

The Hidden Luna Queen

Chapter 7

Maeve POV

“Your Highness,” the room collectively murmured with a bow.

Prince Xaden.

The crowds dispersed as he strode into the room with authority, and the ground beneath me crumbled.

My one-night stand is Prince Xaden.

Seeing him once more in the flesh, without the haziness of a drug-induced heat, made my scared, lonely heart skip a beat. His dark, lustrous hair dangled nicely in his roguishly handsome face and he stood tall **and** proud, looking every bit like the daring and confident Alpha Prince he was. He truly was the vision I remembered him to be and more.

And then—like something out of a fairytale—our eyes met across the banquet hall.

Panicked, I quickly tore my gaze away and lowered my head.

We might’ve shared a wonderful, **fantastical** night together, but I needed to face reality. He is the Alpha Prince -and I was just... me.

He probably didn’t even remember me.

However, heavy and swift footsteps made their way over to where I stood, dripping with wine. Fabric shuffled and, suddenly, the weight of a damask blazer fell gently over my trembling shoulders, left behind by tender, reassuring hands. Still, I did not dare lift my eyes.. but I clung to the blazer as tightly as I could—my only source of comfort that came from the most kind and generous **man** in the room.

“Alpha Burton, is this how you treat your omega servants?”

Father cleared his throat awkwardly. “Actually, she’s—uh.. my daughter, sire.”

I felt the prince’s surprised gaze wash over me, yet I continued to purposefully avoid him. “How ridiculously absurd,” he muttered, incredulous, but not for one second did he stray from my side. “I never **knew** it became common practice to treat one’s own daughter with such blatant disrespect

The familiar click-clack of **Sarah’s** expensive high heels stepped forward.

“**Allow** me to explain, Your Highness! **This** is all because my sister had the misfortune of having a one-night stand with a stranger some **weeks** ago, and now she finds herself pregnant with the **man’s child.**”

I gasped, lifting my **head**. No-

He **wasn’t** supposed to **find** out! Especially not like this!

He was campaigning to become the next Alpha King. If he decided he wanted nothing **to** do with me or our baby, I would rather never let him **know** anything. I would never subject my little one to a life of loathing.

Prince Xaden’s eyes widened. “**Pregnant?**”

“Yes, but there is no cause for concern,” she **said** proudly. “Our father **is** a strict man and is most unhappy with Maeve, so there **have** been talks of expelling her from Moonstone because we will not tolerate bastard mutts-“

“Stop right there,” he warned. The dangerous glint in his eyes startled everyone... most of all, Sarah.

Puzzled, and a little frightened, she cocked her head. “Your Highness..?”

An increasingly irritated Prince Xaden straightened with a sharp expression. “Allow me to **explain** something, you blabbering busybody,” he spat. “That **baby** is not a bastard mutt and I forbid you from using that term ever again.”

Sarah reddened with outrage at the prince’s insult.

“That baby,” he continued, “is mine.”

A chorus of gasps filled the banquet hall.

I could imagine the train of thought everyone in the room must **have** run through: The ever-so-popular Alpha **Prince** Xaden impregnated some random Alpha’s daughter out of wedlock in the middle of his campaign for the throne? What impropriety!

My family, however, were shocked **for** different reasons.

“Y–Your Highness must be mistaken,” Sarah stammered. “Maeve **was** seen with several men at a brothel that night. It couldn’t have-

“Yes, and if I recall correctly, it was right outside the capital’s infamous Diamond Cage brothel–the filthy alleyway directly alongside it, was it not?” The color drained from my sister’s face, and it **was** clear she realized he spoke the truth–only three people in the entire kingdom knew the precise time and place it all transpired, and they were all gathered in this very room. “It was shortly after sunset when I found her, scared and drugged and surrounded by dangerous, belligerent men.

Shocked murmurs floated around behind us,

“This can’t be true.” Sarah muttered, appalled.

Victoria stepped forward, gaping **at** me. “Why didn’t you tell us it was the prince you’d been with?”

“L.. didn’t know... Honestly.”

“Wh–Why don’t we continue this matter in my private office, Your Highness?” Father suggested. I could see the crippling anxiety behind his silent plea, and I knew the thought of **losing** control over me utterly terrified him. “There, we can further discuss what you plan to do **about** my daughter’s child-

“**That** won’t be necessary, Prince Xaden said with complete authority. “Both Maeve and our baby will come to live with me.”

Live... with the prince. with our baby?

My heart fluttered, torn between confusion and **hope**. “**What?**”

I felt his hand move to caress mine in response.

“Only, of course,” he relented, his voice softening, “if that is what **she** desires.”

At that moment, I could have sworn I saw **a** bright, golden halo materialize above Prince Xaden’s beautiful head. This man had more power than any man or woman could ever want at his fingertips, and yet, he left this decision to me. Unlike my own blood, he seemed to value my individuality.. my free will.

And suddenly, it was like he was the only other person in the room.

With a shy, yet growing smile, I nodded emphatically. “I’d like that”

He further pulled my hand into his in front of everyone, warmth radiating through his touch. “Then it’s settled.”

Father stepped forward one last time. “Sire, I urge you to reconsider. Maeve is-

“She is carrying a child of the crown, Prince.” Xaden interjected, taking a menacing step forward. His eyes burned **with a** hostility that showed he was not to be opposed. “Do you mean to say you intend to keep them both from me?”

“O—Of course not, Your Highness, Father cowered, not looking at all like the alpha he was supposed to be. “Please, forgive me.” The pathetic display of submission seemed to satisfy Prince Xaden.

I was in awe—I’d never seen Father yield to anyone like this.

“As I thought. Prime Beta Burke, please hand the birthday girl her gift. And you, Maeve.” he murmured, turning to me with a smirk, “should go change into something clean and dry so we can get out of here.”

Sarah gaped **as** we prepared to leave, completely disregarding the bespectacled Prime **Beta** that plopped the prince’s gift on the designated gift table.

My shoulders slumped with guilt. She had been looking forward to this day for weeks. No one in our family had been more obsessed with meeting Prince Xaden than she **was**. Heck, she knew more about him than I ever did, and I’m the one carrying his baby.

In a strange way, I couldn’t help but feel like I took something that didn’t belong to me.

“Prince Xaden, please stop!” she screamed. “You **can’t** leave with her!”

I knew Sarah. She was as headstrong as her mother. She was not going to **give** up so easily.

“You’re making the worst mistake of your life!”

Prince Xaden came to a stop. "Excuse me?" he enunciated, slow and careful, not looking at her.

"You think you're the first man Maeve has ever been **with?**" she spat, a last-ditch attempt to change the prince's mind. "She seduces men to sleep with her with **that** helpless virgin act! She's **a** sleaze, a con-worse than any of those capital prostitutes! Even if you did spend that night together, that baby could belong to any man in the entire kingdom!

I was utterly horrified by the depth of Sarah's twisted mind.

How could she make up such disgusting lies about her own sister?