

# The Hidden Luna Queen

## Chapter 10

### Maeve POV

Back at that disaster of a party, I recalled **him** saying **that** he would be taking me to live with him, but he never specified a particular place. Surely he hadn't meant the royal palace. Not the place where the Alpha King and his family resided.

Oh, how I hoped he wasn't the type of royal to live there!

As the car steadily approached a large, majestic gate decorated with the royal family crest, mild panic began to swell within me. Besides Xaden, I had never met another member of the nobility. I had no idea what they were like, nor what they would think of someone like me stepping into their territory.

Glancing down at my wine-soaked mess of a dress and my little baby bump, I couldn't help but feel self-conscious. I didn't **loathe** my unborn baby.. but I still needed time to come to terms with all the changes that were happening to me.

"What's wrong?"

I **looked** over at Xaden and noticed he was eyeing me with a hint of concern.

"Are you sure it's alright for me to show up at the royal palace looking like this?" I asked shyly, gesturing to my clothes.

Xaden flashed a smirk at me. "Who said anything about going to the palace?"

I raised my eyebrows in confusion. “Then where...?”

He directed my gaze to something on the horizon. Instead of entering the gates, the car changed course and, suddenly, I was able to see where we were headed. Indeed, we were not going to the royal palace.

We headed straight for a mansion.

I stared, awestruck, at the mansion from my seat near the window. Despite the stately architecture, it was small compared to that of the royal palace and was located deep within the grounds, far from prying eyes and hidden behind a grove of hickory trees, which made it feel reassuringly private.

This is Prince Xaden’s home?

I turned to him. “Why aren’t we staying at the palace?”

“You don’t want that,” he said, planting his hand on my own. “Trust me.”

A faint memory flashed in my mind upon hearing those last words—a dimly lit room and the scent of clean sheets... a handsome figure haloed by lamplight hovered above me, his course fingers grazing my ticklish skin as he whispered those seductively sinful words. “Trust me

**I blushed.**

But, at the same time, something dark twisted inside me. Did he mean to hide me? If that was the case, I wanted no part of it -I’d hidden enough to last a lifetime. “Please, tell me,” I implored. “I want to know.”

There was a brief moment of silence as Prince Xaden hesitated.

“Life in the palace is not as glamorous as one might think,” he sighed. “My brothers—the other Alpha Princes—and their ambitious families, hunger for the throne as if their very lives depend on it, and every day is a race to gain the favor of the king and our subjects. When the kingdom projected me as the best candidate for Heir Apparent, everything only worsened, and... I... I didn’t

want to live with that anymore, so I moved here while still being able to fulfill my royal duties.”

His fingers brushed along my palm. “It’s exhausting.” he murmured, “having a family that you can’t trust.”

I gazed at him.

This seemed to be a secret side of Prince Xaden that he didn’t allow himself to share with outsiders. Of course, how could he? As an admired prince and a potential heir apparent to the crown, he had a permanent target on his back—it must have been a **painful** lesson to learn how little he could trust those around him.

For him to feel comfortable enough to share this with me it warmed me inside. And, not only that, but he understood the pain that came with a toxic household, just as I did. It was a relief to know that I wasn’t alone.

And now, neither was he.

I squeezed his hand—a silent promise. “You can always trust me.”

Wordlessly, he squeezed back. His eyes shone with something I **couldn’t** quite pinpoint but I yearned **to** see more of

An awkward cough from the Prime **Beta** quickly put an end to that tender moment. However much I enjoyed seeing this soft side of the prince, public displays of affection **were** a foreign concept for me. I shyly tore my gaze away and intended to move **my** hand but Prince Xaden kept it locked in place.

“Pay him no mind.” he teased. “Beta Burke is usually a background sort of man.”

His Beta scoffed with amusement. “Kindly put, Your Highness,”

I fidgeted, embarrassed, and kept quiet but left my hand entwined with the prince's. Once the car rolled to a stop in front of the mansion, Burke exited the car first, being the one closest to the door. Xaden was next to leave and, turning back to me, he offered his hand to help me **out** of the car.

I looked at his hand with uncertainty. Should he really be helping me out like this?

"You don't **have** to be afraid," he said, further extending his hand.

Slowly, I reached out and took his hand—big and warm and welcoming.

"Welcome back, Prince Xaden, sir," a short, plump woman greeted with a low, reverent curtsy as the three of us approached. the **grand main doors** of the mansion. "Did your outing to Moonstone go well?"

He strode inside with myself and Beta Burke in tow. "As well as it could have, Maggie. Though I did manage to return with something that made it all worth it."

My heart pounded. Did he mean...?

Xaden planted his hand on my back and nudged me forward. "This is Maeve," he **said**, and heat rose on my cheeks as I realized the implication of his words. "She's going to be staying with us indefinitely."

With a lifted eyebrow, Maggie dipped her head. "How do you do, miss?"

I bowed in response. "Hello, ma'am," I whispered.

"As much **as** I'd like to stay, I have some business I need to attend to," Xaden admitted, before turning to the housekeeper. "In the meantime, please get this young **woman** a fresh change of clothes and show her around the grounds."

My **face** fell. "You're **leaving**?"

The corners of **his** lips tilted upwards. “Till only be in my study. I won’t be too far away. Besides, Maggie, here, will take very good care of you,” he reassured before glancing back towards the housekeeper, “won’t you, Maggie?”

“Of course, **sire**,” she affirmed in earnest.

Anxiety bubbled in my stomach. This wasn’t my territory and she knew that to her, I was just some dirty woman that Xaden picked up off the streets. I hoped she wasn’t going to be as judgmental as she appeared to be

Xaden rubbed my back, a gesture I found soothing. “You’ll be fine,” he promised. “I’ll catch up when I can.”

And with that, the prince and his beta left.

“Alright, little miss—come here. Front and center,” Maggie said with a clap, and the authority in her voice made me hustle into formation. “Now, if you could please tell me **your** name and your purpose for being here.”

“My purpose?”

“What are you to His Royal Highness?”

That question rendered me at a loss for words. Xaden and I hadn’t yet discussed the depth of **our relationship**—was I supposed to be his mistress. or just a pregnant one-night stand... or something else entirely? We could hardly be considered friends, yet we were not quite lovers either. but there was some sort of undeniable connection between the two of us that we could not really explain.

For goodness’ sake, we were even expecting a baby together, which would never have happened without that cosmic connection. A baby he seemed to sincerely want, unlike my family who kept me solely for the sake of their reputation.

That had to mean something, right?

“Ahem.”

Maggie stared at me expectantly **as** I jolted back to reality. “Miss?” she pressed.

“Oh... my name is Maeve

“And your purpose!”

I hesitated. “... I don’t know.”

She sighed with an impatient shake of her head. “That doesn’t give me anything to work with. I suppose I have no choice but to trust His Highness and make do.” Without wasting **another** moment, she shuffled me into a conservative, yet comfortable- looking bedroom, draped with neutral colors and muted blues. Everything was immaculate and organized to perfection, which led me to believe **this** was her private quarters.

After a quick inspection of the dresser, she pulled out a simple, deep blue dress. “Let’s have you try this on, yes?”

Shyly, I nodded. “I’ll wear anything you can give me.”

I guess **that** wasn’t the response she had expected because one of her eyebrows raised in surprise and her mouth fell slightly open as if to say something, but she was quick to compose herself. With her **assistance**, I removed my ruined dress, setting it aside to be thrown out later, and put on the blue dress she provided.

Maggie observed as I modeled in front of the standing mirror. “Is it to your liking?”

It really was a simple dress, but there was an elegance to it. The lantern sleeves fit loosely around my thin arms and the knee- length skirt flowed with grace as I swirled for the mirror, giving the dress a very romantic feel. And with its empire waistline, it perfectly hid my small baby bump from prying eyes, which made me heave a sigh of relief.

One aspect of the dress I **was** absolutely stunned by, however, was the color. I'd only ever worn old clothes of muted beige, black, or gray at home—any other colors were meant for pure **Alphas**, according to **Sarah**—but I found that this deep blue **looked** rather nice against my pale skin.

For the first time, I actually dared to feel a little pretty.

“It’s lovely.” I smiled. “Thank you.”

“Nonsense. I was merely following orders.”

As she further tidied up my appearance, smoothing out the dress skirt and adjusting the loose neckline, curiosity bloomed within me. “Maggie,” I started after some hesitation, “how long have you been with Prince Xaden?”

“I have served His Highness since his young adolescent years,” Maggie said with a lift of her chin, tall with pride. “Besides our beloved Luna Queen, I was personally in charge of his royal upbringing.”

—Oh!” Her answer was a a **pleasant** surprise. “Would you tell me what he was like?”

I saw this as my chance to learn **about** Xaden from someone who knew him well before he became the renowned Alpha Prince everyone knew him as. After all, she sounded like the closest thing to a second mother figure for him. He was the father of my baby, and I yearned to know more about his own childhood.

She eyed me, looking quite stern. “That’s something for the prince to divulge, himself, Miss Maeve. I shan’t speak a word about him until I know who **you are**.”

Disappointment flooded me, but admittedly, it had been a long shot.

I was still a stranger, after all.

“If there are no more questions, let’s begin the tour,” she suggested, beckoning me to follow as she opened the door.

Some time into Maggie’s tour of the mansion, we had to pass through **what** looked like the main hall. I was in awe of the beautiful decorations and how they all seemed to nicely reflect the mansion’s architecture. All of the paintings, the carpets with intricate design work, the crystal chandeliers—this was, without a doubt, a style befitting of a prince.

As we walked on, a pair of dainty, hurried footsteps suddenly caught our attention. “Hello?” a light, airy voice called out to us. “Could one of you tell me where I can find the guest room?”

My stomach **sank** with **dread**. I knew **that** voice and it was one I’d never thought I’d hear on palace grounds. Bella—my sister’s so-called “bestie” and a fellow Alpha’s daughter who took cruel pleasure in bullying me alongside Sarah.

This was not going to go well.