be lonely, but I’m not alone... not when I have you—and your dad. I’ll make sure you’re well taken care of, no matter how long it’ll take.”

There **was** a brief hesitation before I continued. “I... just want to find a doctor that feels like my own, if that makes any **sense**. I might not get another chance like this again once I get married.”

I looked at my **list** of clinics once more, zeroing in on the last one.

Well... here goes nothing.

I pressed each number into the dial, listening to the musical tone of each click of a button, I felt my nerves start to build up once more. And as the line began to ring, faint tremors shook my hands.

I didn’t **have** many more options left, and if this one didn’t pan out, then I’d have no choice but to either visit a palace doctor or leave the safety of the capital to find another doctor—which I hoped to avoid at all costs.

“Hello. This is Doctor Meadows’ office. How may I assist you?”

“**Yes**, hi,” I said perhaps a little too quickly. “**Are** you taking new patients right now?”

“**Yes, we** are. Are you looking to schedule an appointment?”

I practically sank with relief in my chair. “**As** soon as possible, please,” I begged, hoping I didn’t sound too desperate. “It’s my first pregnancy, and I just want to make sure everything is going well.”

“Congratulations **on** your baby,” the receptionist said kindly, which I found to be a pleasant surprise. This **was** the first I’d gotten out of **all** the people I’d spoken with thus far. As far as first impressions went, this clinic was by far raising the bar. “Of course, we’d love to help you get started on this new and exciting journey.”

I smiled, murmuring a quiet ‘thank you,’ while gentle clicks of a keyboard could be heard over the phone.

“It looks like the earliest appointment we have for Dr. Meadows is for tomorrow, nine o’clock in the morning. Shall I put your name down?”

“I’ll take it,” I chirped, giving her the necessary information while I wrote down the clinic name and appointment time on a separate sheet of paper. Once everything was settled, I placed my pen down. “Thank you so much for this.”

“**We’ll** see you tomorrow, then.”

The **call** ended, and I sank back into my chair, feeling proud of myself. This was not like when I accepted to take lessons under the Luna Queen’s direction. I did this by myself. For myself, and for my baby.

Maybe I was not so much of a lost cause, after all.

As a **treat** to myself, I decided to dig into a small bowl of leftover beef stew from last night’s dinner. A delicious meal Maggie had organized for us with chunks of potato, vegetables, and all the beef I could ask for. Sitting comfortably in the dining room, I was overwhelmed with calm the moment I felt the warm broth trickle down my throat. So delicious and so soothing.

It couldn't have been more than ten minutes later when the phone suddenly rang again, interrupting my lunch.

Was it the clinic again?

I swallowed my food quickly and put my spoon down. I prepared to push myself out of my chair, but then Maggie emerged from the kitchen, wiping dry her hands on her apron from cleaning something, and headed towards the direction of the drawing room.

“**Please**, keep eating, Miss Maeve,” she said, gesturing for me to sit back down once she noticed I was in the process of getting up. “I’ll take care of this.”

“It’s alright. You were busy. I can-”

“Nonsense. This is hardly what I’d consider an inconvenience. Now,” Maggie said pointedly, “sit back down and eat.”

Feebly, I settled back in my chair as she went to answer the phone, feeling a bit like a scolded child. Still, I had to admit it was nice to let someone else handle it. Maybe the call had nothing to do with me. Maybe it was something Maggie could take **care** of without my help.

I **had** taken a few more spoonsful of the soup when she suddenly returned, phone in hand.

“Miss, it’s the Luna **Queen**,” Maggie said urgently as she approached me, holding out the phone. “She wants to **speak** with you.”

Queen Leonora?

Quickly, I put my spoon down and took the phone. “Your **Majesty**,” I stammered into the phone. “Good morning!”

“Good morning, **dear**,” Queen Leonora answered, sounding kind **as** ever and making me smile **a** little. Hearing her reminded me just how much I missed having our daily visits. “I hope I’m not interrupting anything.”

“Not at all, I’m just... having lunch.”

“Then I shall keep this brief. Might you be able to come to the palace tomorrow morning?”

“Tomorrow morning...?” I repeated, biting my lip as the appointment I’d just scheduled swiftly came to mind. “I actually have something in the morning, but I should be available hopefully after ten o’clock.”

“That’s perfect,” she answered without hesitation. “Shall we make it an even ten thirty? Perhaps that will give you ample time to arrive.”

“Nothing could stop me,” I replied, my smile deepening. “Are we continuing our lessons?”

It had been a few days since our last lesson together. What with that banquet to prepare for, along with all of her regular duties as queen, she must have been swamped with work. Not that I would ever fault her for not making the time.

It was a miracle she even offered to help me in the first place. I could not take such kindness for granted.

It seemed, however, that Queen Leonora had something planned up her royal sleeve. “Of a sort,” she answered, puzzling me. “I thought we’d try a different approach this time. Something a little more tailored to your future duties as a Luna Princess.”