

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 92

I just sat there and took it all. Absorbed it like a sponge, and every insult Henry hurled at him was a splash of water.

But even sponges have their limits, I thought. Surely, he would tire of the harassment and speak up for himself before the evening was over. I was sure his siblings would have enjoyed the sight of their eldest, obnoxious brother's ego getting kicked down by a few notches.

I knew I would have loved to see Eric take a stand. Do what I never had the courage to do in front of my own family.

But it never happened.

Outside of the banquet hall, as everyone began to depart, Eric approached Xaden and me. "Thank you for letting me join you, Maeve," he murmured, his gaze flickering between me and the floor. "It was... nice to see you again."

Something inside me both warmed up and deflated at the same time upon hearing him say that.

"There's no need to thank me," I insisted. "I was happy to have you there."

Pensiveness suddenly marred his face as he glanced behind me towards the open banquet hall door. "At least you were," he said with a small smile.

After Xaden quietly apologized to him for the rude remarks made by their older brother and Eric had already begun to retreat to his room, Henry left the banquet hall, followed by his wife.

The moment his lazy gaze caught sight of Eric; I got this horrible, sick feeling in the pit of my stomach.

"Good riddance," Henry spat as he strolled past me without a care in the world, glaring a hole into the back of his younger brother's slim silhouette. And it was like the ground quaked beneath me. "Crawl back to your hole, you freak of nature."

The cruel choice of words was horrifying. I'd had enough.

Even if the hate was not directed at me, I could not stand another second of the abuse. I had just escaped a house where I was forced to accept it as my reality, where even after my days of freedom and love in Xaden's home, I struggled to free my mind from my family's dirty clutches. It took a long time for me to even begin to tear apart at their intricate web, and I wanted more than anything to help Eric out of his.

So, while Xaden chastised his brother, I stormed through the hall, desperate to share a piece of my mind.

But not to any of the princes.

No. My blind fury led straight to Alpha King Arlan, who was just leaving the banquet hall with Luna Queen Leonora, as I ignored Xaden's calls. "Why haven't you done anything to help Eric?" I demanded.

He regarded me slowly, almost with disbelief. "Excuse me?"

"Maeve," Xaden interjected, grabbing onto my arm with wild, worried eyes, his mother mirroring a very similar look on her face." What are you doing?"

And just then, it dawned on me just what was happening-I was actually picking a fight with the king himself. I could get into serious trouble if I said even the slightest insult to him. I could lose everything

But I couldn't stop.

It was like I was possessed by some vengeful spirit, desperate to have her voice heard.

"D-During dinner," I said as I lost momentum, frantically trying to gather my thoughts in the process, "Henry kept saying such awful things about Eric in front of everybody and you... you just let it happen. Why?"

His lip curled in response. "Why should I intervene? It's an issue between brothers." I couldn't help but gape at the king. "Eric is not just some scapegoat for you or anyone to unleash your anger upon," I spat, desperately trying to ignore the tremors that shook my body, "he's your son. And he has the same rights as any of your other children, no matter how you feel towards him."

The Alpha King did not say a word. He just watched me... very carefully.

"Do you think they asked for the weight of your crown on their shoulders?" I continued, letting this angry spirit keep control over me. "You're the one who placed such impossibly high standards on your children."

"I only want what is best for my children," he growled, low, a warning. Xaden's grip tightened around me.

I shook my head, not tearing my furious gaze away. "Neither Eric, Xaden, nor anyone else in this family needs to improve on anything," I insisted. "You're the one who needs to fix themselves. Be a better father to m-to them!"

Having said everything I needed to say, I froze, heaving and shaking profusely like I had just run a marathon.

But no one else dared to speak up in the silence.