

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 88

Maeve POV

As Isabelle smirked at me from behind her wine glass, the truth was made more apparent to me than ever.

She had only pretended to be cordial in an attempt to lower my guard. And chances were, if I somehow managed to circumvent my sister's party and that tussle with her friend, and instead met Isabelle immediately after Xaden rescued me, then that jab would have done exactly what she intended.

But little did she know, this was not my first time trapped in the wolf pit.

"Y-You know what?" I muttered through gritted teeth, scrunching the skirt of my dress with tight, white knuckles. Meanwhile, Isabelle peered down at me with an arched brow, daring to continue my train of thought.

And... to be honest, my first instinct was to shut up and cower.

Perhaps the Maeve from a month ago maybe even five days ago would have backed down. I could just picture how it would have happened, how I would have rolled over at even the slightest sign of resistance and exposed my belly like a docile, pathetic pup. Maeve of Moonstone was pliable... someone easy to push and play around with when one wanted entertainment.

But I was not the same girl I was a few days ago.

I straightened myself, mustering as much courage as was physically possible.

"I... I don't regret a single second of it. All those years living in that house showed me everything I knew I wanted out of life and everything I should never be. Living there helped me learn the importance of kindness and humility-something you could stand to learn a thing or two about," I snapped with a cold glare directed straight at her, feeling far from the girl I was a week ago.

"And what could I possibly gain from that?" she drawled, unimpressed. "None of those will win me any favors among fellow alphas."

I shrugged. "On the contrary, I think you could gain plenty. For starters, you could find some friends to keep you company," I retorted. "Then you would have something better to do with your time than pick on others, since your duties as a Luna Princess clearly aren't enough to satisfy you."

Immediately, her face reddened with fury as a thick vein throbbed in her forehead. She did not appreciate my insinuation in the slightest. Part of me wished I could say that I felt even a little bit of pity for her, but that was difficult to do behind all the adrenaline that coursed through my veins.

"Like you would know anything about having friends or duties," she spat. "You've only been here less than a week, and you're already acting like you own everything."

"I have never claimed such a thing," I countered, unable to stop, ignorant to the stunned faces at my side. "But your behavior is nothing like what I expected a Luna Princess to be like. I always imagined they were someone to look up to, someone who cared about her people... but I never thought I'd meet one who was so juvenile."

Her eyes practically bulged out of her head the moment those words left my mouth.

And, if I was perfectly honest with myself, I couldn't believe my own audacity.

With impeccable timing, the kitchen doors blew open as carts stacked with food came rolling out before Isabelle could attempt a response. That was probably for the best, too. By the time I had finished my verbal assault, I was shaking with adrenaline so fervently that I couldn't focus on anything else.

What just happened, that was so unlike me...

I didn't think I could manage something like that again.

"That was fantastic, Maeve," Charlotte whispered next to me with a wide, mischievous grin, while Lucas held up a proud thumb- up. "I almost wish I'd taken a picture of her face when you'd said that."

I smiled weakly in response, not quite sure how to feel about it.

As the servants placed the different dishes of food on the table, I suddenly caught a whiff of something strong that made my stomach churn. An uncomfortable sort of movement that was most decidedly not hunger. It took over my body, quick and unforgiving.

Whatever had been wheeled out on those carts... I needed to stay away from it.

Xaden leaned in close, thankfully having realized something was wrong. "Maeve, you've gone pale," he murmured wide-eyed, caressing my back with slow, soothing strokes. "Do you not feel well?"

Suddenly overcome with strong waves of dizziness, I shook my head with a quiet groan. I could feel my skin start to grow clammy. From the second the scent hit my nose; I knew what the culprit was.

For some reason, I was highly sensitive to fish and rare-grade meats-an aversion that I was quick to discover while I tried to explore the farmer's market at Mona Road with Maggie all those days ago and the table was stacked full of grilled salmon and beautifully cooked steaks of varying

degrees. I had never had any problems with either delicacy before, so I could only credit it to being a side effect of my pregnancy.