

Kids from One Alpha By Selena Lynch Chapter 41

Kids from One Alpha

Chapter 41

Chapter 41: Carson and Serena

Carson wasn't badly injured after the most recent Moonshine attack, but Serena had patched him up when he'd come into the hospital and supplied him with fluids. Since then, he had stopped by every day to see her while the hospital renovations had been in progress.

Always with an excuse, like checking in for the Alpha, but Serena was starting to suspect there was more to his visits. "I see you go the new hospital beds installed," Carson said when Serena entered an unoccupied room to restock medical supplies. Starting, she whipped around to see Carson sitting on the new bed, bouncing up and down to test the mattress. Serena sighed and smiled at him.

"What are you doing here?" she asked. "Daily progress report," he said dismissively. "I really doubt that," Serena said, going to the medical cabinet and putting the new stock of supplies away. "That hurts," Carson said. "You really don't believe me?" "No, I don't," Serena said, glancing over her shoulder and smirking at him. Carson grinned. "You don't think I have an honest face?" he asked, giving her an innocent smile. Serena rolled her eyes, but laughed. He was entertaining, and she found herself flirting right back with all his antics! "See this folder?" she asked, holding up the file in her hand. Carson nodded. "The Alpha has me making daily reports on my progress. I send them directly to his office after each one of my shifts. He wouldn't need you to come in and check on my progress." Carson pursed his lips. "Alright, you caught me," he said jokingly. "I just like the hospital. Something about new medical equipment and the smell of sterility is a real turn on." He hopped off the bed and bounced his eyebrows. Serena giggled. "Yea, I'm sure it is," she said. "I've still got a lot of work to do today. If this really is going to be a daily event, do you mind if we pick it up again tomorrow?" she asked. "Oh, are you inviting me to come visit again?" he asked coyly. Serena rolled her eyes. She liked how flirtatious and goofy he was. It allowed her to feel like she could get go of her own control sometimes. Carson was a great Beta, a strong leader, and he wasn't afraid to go great lengths to protect the pack. She had treated him twice after attacks from their rival pack! Serena was a little out of practice when it came to flirting, but Carson had made it easy for

"I didn't realize that the Beta needed my permission for anything," Serena teased. Carson shrugged, grinning. "In that case, I'll see you for dinner tonight," he said, winking at her. Serena scoffed and shook her head. "Are you asking me out to dinner?" she asked. Carson smirked. "You said I didn't need to ask your permission, so I'm telling you that I will see you for dinner," he informed her. Serena sighed. "Well, I walked right into that one, didn't I?" she asked. Carson laughed. "If you don't want to, I'll understand,"

he said. Serena shook her head. She thought about it for a moment. The only other male she'd had a chance to really talk to since she'd come to the pack, other than Logan, had spurned her the moment he found out that she had kids. Carson was charming, funny, and nice. She didn't want to get her hopes up though, and then have him react the same way the guy at the party had. "You know I have kids, right?" she asked. "That I'm a single mom?" Carson raised an eyebrow at her. "Um, yes," he said. "Did you want to bring them to dinner too?" Serena smiled lightly. "No, I was just making sure," she said with a nod. "Why would that bother me?" Carson asked. Serena shrugged. She scooped her folder up under her arm, seeing the time and realizing she had to get back to her rounds. "I have no idea," she admitted. "It seems to bother some pack members." Carson growled under his breath. "Then they aren't worth your time," he informed her, crossing his arms over his chest. "Thanks for the pep talk," she said. "Now, I do need to get back to my rounds." "Does that mean I'll be seeing you for dinner?" Carson asked as she headed for the door of the room they were in. Serena smirked, glancing at him over her shoulder. "I thought you weren't asking permission," she said. Carson smiled broadly. "Good, my place then, tonight," he said. Serena nodded and left the room. As she was walking to the next room she had to check on, her steps faltered. She'd just agreed to going to Beta Carson's house for dinner! The idea was so strange to her. She hadn't gone on a date with anyone since the twins were born. Now, the Beta was asking her out!

Her thoughts became conflicted when she thought about Logan. Carson and Logan were best friends. Logan was likely the father of her kids. What kind of problems could that cause? She didn't know, but for the first time since coming to Night Sky.

she didn't care. Carson was a lot of fun to be around, and Serena wanted some more adult fun time. She wanted to go on a date with him, and it was the first time, as a single mom, where she was able to make the choice to do something for herself. "What is with the pep in your step?" Adriana asked her when she made it to the nurse's station. "I'm going to dinner with Beta Carson," she said, unable to hide her smile. "Huh," Adriana said. "Honestly not what I expected, but good for you." "Thanks," Serena said. "I'm so out of practice. I have no idea what to do." Adriana laughed. "Just show up, look pretty, and laugh at his jokes," she said. Serena chuckled. "That's easy enough. Speaking of, can I get off a little early so I can make sure the kids are fed and Dana can watch them?" she asked. "Sure, just, leave enough time to get yourself dolled up too," Adriana said. Serena smiled. She finished filing her paperwork and then headed to pick the kids up from daycare. Dana wasn't at the daycare, and Serena was told that Dana was sick. When she got them back to Logan's, she made a quick snack for them and then called Carson. "Hey, I'm sorry to have a last-minute change, but the sitter is sick," she said. "There's no one to watch the kids. Luna Flo is overseeing more renovation plans at the hospital." "Oh, that's really too bad," Carson said. "But, if that is the only thing stopping you, just bring them along to my house. I'm sure we can keep them entertained." Serena hesitated. She had actually been disappointed when she learned Dana was sick and the kids had no sitter. Another part of her had been relieved though, and she was glad for the excuse not to go. Now, Carson was removing her excuses. He wasn't going to make it easy for her. She appreciated that as much as it made her uncomfortable.

“Alright,” she said slowly. “If you’re sure you’re okay with two rambunctious twins in your house..” she trailed off. Carson laughed. “According to Logan, they are great kids,” he said. Serena rolled her eyes even though Carson couldn’t see her. The Alpha would say that! “They are,” she assured. “Give me a bit to get them ready and make myself presentable. Oh, they’re a little picky about food, so I can just make something.” “That sounds lovely.” Carson said. Serena hung up. She showered while the kids ate their snack. She dressed herself in a casual dressy outfit, did her hair and even put on a little makeup. When she felt like she was presentable, she got the kids into clean outfits and packed a bag with some of their

toys and games to help keep them occupied. “Where are we going?” Olivia asked as they headed out the front door. “We are going to my friend’s house for dinner,” she said. “You have a friend?” Olivia asked. Serena chuckled. “Yes, I can make friends too, you know,” she teased. Olivia smiled. “What is her name?” Oliver asked. “His name is Carson,” she told them. “He is Beta of the pack, second to Logan.” “Is he a kissing friend?” Olivia asked, making a face. Serena laughed, shaking her head. “No, he isn’t a kissing friend” she said. “We are just having dinner together. And he wants to meet the two of you, so be on your best behavior.”

“Yea, yea,” Olivia said with an eye roll. She was developing too much of an attitude! Serena filed that away as something to work on later. At least Oliver was docile enough to make a good first impression.

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Chapter 42: First Date

“Come on in,” Carson greeted when Serena and the kids showed up at his door. “It is good to see you again,” Serena said, smiling. “This is Olivia and Oliver.” She introduced the twins. “Hi,” they said together. Olivia grabbed the bag of toys Serena had on her arm and they took off.

“Play quietly,” Serena called “Remember we are inside!” She sighed and gave Carson an apologetic look. “Don’t worry,” he said. “I’ve removed everything breakable from this floor.” He was teasing her, and Serena laughed lightly. At least he was realistic about the twins. “I brought them enough toys and games to keep them busy while I make dinner,” she said. “The kitchen is this way,” Carson said. He put his hand on the small of Serena’s back and started guiding her into the kitchen. She felt her cheeks redden with a blush from the contact “Thanks,” she said. “What are you going to make?” Carson asked. Serena shrugged, going to the refrigerator and cabinets, seeing what Carson had in the house. “I’ll throw something together with whatever you have,” she said. Carson laughed. “Not following a recipe. That is risky, I love it,” he teased her. Serena

smiled pulling some things out of the refrigerator and cabinets. "Would you like help?" "Sure, I need a sauté pan and a knife," she said. "Also, where are your herbs?" Carson got up. He put a pan on the stove, handed Serena the knife she'd requested, and brought a spice rack over from the opposite counter. "Well, you look like you know what you're doing," Carson said. "I don't," Serena admitted. The twins ran into the kitchen, Oliver carrying a plane and making engine sounds while he chased after Olivia. "Eww, Mommy is cooking?" Olivia asked, forgetting all about her need to escape her brother,

"Can't we eat something else?" Oliver asked. Carson raised an eyebrow at Serena. "Go back to the living room, please," Serena requested. She shook her head. "It will be fine," she assured. Carson shrugged. "I'm not worried," he said. While Serena chopped vegetables and heated the pan, Carson asked her about he:62

recent venture into the human world with Logan. She hadn't realized how close Logan and Carson were before. Being Alpha and Beta meant they worked closely together on pack business. She could tell by how fondly Carson reacted to her story, they were also friends. Part of her felt a tug of guilt in her stomach Logan had already been so nice to her and offered her so much, and she was on a date with his best friend! At the same time, he was still seeing Holly and hadn't made any romantic advancements towards

her.

The only real complication with Logan was the kids and whether or not they were his children. She hadn't gotten the DNA results back from the lab yet. With the prospect of creating potentially romantic relationships with other males, Serena knew she had to get that answer, and then she had to decide what to do with it. If she had another male in her life, then maybe Logan never had to know the kids were his.

"It sounds like he had a good time," Carson said. "I'm a little jealous. My time in the human world has been very limited." "You know, as much as I enjoyed being there for school, nothing really compares to the community and support you get from the pack," she told him. "I believe that," Carson said. Serena stirred the veggies in the pan, adding salt and turning the stove temperature down a little.

"You've really taken charge with the hospital renovations," he noted. Serena nodded, moving on to preparing the meat.

"Logan didn't give me much of a choice," she pointed out. She went on to tell Carson about the extensive planning, ordering, and research she'd had to do in order to make the renovations and updates work. "I had no idea our facilities were so out of date," Carson said. Serena scoffed.

"Can you get me four plates?" she asked. He got up from the kitchen table and got her the plates. "Yea, well, believe is. It has been a project, but the hospital and pack will be

better for it." Serena put food on each plate and Carson brought them to the table. "Dinner is ready, kids!" Serena shouted into the other room.

The kids came running in, finding their seats. Serena poured them each a cup of juice. The four of them sat down together, Carson across from Serena and the kids across from each other. It was the perfect dynamic of a family dinner. "You do have a particular fondness for the pack and a directness I like," Carson told her forthright. Serena smiled. "Thanks," she said. Olivia and Oliver were the first to bite into their food. "Blech!" Olivia said putting her fork down and guzzling juice. Oliver made a face, and Serena could tell he was trying really hard to swallow. Carson chuckled. "Okay, I'm a horrible cook," she said. "Oddly, that's not my concern," he said, "You're a natural born leader, and those qualities are hard to come by." "My mother and father are Luna and Alpha of Starseeker pack," she reminded him. Carson nodded. "That's right," he said. "You come from a long line of leaders. Why'd you leave Starseeker then?" Serena looked at the kids briefly. They weren't the reason she had left, they were the reason she'd stayed away. "Can I have more juice, mommy?" Olivia asked. Serena got up and refilled her cup. "I have a twin brother," she explained as she sat back down. "From a young age, Santino began training to take over as Alpha. I wouldn't say he was the favorite, but he was given a lot of attention and prioritized over me. I wanted to get out, see what I really could do on my own, and have a career my parents would be proud of." "That's very impressive;" Carson said with a nod. "In the face of adversity, you chose strength and determination." ; "You are a good flatterer," Serena said, smiling across the table. Carson grinned. "I'm also honest," he said. "This is probably the worst dinner I've ever eaten." Serena grimaced. "I know, I'm sorry," she said. "Luckily, I have the remedy for that," Carson informed her. When the plates were cleared from the table, Carson pulled a tub of ice cream out of the freezer. "Ice cream!" Olivia shouted, standing up in her chair. That got Oliver's attention too. "Olivia, sit down!" Serena snapped. Carson looked at her. "Is it alright if the runts get a sugar rush this late?" he asked. Serena nodded. "Yes, that is fine," she said. "Thank you for asking." It occurred to her that Logan rarely ever asked her permission for things when he was with the kids. He always just assumed it was okay. That had led to their argument when he'd dismissed her parenting authority. It was refreshing to have Carson actually ask. He seemed to understand that he wasn't an authority figure to the kids and that as their mother, Serena had the final say.

She liked that. "Would you like some too?" he asked. Serena nodded. "Please," she said. "I could use something nice tasting."

Around the table they sat again, enjoying their ice cream. Serena was happy that Carson had had a backup plan to her cooking. He was so different than Logan, and she found that she really liked the way he treated her and her kids. There was a measure of respect for her and her relationship with them that she didn't feel like she

got from Logan. "I can make you some coffee, if you'd like to wash down the ice cream," Carson offered when Serena cleared the table of empty ice cream bowls. "Sure," she said.

"Can we go play?" Olivia asked. Serena grabbed a paper towel and wet it. "Let me wipe you two off, first," she said. They stood in front of her and she wiped their hands and mouths to get all the sticky ice cream residue off. Then, the twins were off to their toys again. "They are very well behaved," Carson said while he was making her coffee. "You've always been a single mother?" Serena nodded. As much as she didn't want to talk about it, she knew that anyone she was getting to know would be interested. "It hasn't always been easy, but I've made it work" she said. She sat back down at the table and Carson gave her a mug of coffee. He sat down too, his face scrunching up. "Something wrong?" Serena asked. "It's Logan," he said, holing up a hand. Serena sipped her coffee, figuring Logan had reached out to Carson through the mind link. Whatever it was couldn't have been that important, because Carson smiled at her and motioned for her to continue her story.

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Chapter 43: Confusing Feelings

In his office, Logan reviewed the reports from the most recent Moonshine attack. Everyone had submitted the necessary reports. He moved on to the medical records of the Moonshine prisoners. Everything there was in order too. Each of those records was signed by Serena. It still infuriated him that she had gone against his will to heal their enemy. At the same time, he was overcome with a sense of admiration for her. She was willing to help others, no matter who they were or what they'd done. There was a certain beauty in it.

Shaking his head, he went on to review her most up to date renovation records. She was meticulous. If Logan could have had every wolf in the pack, even Adriana, be as precise and detailed in their reports, he'd never have to track anyone down for follow up. Whenever he was filing reports, he found the majority of the time was spent chasing down people that hadn't done it right! Even Adriana's updates about the hospital renovations weren't as thorough, and she didn't give him daily updates. He amused himself, thinking that he could have Serena teach the whole pack a lesson in proper report making and filing. Sighing, Logan leaned back in his desk chair, tilting it back until it groaned against its springs. He looked up at his office ceiling, resting his eyes for a moment from going over mind-numbing reports.

When he'd checked in at home earlier, no one had been there. His mother was out, Holly was gone, and Serena and the twins were somewhere else. It surprised him that the three of them had gone out. He knew they'd been picked up from daycare, because of the time, but it seemed late for her to go somewhere with the kids.

After his momentary break, Logan went back to his reports. He pulled a map out of his pack territory, marking the locations of recent Moonshine attacks. He wanted to know if there was any kind of pattern or logic to their attacks. If there was, he might be able to predict the location of the next attack.

He made dots on the map for where the attacks had happened, adding in notes of nearby targets of interest, like the shed that the Moonshine wolves had tried to steal from. Each point they'd attacked did have a nearby building or area that could be pilfered and stolen from, even if that was a trade convoy traveling in or out of the territory.

So, they were stealing resources. That was their focus. Most of the places they'd hit were points close to the border between Moonshine and Night Sky territory. There were a few other targets along the same lines that hadn't been hit yet. Logan wanted to set up heavier patrols in those areas. They never hit the same area more than once, probably assuming that the guards would be increased in an area that had already been attacked to avoid another.

To thwart them, Logan had to outthink them, get ahead of them. If there was an attack, bulking up those areas would limit injuries and counter surprise attacks. Carson, he reached out with the pack mind link. What is it? Carson responded. His response was slow.

I need your help assigning heavier patrols to areas where I think Moonshine might launch their next attacks, he explained.

Can we meet tomorrow, I'm busy, Carson said. Logan was surprised by that response. Pack security was a top priority. Logan knew that a night attack from Moonshine, especially after so many wolves had been imprisoned, would be unlikely. There was no logical reason that they couldn't wait until the morning, but Logan wanted to know what was so important to his Beta that he didn't feel the same urgency. Busy with what? Logan pressed. He expected his Beta to give him a direct response, shifting his tone to that of the Alpha, not a friend. I'm having dinner with Serena and the kids, Carson responded. Logan didn't say anything back. He was too stunned by Carson's response. He'd had no idea that his Beta was interested in Serena.

Okay, tomorrow, he said back, his mental voice sounding stiff, even to him. He cut off the link.

Shaking his head, Logan tried to concentrate on his work again, but he couldn't! He was uncomfortably bothered by the fact that his Beta was having dinner with Serena, and with the kids! It wasn't like they were off limits to anyone in the pack, he just hadn't seen it coming. There was an odd sense of betrayal mixed in with disbelief! He kept trying to justify it to himself, telling himself that his only interest in Serena was the kids. He'd grown so fond of them and loved getting to act silly and goofy around them. He tried to tell himself that the betrayal he felt was in regards to the kids spending time with someone outside his family. He'd begun to see them like family, in a sense. The way they lived in his house and how involved his mother was with them. All those justifications were enough to settle his mind and the confusing thoughts that coursed through him. Still, he couldn't concentrate on his work anymore, so he left his office and headed home. His mother was still up, waiting for him, or for someone, to come home. "Oh, other people so live here," she said with a chuckle when Logan entered. "Everyone else is still out?" Logan asked, kicking his shoes off by the door. "I forgot how quiet this house can be without the kids and when it is just me," Flo said. Logan gave a strained smile and nodded.

"It is a big, empty house," he said with a nod. Flo touched her son's shoulder. "That is easily fixed," she said. "You could have your own little pups running around too."

"Mom," Logan said, pushing her arm away. "There's plenty of time for that." "Until there isn't," she reminded him. Logan shook his head. "Where is everyone?" "Serena is on a date with Carson. I guess she brought the kids," he told his mother. She arched an eyebrow. "Good for her," she said. Logan swallowed the growl that rose in his throat. "As a single mom, I'm sure she doesn't get a lot of chances to socialize unless her friends are willing to let her bring the kids." Logan said. "Yea, I guess that is good," he said. He walked past his mother and to the kitchen. He got himself a glass of water, but his mother had followed him. "Where is Holly?" she asked. Logan paused in his drinking. He felt guilty suddenly, knowing where another woman and her kids were, but not knowing where his own girlfriend was! "Working, I assume," he said. Flo put her hands on her hips. "Logan, if you don't feel for Holly the same she feels about you, you shouldn't string her along," his mother warned. "I'm not," he assured. "Nothing between us has changed. The way I feel about her hasn't changed." It wasn't a lie. He'd been colder towards her based on her behavior, but she hadn't done anything to humiliate anyone else, and she'd been nicer to the kids. He'd felt his old feelings and attractions rekindled when he saw her actually trying to be okay with a complicated situation. He still wasn't ready to declare her his mate, but he knew he would have to, and soon. "I'm exhausted;" Logan said, leaving his mother in the kitchen. He really didn't want to talk to her more. Already, his mind was confused with thoughts and feelings about Holly and Serena, and now Carson too. It was so unusual to feel confused, betrayed, guilty, and humiliated all at the same time. If he'd tried to explain what he was feeling, Logan knew that none of it would make sense. It was easier for him to focus the feelings on the kids. He was fond of them and he wanted to keep being influential in their lives. He had to remind himself that just because Carson was now in their lives didn't mean he couldn't be. They were still living with him, after all. Logan changed for bed. He knew he should have texted Holly to ask where she was. He should have been more concerned about

her being out, maybe even feeling jealous of the fact that she hadn't told him where she was. The concerns he should have had about Holly just weren't there! Sighing, Logan laid down and stared up at the ceiling of his bedroom. He stayed awake until he heard Holly come back. She came to join him, but he pretended to be asleep. She curled up to him. Logan heard his mother go to bed, but he still stayed up until Serena and the kids got home, telling himself that it was to make sure they'd got

back safely, even though he didn't fully believe it.

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Chapter 44: Holly's Confession

When Logan came down for breakfast the next morning, Serena and the twins were already in the living room. Oliver was painting with fingerpaints. Serena had covered the rug with newspapers so he wouldn't get paint on anything. Olivia was on the couch with her mother and Serena was reading to her. She looked up and smiled at Logan when he came down. He narrowed his eyes at her, still unsure what he felt about her date the night before.

Holly was in the kitchen making him breakfast. It was an unusual treat, so he smiled when she handed him his coffee. "What's the occasion?" he asked sitting down at the table. Holly bit her lip coyly. "I can't just dote on my mate?" she asked. Logan chuckled. "Why were you out so late last night?" he asked. Holly shrugged, putting pancakes on a plate for him. She set them in front of Logan and then got himself some too. She sat across from him. "I was with a friend," she said. "We had a lot to talk about." "A friend?" Logan asked, raising an eyebrow at her. There was the suspicious jealousy he'd been missing last night! Holly shook her head and laughed, flipping her hair over her shoulder.

"Natalia," she said. Logan nodded, biting into a pancake. "It was just a girl's night." "Is everything alright?" Logan asked, realizing that he'd have to show some interest in 'girl's night' now that Holly had confirmed it wasn't anything for him to worry about. Holly sighed, looking down at her pancakes. "I think so," she said. "You think?" Logan asked. "Is there anything Natalia needs?" Holly shook her head. "It isn't Natalia," she said. "I mean, she was there for me last night. I was the one who needed someone to talk to." Holly was being so kind and pleasant. Logan set his fork down, a new suspicion flooding through him. She was usually only so nice and pleasant when she thought he was going to be mad at her. "The pancakes?" he asked. "Are they to put me in a good

mood?" Holly sighed, wrapping her arms around her waist. "Logan, please, this is serious," she said. That made Logan even more suspicious. Holly was rarely ever serious about anything. "So, are you going to tell me what is going on?" Logan asked, his voice rising in volume. "I don't think I'm ready yet," Holly said. "Not ready?" he asked through gritted teeth. "Holly, what affects you affects me too!"

"I know, I know," Holly said looking up with wide eyes. "I just need more time." Logan shook his head. He pushed his chair back, leaving a half-eaten breakfast at the table. He headed to the living room, sitting down with Oliver on the floor. "What are you painting, Buddy?" he asked. "A flower," Oliver said. "Want to paint with me?" Logan nodded, grabbing a blank page and sticking his pointer finger into the blue paint. "You really want to know what is going on!?" Holly snapped, her tone full of anger as she appeared in the living room. Logan looked up at her. She had her hands on her hips, her eyes glowing cruelly as she took in Serena and the twins in the living room. "I don't think now is the right time," Logan said. "As you pointed out earlier." "You're such a jerk, Logan!" she hissed, throwing her hands in the air. "You always have to have your way. Well, you wanted to know what was wrong, so I'll tell you. I'm pregnant!"

The room became completely silent. Oliver stopped painting, Serena stopped reading. Everyone stared at Holly and Logan just blinked at her. He laughed and shook his head.

"No you're not," he said. "You're on birth control." "Okay," Serena said standing up. "Oliver, can you go upstairs and wash your hands, please? Olivia, go with him and make sure he doesn't touch anything until his hands are clean." With reluctant sighs, the twins got up. "Please play in your room until I come get you," she said. They nodded. Logan hated to see them go, because he knew Holly would just get more worked up. "Tactful," Logan said. "You really don't know how to behave around kids. There is no way you are pregnant." "Oh, I'm sorry," Holly said. "I must just be imagining all the things that are happening in my body." She crossed her arms. "I don't think I should be here for this conversation," Serena said. "Do you think the two of you could at least keep it down? There are curious five year old twins in the house."

"She's right, we don't need to have this conversation now," Logan said. Serena rolled her eyes at him. He didn't know what he'd said to make her angry.

"That's not what I said," Serena snapped. "But if neither of you can censor yourselves with impressionable ears around, how can either of you ever hope to be parents?" Holly scoffed.

"You're already going to give me parenting advice. The dysfunction queen thinks I need her wisdom?" she asked rudely. Logan growled at Holly. He would have grabbed 2/6

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her and dragged her away, but if she really was pregnant, he couldn't do that. "You know what, the two of you deserve each other and whatever and all the misery you

bring each other. Don't be selfish and force your own child into that!" she shook her head and fled from the room. Logan glared at Holly. "We'll talk about this later," he said. "I want to see the proof, because you told me you were on birth control." "Accidents happen," Holly said with a dismissive shrug. Logan swallowed another growl. He had to get away from Holly. Whatever he was feeling wouldn't be good to unleash around her, especially if she was telling the truth. Even if she wasn't, his anger would only fuel hers and they'd go back and forth forever. Logan followed Serena. She was right. If that was how Holly was going to act, then she wasn't ready to be a mother. She didn't know how to behave around kids at all, which was obvious based on her outburst. She'd been completely inappropriate. What bothered Logan more was that Serena was right about him too! He'd spent a lot of time with her kids, deluding himself into thinking he could be a positive influence on them. Yet, he was still with a woman who had no ability to relate to them, who was selfish and unnecessarily competitive and cruel. He wasn't ready to be a father. The only difference was, if Holly was telling the truth, he would do everything he needed in order to get ready to be a father. He wasn't sure Holly would do the same. He had trouble imagining her being a good, selfless, attentive mother. Serena had gone out into the yard through the kitchen. Logan followed her steps, staying out of her sight though. She was on the phone and her voice was urgent. He wanted to know what urgency had been sparked by the announcement that his girlfriend was pregnant. "Yes, can I speak to Dr. Maverick, RedEx Labs, please," Logan heard her say. It wasn't a lab or last name he was familiar with. It had to be a connection of hers in the human world. It was odd, her using a human lab for some kind of test. All he could think was that it meant it was a lab result or test that she didn't want anyone in the pack to know she had run. A result she didn't want anyone else in the pack to find out. He could think of a few obvious tests, including paternity for her children, which would make sense with a new pregnancy announcement. Logan had no idea what he was even thinking! His knowledge of medical technology wasn't enough to form any opinions. "I sent the blood and swabs in a while ago," Serena said on the phone. Logan quieted his mind to hear more of her conversation. There was a long pause. He saw Serena nod her head several times. "Okay, please let me know as soon as you get the results," she said. "The situation has become urgent" She hung up the phone and pocketed it. Logan watched her sigh and look up at the sky.

She seemed more aggravated by Holly's confession than he was. There was a part of him that still wasn't convinced. Whether he was in shock, denial, or actually thought Holly was capable of making something like that up...

Sighing, Logan went back inside. He wanted to know what Serena was up to. Why did she feel like she had to go outside the pack to run lab tests? What was she hiding? He didn't know nearly enough about her past to actually put the pieces together. He was determined to find out though, and it would be a welcome distraction!

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Chapter 45: Logan Needs a Luna

Flo was waiting for Logan at his office. Logan groaned when he saw his mother sitting at his desk. He turned the lights back out and tried to back away, but she flipped the light on that sat on his desk.

“Logan, we need to talk,” she said. “Have a seat.”

Logan felt like he was a child being scolded by his mother. Flo had the stern, motherly look. It was more than that, though, she was also acting as Luna. The Luna’s job was to be honest with the Alpha and keep him in line. Normally, Alpha and Luna pairs were mated. Logan had gotten away with not doing that because his mother had outlived his father. “Not now, please,” he said shaking his head. “Logan, sit down,” Flo insisted, pointing to the chair across the desk from her. Logan sighed, moving to the chair and plopping down heavily. He wasn’t used to being on this side of the desk.

Flo had been in that office countless times when his father was alive. She had been much more hands off since his father had passed. Logan knew he could count on her to be Luna when needed. She looked like she belonged behind the desk, and Logan imagined that his father had sat in the same chair he was sitting many times, confronted by Flo. “Okay, what is so important?” he asked. “I heard about Holly,” Flo said. Logan scoffed, dropping his head back on his neck. “Of course, she is just so eager to tell anyone that will listen,” he muttered. Flo sighed. “You need to take this seriously,” she said. “Holly is pregnant with your child. You’ve been Alpha for years no and haven’t declared a mate or a Luna.”

“You’re Luna, remember?” he asked, looking up at her. Flo glared at her son harshly.

“I don’t want to be anymore,” she admitted. “I was Luna to your father for years. I loved being by his side, but it shouldn’t be my responsibility now. You need to find a mate and make her Luna.” “If you’re suggesting I make Holly Luna... he trailed off. “You’ve been together a long time. She is carrying your child. She comes from an Alpha bloodline. Is there a problem?” Flo asked. “I don’t think she is my mate,” Logan admitted. Flo sighed and shook her head. “I’m sorry to be so forward, Logan, but the time has come to have a Luna, other than me,” she said, “If you had found your mate, I would be overjoyed. Unfortunately,

Alphas have to do what is right for the pack.” “I know, mom, I get it,” Logan said, crossing his arms and pouting like a scolded child. Flo laughed

“Honey, I don’t want you to give up on finding your mate,” she said. “But the pack needs a Luna. What if you never find her?” Logan shook his head. He didn’t want to think

about that “I thought I did,” he admitted. “I thought I smelled her a while back, under the light of a full moon.” Flo looked thoughtful. “Did you ever manage to track her down?” she asked. “No,” Logan said moodily. “I don’t know, it was inconclusive.” “Inconclusive how?” Flo asked, amusement dancing in her eyes. Logan sighed, sliding further down in his chair. Discussing these things with his mother was not ideal. She wasn’t there as his mother though, she was there as Luna. “In wolf form, I smelled someone so...intoxicating, but I never found her,” he said. “I couldn’t tell if it was because it was a new smell that made it so delicious or because she was my mate. I couldn’t get it out of my head for days though.” “And you haven’t smelled it since?” Flo asked. Logan shrugged. He hadn’t. At least, not that he was sure of. He had thought he smelled traces of it on Serena’s hair, but it was so soon after the initial encounter, he’d been smelling it everywhere he went. Besides, she’d never done anything to show she smelled something about him. She was dating his Beta! “No, I haven’t. So, then there is the possibility I’m just crazy and imagined it,” he said. Flo shook her head.

“You’re my son, you aren’t crazy,” she assured. She stood up and walked around the desk, leaning back on the desk for support but remaining in front of her son. “Holly is so convinced we are mates, but I’m not, so I’ve been stalling,” he admitted. “Like I don’t know that,” his mother teased. “She clearly loves you. And I know you care about her, even love her. Why not make it official?” Logan snarled. He stood up and walked away from his mother, standing in the corner of his office with his arms crossed. “Can’t you step down without me finding a new Luna?” he asked. “I get it, you’ve been doing this a long time. First with your mate, now with your son. I’m sure you want a break.” “I want a break, I want to be a grandmother, and I want to see you happy,” she said. “I want to see our family line continue.” “That’s a lot of pressure to put on me, mother,” Logan scoffed. “When you became mated to my father, you also accepted a certain responsibility to the pack. Now you have to fulfill it until the time comes when it isn’t needed.” Flo sighed. Logan glanced back to see her looking at the floor, her shoulders having sagged. She looked old suddenly. She wasn’t the young, energetic Luna he had always seen her as. His mother was aging, she was losing her strength. She needed a rest

“I’m sorry, mother,” he said, walking back to her and taking her hands. “That was harsh of me.”

“Logan, I know you had to become Alpha young, and the loss of your father wasn’t easy on either of us,” she said. “You had to begin your life as Alpha and take on so many responsibilities for a young wolf. It wasn’t fair.” “I did what I had to,” he said. “Yes, and once again, as much as it pains me to say it, you have to do what is needed again,” she said, putting her hand on his cheek. “You can’t wait around for your mate forever.” Logan sighed heavily, shaking his head. “I don’t know if I’m ready to give up yet,” he admitted. “I don’t know if I’m ready to be mated to someone forever.” “I get it,” Flo said. “You had to grow up fast. And time to be who you want to be and live your life your way is not a luxury that is afforded to an Alpha.” “You’re right,” he said, placing his hand over his mother’s. He gently pulled her hand from his face. “I’ll think about it.” Flo nodded and left him to his thoughts. Logan sat at his desk. He leaned back, closing his eyes to

digest his thoughts. He'd been selfish, keeping his mother on as Luna when she was ready to step down. In the beginning, it had made sense. He was so young he'd needed an experienced hand to help him. Now, he knew what he was doing and he could carry on without her.

Still, he wasn't ready to give up on finding his mate. Not when he was nearly convinced he'd smelled her recently and he was determined to find her! Even if just to smell her again. He thought back to the night. How close she had been to him! He shouldn't have just walked away, he should have tracked her to the ends of the earth. Even his memory of her scent made him salivate.

There was no way he could accept Holly as his mate when he knew his real mate was still out there. But Holly was pregnant with his child. It wasn't right to cast her aside now. He had a responsibility to her and to their unborn child. There was a part of him that hoped it wasn't true. He was going to get her medical records to confirm she was pregnant. Until then, he had no idea what he was supposed to do. Being Alpha was pulling him none direction. The direction of the wellbeing of the pack. That was his duty, one he had never faltered in since accepting the role so young. As much as he wanted to provide for the pack, he thought that he was deserving of the change to find his mate. It was the one thing left that wasn't dictated by him being Alpha. He'd already given up so much to fulfill that, he really wanted the chance at happiness with this one part of his life. He wanted one thing that really was his, not a duty to his pack.

If he accepted Holly as his mate, that would be fulfilling his duty to the pack. If he looked for his own mate, that would be for his own pleasure and happiness. He was being pulled in both directions, his loyalty and devotion to the pack so strong, just as strong as his desire to find his true mate!

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Chapter 46: Another Trip

"Thank you for meeting with me," Serena said to Logan when he joined her at the hospital. "I'm having trouble with one of the medical equipment vendors. They want to speak to me directly." "As in, in person?" Logan asked. Serena nodded. She had anticipated the need to go back into the human world when dealing with vendors, but it was another setback to the renovations she hadn't wanted to encounter. "I offered a phone call, but they think I am inexperienced and would like to speak to someone in charge," she explained. It was hard to admit, but she knew she didn't have the experience she should have for the current task. Logan was in charge of the pack, and Adriana was busy with her half of the renovations. "Ahh, so we both need to go," Logan

said. Serena nodded again. "I'm sure you're busy, but we really need those new vital monitors," she said. "It isn't a problem," Logan said. He was being strangely distant with her. Serena had no idea what his problem was, but he wasn't being playful or friendly like he normally was. She assumed it had to do with the most recent news about Holly. "Thanks," Serena said with a smile. "I already talked to Dana, and she said she could come with us to watch the kids. My parents are otherwise unable to do so." "Good," Logan said. "I'll make arrangements on my end. Serena smiled at him. The Alpha did not return the smile and stiffly walked out. She couldn't worry herself with whatever mood the Alpha was in. Her own job took precedence, and Logan was not her responsibility, outside his medical care. Moodiness didn't qualify. Serena called it an early day to go back to Logan's and get herself and the kids ready. She called Dana to bring them back to the house to get packed too. "Can we go to the zoo again, and the park?" Olivia asked.

"You will have plenty to do, don't worry," Serena assured. Logan and Holly were having an argument down the hall, their bedroom door partially closed. When Serena went into her room to pack, she could hear the argument through the walls. "I don't want to stay here alone," Holly argued. "You shouldn't be traveling in your condition" Logan told her, a hint of anger in his voice. "So, you're just going to run off with some other female and her kids?" Holly snapped. Serena heard the Alpha's sigh and imagined him rolling his eyes. "I'm not running off with her," he said calmly. "This is pack business, necessary for the hospital."

Right, and it just has to be a full family outing," Holly said in annoyance.

"There isn't anyone to watch the kids, unless you want to," Logan said. Serena knew she'd never let Holly near her kids unsupervised, but she heard the slight challenge in Logan's voice. "No, absolutely not! They are disgusting!" Holly whined. Serena didn't exactly like hearing someone call her children disgusting, especially an expecting mother! "That's what I thought," Logan said. "So, stop making a fuss." Holly grumbled and their argument ended. Serena finished packing her clothes. She got a backpack to put all her files, papers, and order forms for the medical equipment that she'd need for this meeting. She'd called ahead and set up the appointment for her and Logan. It had taken some convincing, but finally the company rep had agreed to the meeting. Another long drive into the city, and Logan didn't speak once. There was definitely something on his mind, but Serena had no intention of diving into his mind. He was moody, that was clear, and she didn't want to spark his unpredictable temper. This time as they went into the human city, Serena didn't have the same elation as before. Things had shifted drastically in the relationship between her and the people she was living with. Logan was being strange towards her, Holly was pregnant, and she'd had a date with Carson. It was all different.

Dana was sitting in the front passenger seat, and Serena sat in the back with the twins, keeping them entertained with car games and singing. It was an awkward car ride, and

even the kids could feel it. Eventually, they fell asleep. When they go to the city, Dana took their luggage to the hotel and Serena and Logan took the kids to stretch their legs and get something to eat. "We'll be meeting with the company rep in about an hour," Serena said. "We're lucky they agreed to meet us on such short notice." "Sounds good," Logan said. "Logan, Logan!" Olivia called to him in a loud voice. He smiled, and Serena was happy to see he wasn't being standoff-ish towards her kids. It made her feel like there was something about her that he was distancing himself from. "What is it, Olivia?" he asked, picking her up. "Can you become a wolf now?" she asked. Serena cleared her throat as a few nearby pedestrians stopped to stare at the child and her unusual request. "Olivia, we're not playing that game right now," Serena said, taking Olivia from Logan's arms. Logan gave her an appreciative nod. It was clear he still didn't know how he was supposed to react around humans.

Fortunately, Serena's quick thinking got the gawkers to keep walking. "What did I do wrong, mommy?" Olivia asked. Serena pulled her daughter and son to the side, setting Olivia down and getting them to stand side by side. "Do you two know what a secret is?" Serena asked. They nodded.

"Something we can't tell anyone else," Olivia said. Serena nodded. "That's right," she said. "When we are with the pack, you can talk about wolves. Everyone knows about them. When we are in the city, wolves are a secret, okay?" "But why?" Oliver asked, always the contemplative one. "There are some people that wouldn't understand and might want to hurt anyone that can become a wolf," she explained as simply as she could for the kids. "That's scary," Olivia said. "It is," Serena agreed. "That's why we don't talk about turning into wolves in the human world, okay?"

"Okay, we won't," Olivia said, taking Oliver's hand. "Good," Serena said. "Alright, kiddos, what is it that you wanted to show me?" Dana asked when she rejoined them. "We want to go to the park again," Olivia said, taking Dana's hand and jumping up and down. "Alright, let's go to the park," Dana said. "We'll see you later for dinner," Serena said to the kids. They were already focused on the park.

"We will be there," Dana assured, waving to Serena. Serena nodded and waved back. "That goes for you too, Logan," Serena said when the kids and Dana were out of earshot. "What does?" he asked, a ghost of a smile touching his lips. "Not mentioning wolves around humans." Serena said. Logan gave a dry chuckle. "Yes, I figured as much," he replied. It was nice that he was loosening up a little bit. He still wasn't teasing and playful, but she'd got a smile reaction out of him, and she hoped that would make their time together less awkward. They couldn't exactly bring the twins to a business meeting. "We are meeting this guy at his office," she explained. "It is a few blocks down." "Lead the way," Logan said, holding an arm out. Serena nodded and took the lead. "I'm sorry I wasn't able to take care of this without your assistance," she said, feeling her inexperience weighing heavily on her. "It isn't a big deal, Serena," Logan assured. "I handle this kind of stuff all the time." "I know you do, I just...I wanted to be able to handle it on my own," she said. Logan chuckled.

“You’re in a pack again, you don’t need to do everything on your own,” he reminded her. Serena sighed.

“You’re right. It still takes some getting used to,” she admitted. “But after this, I think that I’ll be much better equipped.” “If you ever need anything…” Logan trailed off, his voice getting colder. Serena paused and turned to look at him. “I know,” she said. “You’re the Alpha, it is your responsibility to support the pack members.” Logan nodded. “It is,” he agreed. He sighed and kept walking. Serena again wondered what it was that was bothering him. It couldn’t just be his impending fatherhood, because he had been friendly and warm with her kids. Whatever was going on had something to do with her specifically. Serena wanted to ask him, but she wasn’t sure what to ask. Should she ask him if he had a problem with her? Should she ask him why he was so distant with her? Was it self-centered of her to think the problem was her? She could ask how he felt about Holly and the baby, or just ask if everything was okay in general. She didn’t want to upset him before a business meeting, though

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Chapter 47: Negotiations

“Ahh, you must be Logan and Serena,” the company rep said when he greeted them at his office door.

“That’s correct,” Logan said. The rep held out his hand to shake and Logan paused in shaking it Serena nudged him in the shoulder to get him to use the proper greeting. Logan did, and the rep smiled at them. “Please, come in, let’s talk about this order of yours,” he said. “You can call me James.”

They went into his office where there were chairs prepared for them. Serena took her seat and got the files out of her backpack. She hoped that the rep wouldn’t defer to Logan on everything. Not only wasn’t he a doctor, but he wouldn’t necessarily understand all the human nuances.

“I wanted to meet in person, because the order you placed is rather large, and we need to get corporate approval before filling that large of an order,” he explained. “Was there a question as to our need for the supply?” Logan asked. Serena looked at him, impressed that he dove right in with the right questions. “No, nothing like that,” James said shaking his head. “It is more of a financial concern. You know, getting our money before the order is fulfilled.” Logan glanced sideways at Serena. She knew money

wasn't an issue. He'd told her not to worry about cost, and she hadn't. "What numbers are we talking about?" Logan asked. Serena passed him her order form. It included the number of units for purchase and the price at the bottom. Logan reviewed it quickly. "As you can see, we have our concerns about why a small hospital would need so many units," James went on. "We want to deliver a product and ensure we get

compensated for it." Logan cleared his throat and handed the page back to Serena. "It sounds to me like you are questioning my honor in this matter, questioning my intentions," he said. Serena winced, hoping he wasn't about to blow their chances! Logan had a temper and if something else was bothering him, there was a chance he would take it out on this meeting. "No, no" James said, shaking his hands back and forth. Logan raised an eyebrow. "In my experience, business men don't question a substantial order unless they have something to lose," Logan went on. "I have my suspicions, but I'd like to hear it from you" Serena chewed on the inside of her cheek nervously. What was Logan after!? "I'm sorry if I offended you," James said quickly. "I want this deal to go through too, but I need the approval of my superiors. I just need to make sure it is all legitimate."

"Legitimate?" Serena asked. Logan glanced at her and shook his head. Serena nodded, deferring to his authority. "You think we plan to resell these units for profit?" he asked. Serena was impressed again by Logan's deductions. James swallowed hard. Serena could hear his heart pounding in his chest. "You claim to be from a small hospital," he muttered. "That is a large order for a small hospital, and we are the only suppliers for this piece of equipment." Logan scoffed. "If our hospital already has the funds to purchase this large of an order, what would we gain by reselling equipment for profit?" Logan asked. "I understand your concerns, but how many small hospitals do you know that have this solid of financial backing already?" "Not many," James admitted. "That was part of my concern. You see, we offer payment plans. You wouldn't have to pay it all up front, and then could sell the units, pay us back, and keep a profit." Logan scoffed. Serena found her presence to be completely obsolete. Logan had taken charge, and even though he wasn't familiar with the human world, he really knew what he was doing. She wondered it came from his work in trade negotiations. He didn't necessarily need to be knowledgeable about the goods in question, he just needed to know how to negotiate. Clearly, he did! "I can assure you, our hospital is not as small as you might think," Logan continued. "Our region has been hit by an influx of flue viruses that are drug resistant. We might not be large by your standards, but we still need the equipment for the health and safety of our community." "And the payment?" James asked. "All upfront," Logan confirmed. "I can write a check for your right now, today." "Well, well," James said. "Let me call my superiors and confirm the order." Logan nodded. James stepped out of his office to make the call. Serena smiled and turned in her chair to face Logan. "That was really great," she admitted. "I was concerned you wouldn't know what to say as far as medical terms." "This isn't the first negotiation I've led," Logan pointed out. "I used to head all trade for the entire pack." "Yea, but, your quick thinking with the mention of flue viruses," she said. Logan smirked. "Attacks by other werewolves might not be understandable to humans, but drug resistant viruses...that seems to be

universally understood,” he said. “I can’t take all the credit. It is a similar scenario to one my father used in a negotiation once.”

“Ahh,” Serena Sala. “I guess he taught you very well.” “He did,” Logan said with a sigh. Serena bit her lower lip. “Thank you for helping out,” she said. “Sometimes in the human world, powerful men don’t respond well to working with women. Logan hummed in thought. “That is...unfortunate,” Logan said with a small smile. “I’ve known many females who are far stronger and more powerful than males.” Serena smiled back. James returned to the office, tucking his phone back into his pocket. “I spoke to the corporate office, and they are willing to go ahead with the order,” he said. “I do have a specialized form you’ll have to fill out that include a notarization and signature from the corporate office,” he explained. “We can do that now,” Logan said, motioning to Serena. James got the form from his desk and handed it to Serena. The way he looked at her confirmed her thoughts about men struggling to work with women. She took out a pen and began to fill out the form.

“If you want to fill out the check too, I can submit payment and order at the same time,” James continued. Logan gave him a suspicious look. Serena was nervous based on the look in his eyes. It looked like he was about to challenge James.

“And what is my assurance that the order will be fulfilled when I hand over full payment?” he asked. “I’d like a copy of the order form and my check. I also want the number of your corporate office so I can follow up with them, should anything go amiss. If you have a business card, I want that as well.” James swallowed again. Serena kept her eyes on the form she was filling out, but she smiled to herself. Logan playing hardball was intimidating. She realized that when he had relented to her treating Moonshine pack members, he hadn’t really put up much of a fight.

Whether he had done that for her benefit, she didn’t know. “That is acceptable,” James said handing over his business card. Serena gave him the form and Logan gave him the check. He went to his printer to make photo copies and also got the business card for the corporate office. “Is that everything then?” Logan asked, standing up and taking the packet handed to him. He handed them off to Serena. She sighed, putting the items in her file and back in her backpack. Logan shook hands with James and they left his office. “Again, I’m impressed,” Serena said as they went to meet up with Dana. “I have many hidden talents,” Logan told her, bouncing his eyebrows. She was glad to see he was opening up again. “Good to know.” she said. “At least, I know who to call when I need help making business deals.” She laughed a little. Logan smirked.

“Sure, sure, I can keep rearranging my schedules to go on these excursions with you, he said teasingly. Serena shook her head. She considered asking him about his moods from the past few days again, but it seemed like the wrong time, once more.

Logan had just started smiling and teasing her. She didn’t want to bring it up and push him back into that distanced, cold place again. They were in the city with the kids, and she didn’t want to ruin that for all of them. They wouldn’t have much time to enjoy

themselves away from the pack, and it was important for the twins not to feel like there was a problem.

"I'm thinking we should all go to dinner," Logan said. "As much fun as the takeout was it would be nice to experience some real human cuisine." "I know a few places," Serena said. "I'll make a reservation." Logan smiled and nodded.

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Chapter 48: A Night on the Town

Dana and the twins met up with Serena and Logan at the restaurant that Serena had made reservations at. "Did you have fun with Dana?" Serena asked her kids. "We went to the park, and we showed her the duck pond," Olivia said. "That sounds like a lot of fun," she said. "Did you see the ducks?"

"No ducks today," Oliver said. "But there was a big bird that looked like a pterodactyl!" He spread his arms out and zoomed around on the sidewalk. Serena laughed. Even Logan laughed! "Alright, let's get inside and eat," Serena said, holding the door open for all of them. They had a table for five. The hostess brought booster seats for the kids. "This is really nice," Logan muttered to Serena. "Spare no expense," she said, winking. He smirked. "Oh my, there are so many options," Dana said, looking over the menu. Serena had almost forgotten this was her first time in the human world! "Don't worry, you'll read a lot of things you don't like" she said. Dana chuckled. "Mommy, I want to macaroni," Olivia demanded. "I want chicken fingers," Oliver added. "Alright, that is what you will have," she promised. When the waitress returned, they all placed their orders. Serena ordered for the kids. "Can you bring some crayons for the kids?" she asked. The hostess nodded and left with their orders. She returned a few minutes later with a cup of crayons for each of the twins. Oliver happily began to draw on the paper placemat, but Olivia dumped her crayons out to roll them around. Serena rolled eyes. "Full-service restaurant," Logan said. "It is standard practice in the human world," Serena explained. "Kids need constant entertainment." She smiled, seeing the darkness in Logan's eyes. Maybe his mood had been about Holly's pregnancy announcement. "So, I've seen," he muttered.

"Did you take care of the business deal?" Dana asked conversationally. Serena nodded.

"Business deals are easy." Logan said. "I'm an Alpha, and that means I can challenge anyone to get what I want." Serena sighed.

“He was very impressive,” she admitted.

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Chapter 48 A Night on the Town

“An Alpha’s duty.” Dana said. Serena looked around the restaurant. “Maybe we should cut back on the Alpha and human chatter,” she said. “We aren’t alone here.” “I’m drawing the bird we saw today,” Oliver said. “How did you fare today, Dana?” Serena asked. “There was so much to see. It was a little overwhelming,” she admitted. “The kids gave me something to focus on.” Serena smiled, thinking that meant that the kids had had her chasing around after them. Their food was served and both Dana and Logan were impressed with the elaborate presentation.

“It almost looks too good to eat,” Dana said. “I don’t want to ruin it.” Serena giggled as her kids had no trouble digging into their meals.

“I’m sure it tastes even better,” she encouraged. Dana picked up her fork and grabbed a bite.

“Can we show Dana and Logan the pet store after?” Olivia asked. Serena shook her head.

“I don’t think they’ll like the pet store,” she told Olivia. If Logan’s reaction to the zoo was any indication, she didn’t think either of them would appreciate a pet store, especially where puppies were kept in cages. “We can show them the downtown, though and get some ice cream.” “Okay,” Olivia said, happy with the alternative. When they were finished eating, Serena cleaned the kids off in the bathroom. They always made a mess when they ate! She grabbed a few moist towelettes to bring with her for when they were done with their ice cream. There was a place she remembered going with the kids on weekends when she’d had a little time off from studies. It was a decent walk from where they were, but it was still pretty close to the hotel. “I want to hold Logan’s hand,” Olivia said, pulling away from Serena when they started walking down the sidewalk. “You have to ask him if that’s okay,” Serena said. Olivia ran over to him.

“Can I hold your hand?” she asked. Logan smiled at her.

“Of course,” he said, holding his hand out. Olivia beamed a huge smile and grabbed his hand. She started walking, nearly dragging him along the sidewalk. Oliver was happy to hold Dana’s hand. Serena felt strange not having a child to hold onto. She had always been holding their hands, carrying them, taking care of them. Since rejoining the pack, she’d had more help with them than she knew what to do with. She didn’t really like it. She was feeling helpless in their lives as they wanted to be around other people so much.

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It was good for them, meeting new werewolves, getting immersed in the pack, socializing. Serena had hoped to keep them all to herself for as long as possible. It wasn't fair for them, though, and it was good for her to have some of her own time too. "The stores around here are so interesting," Dana said, motioning to a lingerie store. Serena giggled. "There are a lot of interesting retail outlets in the human world," she explained. "They seem to have specializations for everything." "Perhaps the pack could learn a thing or two." Dana said. "What is wrong with how we organize our retail options?" Logan asked, looking over his shoulder at the two females. Serena and Dana exchanged a look and both started laughing. "I don't expect you to understand, Logan, you are a man," Serena said. Dana chuckled again.

At the ice cream parlor, the twins ordered chocolate ice cream cones. Dana and Logan got their treats too, and Serena ordered herself a Root Beer Float. There was a bench outside the ice cream shop. The twins and Dana sat down on the bench and Logan and Serena stood in front of them. "This is a great dessert idea," Logan said. "What did you get?" "A Root Beer float," Serena said. "That sounds interesting. Can I try it?" he asked. Serena raised an eyebrow. "Sure, sure," she said. She used the spoon to pull up a scoop of the vanilla ice cream soaked in root beer. She intended to transfer the scoop to his spoon, but Logan took the ice cream right off the spoon with his mouth. "Hey!" she said, pulling the spoon back quickly. "That's a little too personal." Logan smirked. "It was good, though," he said. "I'll be sure to get one of those next time." Serena rolled her eyes. "Yes, when you have your own spoon to eat off of," she said. "Mommy, I'm tired," Olivia groaned. "My hands are sticky too." "I've got just the fix for that." Serena said, handing Dana her float. She pulled the wipes out of her pocket and cleaned the twins' hands and fingers. They were much happier when they weren't sticky anymore. "We should get back to the hotel," Logan said. "It is getting late." "Can I have a piggy back ride, mommy?" Olivia asked. Serena smiled and turned around, crouched down in front of the bench.

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"Hop up, you little monkey," she said. Olivia giggled and jumped on her mom's back, clinging to her. Serena looped her arms around Olivia's legs. "What about me?" Oliver whined. "I want one too." Logan chuckled. He tossed his ice cream dish and knelt down. "I'll give you a ride," he offered. "Yay!" he said, climbing onto Logan's back. Walking to the hotel, Serena pointed out several other shops to Dana. She showed the other female the coffee shop where she would binge on caffeine and cram for her exams. She showed them the library for her medical school, a large and imposing building that

looked more like a prison now that she was on the outside. “This place is so vibrant and full of life,” Dana commented. “We really enjoyed living here,” Serena admitted. “Always something to do, always somewhere new to go. Plenty of fun outings for the kids.” “Why is it the pack isn’t allowed to mingle with the human world regularly?” Dana asked. Logan sighed. “I’ve heard too many stories of human and werewolf clashes that didn’t end well.” Logan said. “The history books are full of them. It is best to stay hidden and separated.”

“I hope you’re right,” Serena muttered.

It wasn’t a very long walk back to the hotel, but Olivia fell asleep on Serena’s back and Oliver was struggling to keep his eyes open on Logan’s back. The kids had completely worn themselves out, which was good. It meant they would sleep through the night. Seeing as Serena and the twins were sharing a bed in the hotel again, she wanted them to be tired, not tossing and turning or whispering to each other. “We’re on the fourth floor,” Dana said, handing Logan and Serena keys to the room. “Thanks, can you take Olivia?” she asked. Dana nodded and Serena handed her daughter off, Logan set Oliver on the floor. He was a little unsteady on his feet, but he took Dana’s hand. “I’ll put them to bed,” she offered. “Thank you.” Serena said as Dana left.

“Woah, look at this,” Logan said, grabbing Serena’s arm and pulling her towards a display in the lobby. Serena’s heart raced when she saw what he was looking at.

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Chapter 49: Reminiscing

Viennese masks of the most intricate design were on display in the hotel lobby. They were bright colors, decorated with glitter and feathers. Logan couldn’t pull his eyes away. The masks were absolutely gorgeous! “Look at how beautiful they are,” Logan muttered. Serena was standing beside him. The moment he’d pointed out the masks, she had gone rigid. He didn’t pretend to understand what plagued her. The masks brought him back to the masquerade party he’d attended years ago. He’d been new to his role as Alpha. Getting so dressed up and wearing the mask had been a good way for him to pretend he wasn’t Alpha that night. “They are beautiful,” Serena admitted, pulling him from his thoughts. “Human world art is incredibly unique and versatile.” “Really?” Logan asked, pulling his eyes from the masks to look at Serena. She nodded. “Art from all cultures is just so different,” she said. “Are you interested in art?” “I’d consider myself culturally curious,” he said. He looked back at the masks. “Why are masks so fascinating to you?” Serena asked him. Logan shrugged. “There was a masked party several years back for the pack graduates,” he explained. “It was right after I became Alpha, and I was excited to get to hide myself so no one would know

who I was.” Serena giggled. Logan caught the nervous hitch in the sound of her laughter. “Were you there?” he asked. “If memory serves, it would have been around the time you finished your undergraduate program.” He watched Serena’s eyes shift back and forth nervously. Between her secret phone calls to the human medical lab and her discomfort about the party, Logan felt like he was closing in on the part of her past that she was so desperate to conceal from him. “I was there,” she said. “It was a fun night, lots of alcohol.” She chuckled again. Logan smirked. “I remember the alcohol,” he said. “The rest is a bit of a blur.” He creased his brow, looking back at the masks. There was a look in Serena’s face that he couldn’t decipher. It looked like a mixture of relief and also some kind of pain. “I don’t think many in attendance remember that night,” she said. “There was one thing,” Logan said, eyes roaming over a mask that reminded him slightly of the female he’d danced with.

“What’s that?” Serena asked. He glanced at her, and she was chewing nervously on her lower lip. : Reminiscing “A woman,” he said. “I never saw her face, but she was fun. We danced, we ran through the woods. Despite the alcohol, that was at least memorable.” Serena laughed. “I’m glad you had a night worth remembering,” she said. She didn’t speak to her own experience at the part and Logan didn’t pry. As much as he wanted to know about her secrets and her past, he knew that pushing her would cause her to clam up. He was the same way. He knew he’d been cold to her since he found out she’d gone on a date with Carson. He was still too confused about what he was feeling towards it to confront it. Logan knew he’d be silly to think Serena hadn’t noticed his change in behavior towards her. Fortunately, she hadn’t asked. She hadn’t bombarded him with questions or even called him out on the behavior change. It was a pleasant change to what he was used to. Being in the city with the kids again, he was reminded how much he adored them. Though, he wasn’t completely naïve to Serena’s subtle comments about what it took to be a parent. That was another issue he had to confront. He was putting it off until they returned to the pack.

“I’m going to get to bed,” Logan said. “I’m sure the kids have a big day planned for us tomorrow.” He chuckled and headed to the elevator. “Logan,” Serena called out to him. Her heart thudded in her chest. She had the overwhelming desire to tell him that it was her he’d spent the night with at the masquerade party. “Yea?” Logan asked, turning back to her. Serena sighed. “The party…” she trailed off. Telling him would raise too many questions. She still didn’t have the DNA results back on whether or not he was the twins’ father, so she didn’t want to say anything that would lead him to think he was their father. “What about it?” he asked, raising an eyebrow. Serena smiled. “I had a really great time, too,” she said. Logan smiled. It was all she could say without giving too much away. She didn’t want to act like the night was forgettable, because when the time came for her to tell him, she didn’t want him to feel insulted. When he had mentioned that the night was a blur, she had felt a small pang of rejection at the idea that she was so forgettable. He’d followed up with all the right things to let her know she wasn’t – even though he didn’t know he was talking to her about herself – but she didn’t want to set him up for a similar feeling in the future.

“Good,” he said. She went to his side and rode up in the elevator with him. The silence between them wasn’t uncomfortable. She hoped that meant their ride home the day after next wouldn’t be as awkward as their ride into the city. Again, she wanted to ask him about his change in behavior, but she didn’t want to Reminiscing break the comfort between them. They were supposed to be going out to have a nice day with the kids the next day, and if Logan was in a mood, she didn’t want that to interfere with their fun time. “Serena, you know you are more than capable of handling the kind of business deal brokered today,” Logan said, pulling her from her thoughts. “I don’t know, Logan, you said everything right. I don’t know the business that well,” she said with a shrug. Logan chuckled. “I think you underestimate your strengths,” he said, angling himself towards her slightly. Serena looked at him and then back at the elevator doors. “What do you mean?” she asked. “You lived in the human world for years, away from your pack and family. You’ve been a single mother to twins while also going through medical school. Now you’re working as a doctor and still a single mother. You’ve had to put up with the drama I’ve introduced into your life.” Logan sighed, shaking his head. Serena smiled at his praise. It was more than she thought she’d get from him, given the strange way he’d been behaving the past few days. “The strength, resilience, and skills you’ve learned through all that, not to mention the emergency medical situations you’ve worked through, have prepared you for this kind of job,” he went on. “You won’t trust that until you have to stand on your own and do it.”

“Is that why you put me in charge of this renovation project?” she asked, turning and raising an eyebrow at him. “One of the reasons,” he admitted with a chuckle. Serena shook her head.

On the fourth floor, Logan went to his room and Serena went to her two-room suite where Dana was asleep in one room and the twins were asleep in another. She went to where the twins were sleeping, kissing each of them on the forehead. They squirmed in their sleep and then turned towards each other to hug each other. Serena couldn’t help but think about the things Logan had said to her. She got the feeling that he remembered more than he was letting on about the party. She hoped that didn’t mean he suspected that it was her. Nothing he’d said would indicate that, but neither of them had spoken about the party before. She wondered what it meant that they encountered the masks together in such a unique set of circumstances, opening the door to talk about the party. Serena laid in bed with the twins, thinking about the other compliments that Logan had given her. She was certain there was some truth to it, that she just didn’t trust herself yet. The medical field, in the human world, was primarily male dominated, though, and she knew she’d always encounter resistance. It seemed like Logan was telling her not to give in because of resistance, but to push back until she got what she needed,

She wrapped her arms around the twins. She nuzzled her nose into Olivia’s hair. The twins muttered in their sleep. She liked having the chance to curl up with them. They were getting to the point where they weren’t coming into her bed when they woke up at night

Serena made a mental note to herself to push back the next time she was met with resistance. She had to show her strengths, and Logan reminded her that they were there!

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Chapter 50: Another Attack

Dana was getting the twins cereal by the time Serena got up in the morning. She took a shower and changed into some play clothes so she could have a good time, no matter what the kids wanted to do. Dana had coffee waiting for her when she came out of the bathroom. "Thank you, you are a life saver," Serena said, sitting on the couch. There was a small kitchenette in their suite with a counter and two bar stools. The twins were eating their cereal at the counter. "Mommy, can we go to the duck pond again today?" Olivia asked. Serena sipped her coffee before answering. "Why don't we do something different today?" she asked. "Dana has never been to the city before. It would be nice to bring her somewhere new." "We could go to the museum," Oliver suggested. "That sounds like fun," Dana said. A knock on their door cut their brainstorming short. Serena got up and answered the door. Logan was standing there with a somber look on his face.

"We're not going out today, are we?" Serena asked. Logan shook his head. She stepped back to let him into the hotel room. "There's been another attack," he said as soon as Serena shut the door. "Moonshine has made another move." "Again?" Dana asked. "Oh dear." "We have to get back," Serena said. "I have to get to the hospital." "I'll start packing," Dana said, going to get the kids' stuff together first. "Logan, is it bad?" Serena asked. The Alpha sighed. His expressionless face was harrowing to Serena. "I had an idea of where they would attack next, so the patrols in those areas were heavier," he explained. "I was right, though, for where they would attack. Unfortunately, it was a more forceful attack." "Who's injured?" Serena asked. "I didn't get a list of names," he said. "There are a lot though, and we need to hurry." Serena nodded.

"I'll help Dana" she said. "Kids, finish your breakfast, we've got to get going." "We're leaving?" Olivia asked sadly. "I'm sorry, honey" Serena said, going over to put her hand on her daughter's back. "The pack needs us. We need to be there for them." "Okay," she said softly, It was a blessing that the kids were aware enough to know that

Chapter 50: Another Attack being part of a pack was important and when bad things happened, they'd have to put their wants on hold until the pack was safe again. "My

mother said we can drop the twins off with her and go straight to the hospital,” Logan said. “By the time we get back, the wounded will have been moved.” Serena nodded, rushing into the bedroom to collect the luggage. In moments, the five of them were back in Logan’s car. Dana did a quick checkout, and they were off. Serena kept seeing Logan’s eyes start to his speedometer. He was trying not to push past the speed limit, but she knew how hard that was for him. The Alpha should always be with the pack when an emergency came up. She couldn’t imagine what thoughts and feelings of guilt were running through his head. His expression was entirely unchanged since he showed up at their door. “Can we play a game?” Olivia asked after they’d been riding in silence for a while. Serena smiled at her kids. “Of course,” she said. She reached into their travel bag and handed them one of the toys she’d brought to keep them entertained. Olivia and Oliver focused on that. Serena kept bouncing her leg. She felt helpless sitting in a car when she knew there were pack members in the hospital that desperately needed her aid!

It was too much!

Serena watched the scenery flying by out the window. Everyone was silent again in the car. It wasn’t an awkward silence this time, though. It was an anxious silence. Dana was looking out her window, Logan was chomping at the bit to drive faster, and even though the twins were playing, they were quiet. They seemed to sense the agitation in the room. When they passed back into pack territory, Serena sat up straighter. They still had a ways to go, but she was chewing on the inside of her cheek, bouncing her leg against the car floor. Dana was dropped off at the daycare. Logan swung by his house to drop Olivia and Oliver with Flo. Serena moved to the front seat after dropping her bags off. “There haven’t been any fatalities yet,” Logan told her. “Adriana and the medical staff are well versed in what to do.” His attempts to ease her mind failed, but she gave a weak smile and nodded. “It is so soon after the last attack,” she muttered. “They’re getting desperate,” Logan said. “This is... an escalation...but one I was almost expecting.” “What are you going to do about it?” Serena asked. She glanced at Logan. His lips were set in a thin line, jaw tight. “I don’t know,” he admitted. They were silent again until they got to the hospital. Serena jumped out before the car had even stopped moving. The waiting room was full of Night Sky and Moonshine wolves that were in various

degrees of pain and with injuries of different seriousness. “Good, you’re here,” Adriana said. “You made good time.” “Where do you need me?” she asked. “Surgery is taken care of, only a few needed it,” Adriana said. “Start with bandaging anyone in the waiting room that doesn’t need to be moved to a private room.” Serena nodded.

She ran to the doctor’s lounge, getting her coat, stethoscope, and finding a nurse’s cart to load up with bandaging and disinfecting supplies. There were several patients in the waiting room that had minor injuries. Serena passed them over in favor of those that were actively bleeding or had limbs and joints that were out of place. She grabbed a medical pad and wrote down notes – indicating if someone had a broken bone or another kind of injury – sticking the notes on the patients as she went. The waiting room

was full of groans and moans of pain. Those that were actively bleeding took priority. Carson was one of them, seated off to the side. Serena went to him first. "Are you okay?" she asked him.

"It is just a bite," he said dismissively. Serena rolled her eyes. "I'll be the judge of that," she said. Carson lifted his pant leg, revealing teeth puncture wounds. She got the antiseptic and began flushing out the wounds. Carson growled in pain. "I thought doctors were supposed to be delicate," he grumbled. Serena shook her head.

"Not during an emergency," she said. She finished flushing the wound and then used gauze to clean and pack it. Once he was bandaged, she stuck a note on him indicating what his wound was and that it was bandaged. Quickly, Serena moved on to the next bleeding wound. It was going to be a very long night, based on the number of patients still sitting in the waiting room. Every now and then, a nurse would come by and take someone who was bandaged or who needed x-rays and a cast, off to their own private room. Serena's focus was only on those she could treat in the waiting room, though. Eventually, the number of patients in the waiting rooms started to dwindle. While Serena was treating a few minor cuts and bruises, Carson hobbled over to her again. "You shouldn't be on that leg," she said. "I can't just lie still" he said, "Put me to work."

"Carson, you can barely stand," Serena said, "You're not going to be helpful to me, or anyone, unless you lie down and rest." "Ouch," he said, teasing her. Serena shook her head.

"I am working. Now is not the time to be flirting with me," she told him firmly. "Go back to your room and stay there or you'll cause more damage to your leg." Carson sighed, looking crestfallen. Serena moved on to her next patient. It was a pack emergency; she didn't have time to flirt and coddle the Beta who needed to be resting! Her firmness got through to him, though, and he hobbled back to his room. She sighed with relief, not wanting to have to worry about him falling and hurting himself more! "You're good to go," she told the wolf she was working on. "Give this form to the nurse at reception." She handed her patient a discharge note. It wasn't until the waiting room was completely empty that Serena saw Adriana again. Her face was gaunt, she looked tired! "Everything alright?" Serena asked, meeting Adriana at the nurse's station. "It was a hustle today," she said. "No Night Sky fatalities, but there are a few who were seriously injured. It will take them a while to recover, and a couple that are still not out of the woods yet." "I can work extra hours, keep an eye on them if you need" Serena said. Adriana smiled weakly.

"We'll all do our part," she said. "Please tell me your trip to the human world was productive. I need some good news." "Very," Serena assured. "Logan is a great negotiator." "I'm glad to hear it," Adriana said. "Now, we both need to get some rest before putting in another full day tomorrow."

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