

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 78

XADEN POV

And so, I waited

I waited, ready to burst at the seams with excitement and anticipation, for a sign any sort of sign that my baby was, in fact, moving inside Maeve's belly. Her reaction had been so sudden, so harsh and yet so giddy, that I could not help but want to experience even a sliver of what she was feeling

It had been many years since I was able to feel anything remotely similar falling as far back as when my mother was pregnant with my younger siblings, Lucas and Charlotte, but I was too young to be able to really remember any of it.

This would be my first real—memorable—experience with pregnancy and babies.

Not only that... but it was my **baby** in there. My child, who was growing remarkably and would one day enter our lives. The thought that I could perhaps feel this little life that I'd had a hand in creating was enough **to** send my mind spinning

But... it seemed I would have to **wait** a bit longer for such a pleasure.

"I can't feel anything," I admitted, feeling a little disappointed.

Maeve, however, was completely undeterred. She kept my hand planted firmly against her gently protruding baby bump... all the while gazing up at me with wide-eyed wonderment.

She looked like a child who had just experienced snow for the first time.

The sight, along with her unbridled joy, was utterly infectious.

“I wish you could feel this,” she murmured, her soft voice teetering on the edge of a whisper more than anything else. It was as if she was worried speaking even an octave louder would somehow burst the delicate bubble that had formed around us, that protected the three of us from anything and everything else. “It’s like nothing I’ve ever felt before.”

I swallowed hard, my hand beginning to shake underneath hers. My feeble mind could not yet fully comprehend just how she meant that, but somehow, I found myself agreeing with her every word.

How must it feel, I mused silently, to be able to feel our son like she does?

Our son.

Just saying that word was a jolt to my system. Part of me still could not believe it to be real sometimes

I cared very much for my younger siblings. I had even taken some pride in raising them with my self-proclaimed great and wise influence... although I suspected that our mother and the nanny’s we’d had throughout our youth had some strong opinions otherwise It was because of this that my mother used to make the odd comment every now and then about any future children I might have, cooing about how she’d spoil the pups every chance she got, among other things.

The sentiment, which I thought endearing, was also something that would render me silent.

The truth **was**... I had not really given any real thought into having my own children. Not yet, at least.

As a twenty-three-year-old **alpha** with his whole life ahead of him and the world at his feet, the last thing I **had** on my mind was to slow down and start a family. Of course, being a prince meant that I didn't really have a choice when it came to it, but I had wanted to prolong it for as much as possible.

It was something I could worry about once I'd become king and maybe some years after **that**.

But now, **as** Maeve sat in front of me, giggling and smiling as she felt our son Butter **inside** her, I felt nothing but butterflies, myself. Like this was something my restless soul had been waiting for all my life.

Sometimes, I would think to myself just how lucky I was to find and meet her, but maybe luck had nothing to do with it.

Maybe... just maybe, we actually were here because of fate.

A large, stupid grin slowly spread across my **face** as I **gazed** at my world and my future before me. Fate or not, I was mere months away from having everything I never knew I needed, and I would do everything in my power to protect them

No harm would ever befall them as long as I was here.

Not from the press.

Not from my family.

Not from anyone.

MAEVE POV

Going to bed was a particular pleasure that night.

After a long, eventful day filled with shopping, an impromptu makeover for the crown princess of our kingdom, and trying—and poorly failing at getting Xaden to feel our baby move, I was practically drained of all my energy and more than ready to get some sleep

With Xaden’s strong, comforting arm wrapped around my middle, and as we lay shrouded in the darkness of our bedroom, I let my eyes flutter shut with a content hum, surrendering myself to the blissful embrace of sleep.

But then I felt a warm breeze brush against my cheek, tickling my skin. Contrary to the cool, crisp air that normally came with the night.

My nose twitched. My brows pinched together in confusion.

Morning couldn’t have come already. Not before I had the **chance** to rest. Was it one of those nights that seemed to pass in the mere blink of an eye!

I figured that might’ve been the case, but when I opened my eyes, I saw not my bedroom, but a meadow filled with lush, purple wildflowers and a bright, beaming sun shining down on me, surrounded by tall, sweeping **grass**.

I was **back** in that dream world. That could only mean I would soon hear-

“Maeve...” the voice greeted me, warm and welcoming and filling me with pure light. “It’s been **some** time....”

I bit my cheek, smiling weakly at nothing in particular. However silly it might have been, I got the sense that this disembodied voice **was** more than that and could truly see me. I only wished that I would, one day, be able to have the favor returned.

“I’m sorry,” I said. I’m not quite sure how to control this if it’s even something that’s within my power to control, that is.”

“I am only here because you allow me to be...”

Admittedly, I wasn't sure how to feel about that. Hearing the voice always felt like coming home after a long trip, and sounded like the purest form of love I could imagine. I would give anything to be able to listen to this voice.

But

“I wish I could say the same,” I said, slumping with guilt against the flowing meadow, “but every time I speak to you, I hear something I don't want to hear.”

“Little lamb...” the voice cooed, instantly washing over me like warm sun rays on a cold day, drowning my worries **away**. “None of this is meant to scare you, this is only to prepare you for what is to come

“But why me...?” I asked, feeling helpless. “Why is the burden mine to bear? I feel like I'm being forced into a story in which I have place. I have no support, no guidance... and, in the end, I'm just... me...”

“Maeve... what you do not yet realize is how hard the universe worked to bring you to life. You **are** someone that has been long awaited. someone that **is** desperately needed in ways that you **cannot** even begin to imagine.

My heart pounded as I mulled over what that meant. It was a confusing blend of feeling like one of my childhood dreams come true of finally feeling like my existence had purpose—and, at the same time, feeling like the weight of many worlds falling atop my shoulders.

What did this voice mean by that?

“But you must tread carefully, little one... there are those waiting in the shadows, keeping their watchful eye on you and on the baby.”

The moment my mind registered those words, it was like everything came to a **standstill**. All the lovely purple wildflowers, the tall grass, and even the **leaves** on the **trees** in the **far** distance.

The world just... stopped.

Had I heard the voice correctly? Someone wanted my baby? I could hear the blood rush in my ears amid the tense silence.

Instinctively. I threw my hands onto my pregnant belly, as if to shield the unborn life that rested within. “W–Who wants my baby?” I demanded, feeling almost sick to my stomach, **as** well as a burning urge to protect my innocent child. “What do they want with him?”

“Do not under any circumstance—let him near the baby, Maeve.”

A cold chill rolled up my spine. Again, there was that mention of “he.” It had been some time since I last mulled over these warnings, but what I’d heard last time immediately flashed in my mind

There was an alpha I needed to be wary of Someone I couldn’t yet identify. Someone who was either close to me, or soon would be.

He must be the one who wanted my baby.

My blood boiled, hot and feverish throughout my body like nothing I had ever felt before. This child was one of the only things I could claim that was truly mine. My unborn son, little and innocent and pure, would never endure even a moment of what I did my entire life. To think **that** someone wanted him for their own selfish gain sickened me.

Infuriated me to my core.

“I won’t let anyone take my baby from me,” I vowed darkly, sounding surprisingly similar to Xaden in tone. “No one”

In my blind, frightened fury, I felt the frozen world around me start to melt away piece by piece. Everything faded **to darkness** Nothingness.

And when I woke up, drenched in a cold sweat, I let out a sigh, even though my worries were far from Over.

The sun had yet to rise, and Xaden's arm was still wrapped tightly around me. It must have only been a few hours since we went to bed. Trembling, I burrowed deeper against his warm body like he would be able to shield me and our baby from harm, even in sleep

He was here. He would not let anything happen to us.

So, why did I feel so utterly **alone..!**