

Chapter 106 A Genuine Apology

Moana

I couldn't sleep at all that night after everything that happened. What was supposed to be a typical family banquet, an opportunity for us all to relax and enjoy a party, wound up turning into a night of hell.

But at the same time, the taste of Moana's lips on mine stood out above everything else. If I did what my father wanted me to do and sent Moana away, I would never be able to taste those lips again... But no. I couldn't taste her lips again, anyway. It wasn't right; we couldn't be together. Maybe, if I couldn't stop having these thoughts, it would have been better to just follow my father's orders and be done with it.

Besides, I had already made a vow to myself that I would never get married or put myself in that vulnerable position with another person. It would only cause Moana pain when she finally realized that I would never be with her like that. Would it cause less pain, though, to send her away? I couldn't be sure.

The next morning, I finally dragged myself out of bed after my entirely sleepless night and made my way over to the dining room for some breakfast. When I arrived, Moana and Ella were already there. Moana looked just as tired as I was; did she sleep at all?

"Morning, Daddy," Ella said, sounding a bit wistful as she poked at her scrambled eggs with her fork.

“Good morning, Princess,” I replied as I kissed her on top of her head. I stopped then to look at Moana, who was only staring down at her plate. “Good morning, Moana.”

“Morning.” Moana’s voice sounded hoarse. She certainly hadn’t slept very much at all, judging from that and the dark circles under her eyes.

I stifled a sigh and sat down in my chair. The three of us ate rather quietly; even Ella, who was normally chatty at breakfast, hardly said a word. I would have to talk to her later. I must have scared her when I suddenly scooped her up at the banquet and whisked her away, and the last thing I ever wanted was to scare my little girl.

As I ate, however, the memory of my kiss with Moana in the fountain kept floating through my mind, no matter how hard I tried to push it away. It was as if it was burned into my memory, as though the sensation of her lips on mine still lingered. I couldn’t help myself from occasionally glancing up at Moana; once or twice, I was certain I almost caught her looking at me as well, but she looked away too quickly for me to tell.

When we finished, Moana quickly got up and cleared the table with Selina despite the housekeeper’s insistence that Moana sit down and rest. I sighed and stood to go to my study, but as soon as I began walking away, I felt my phone buzzing in my pocket.

I froze. Was it my father, calling to tell me to kick Moana out? Was it my mother, scolding me for fighting with Ethan?

But it wasn’t either of them.

It was Kelly.

I furrowed my brow as I stared down at my phone. It only continued to ring; for a moment, I debated ignoring it, but I knew Kelly well enough to know that she would have probably just kept calling until I did finally answer, so I figured it was just easier to answer now. So, with one last glance over my shoulder, I walked into my study and answered my phone.

“Hello?” I said, shutting the door quietly behind me.

“Edrick,” Kelly said, sounding oddly chipper, so much so that I could hear the smile in her voice, “can I talk to you? It’s about last night.”

I frowned, furrowing my brow. Surely she was only feigning kindness to try to convince me to have a “fake” relationship with her again, but I decided to humor her.

“Uh, sure, I guess,” I replied. “What is it?”

“Well... Listen. I know I was a jerk last night, and I just wanted to say that I am really, truly sorry for everything. It was uncalled for.”

Now, I was taken aback. All my life, I had never once heard Kelly apologize for anything. And now she was saying she was sorry and admitting that she was being a jerk? What changed?

Before I could answer, however, Kelly continued. “I also want to say that, while I don’t necessarily approve of having a baby with a human out of wedlock, you are still my closest childhood friend. And I want to be supportive. So... I’d like to make it up to you.”

“Kelly, I— I don’t know what to say,” I said, stunned by this major improvement in her attitude. “Um... Thank you for apologizing.”

Kelly paused before responding. “So... When is Moana’s next prenatal appointment?” she asked. “I want to make it up to her, too. I was thinking that I could take her. I know that the hospital staff gave her trouble last time, and you’re always so busy. Plus, with the tabloid incident, it might be risky for you to go in public with her just yet. It’ll be fun; it’ll be like a girl’s day out. I’ll even take her out for lunch, if she’s interested in going with me. Assuming either of you aren’t too mad at me...”

I sighed. Kelly was my closest friend from childhood. Maybe I was too harsh in thinking that what happened last night was her idea. My father had been putting ideas in her head for years about our relationship, so it was more likely that he put her up to it. If he hadn’t said anything, she

probably wouldn't have even considered confronting me like that last night. For all I knew, my father put Ethan up to kissing Moana, then hired Kelly to take pictures to convince me that Moana was trying to seduce both of us. It was really my father and Ethan who were to blame, not necessarily Kelly. Maybe it wouldn't hurt to give her another chance, but it was still mostly up to Moana whether she wanted to spend personal time with Kelly.

"I'll have to ask Moana and see what she thinks," I finally replied, pacing a bit in my study. "Ultimately, it is up to her. I'm sure you understand. But, I am going to be busy at work during her next prenatal appointment, so it would be a huge help."

"Well, just talk to her," Kelly said. Once again, I could hear her smile through the phone, and her voice was soft and sweet. "Tell her that I really am sorry. You can even give her my number if she wants to talk things out first."

I couldn't help but smile a bit.

"Thanks, Kelly," I said. "I'll let you know."

When I hung up, I let out a sigh of relief. At the very least, if Kelly was genuinely trying to be kinder, then that was one less person who was actively working against my arrangement with Moana. Maybe things wouldn't turn out too badly after all.

But as I walked out of my study and saw the look on Moana's face, I knew that she must have overheard me.

"Was that Kelly?" she asked.

Chapter 107 Rebuilding Bridges

Moana

I couldn't help myself. When I overheard Edrick saying Kelly's name in his study, and saying that he would "talk to her", I got too curious and didn't pay attention to my surroundings as I slowly crept toward the study door. Were they talking about me? I felt my heart sink; what if they were talking about kicking me out so they could be together?

Suddenly, the door swung open and out stepped Edrick.

"Was that Kelly?" I blurted out, without even thinking.

Edrick's eyes were wide, but he nodded. "Yes," he replied. "Actually... Can I talk to you?"

I swallowed. Here it was: Edrick was going to tell me that I had to leave, that my presence was causing too many problems and that I couldn't be around his family anymore. As I followed him into his office, I could only picture him writing me a check and signing over ownership of a new apartment to me, a place where I could live without bothering him or his family anymore, so long as I stayed quiet about our baby. Tears were already beginning to well up in my eyes.

When Edrick saw this, he furrowed his brow. "What's wrong?" he asked, cocking his head. "Why do you look like you're about to cry?"

I shook my head and dabbed at my eyes with the back of my hand. “Just say it,” I muttered as I stared down at the floor. “If you want me to go, I will. I promise I won’t tell anyone. Just... Promise me that you’ll still help me take care of our baby, and promise that you’ll still visit from time to time. I don’t want to raise my baby without a father—”

“Woah,” Edrick said, holding his hands up in surrender and letting out a chuckle. “Slow down. That’s not what I wanted to talk to you about.”

I slowly looked up at him and sniffled. “It’s... It’s not?”

“No,” Edrick replied and shook his head. “It’s about Kelly.”

My eyes widened once more. So he was going to tell me that he was going to have a public relationship with Kelly — I was sure of it. I knew that Michael wanted Edrick and Kelly to be together, and it only made sense; she was a wealthy Alpha werewolf from a well-known family, and she had been close with Edrick since childhood. It was time for them to finally join their families and take the pressure off of everyone. If they got together, they could claim that Ella was their child, and then no one would question the pregnant nanny anymore.

But that wasn’t what Edrick said. Once again, he took me by surprise entirely.

“Kelly is genuinely sorry for the way she’s treated you,” Edrick said. “She called to apologize, and she said she’d like to make it up to you. If you’re willing, she said she would like to take you to your next prenatal appointment, and then take you out for lunch so you two can get to know each other better.”

I blinked incredulously. My mouth opened, then closed again, as the words I wanted to say just wouldn’t come out. Kelly wanted to apologize to me? Genuinely? Even as I thought about it, my face stung just thinking about the way she slapped me at the banquet because I said she was jealous... How genuine could she really be?

“Of course, it’s entirely up to you,” Edrick continued. “I’d understand if you don’t want to be alone with her. I know she hasn’t been very nice to you. But I will say that I know her well, and I really do think she’s being genuine. I think my father may have been putting some ideas into her head.”

All I could do was stare down at the floor in shock. So Edrick wasn’t going to kick me out, or get together with Kelly. Instead, he wanted us to... be friends?

I didn’t quite believe it. But as I slowly looked up at Edrick, I could see in his eyes that he was being serious. If Edrick really did think that Kelly was being genuine, then maybe he was right; he had known her for his entire life, after all. He’d never really given me any reason to trust him, and although I was still bitter that Kelly slapped me, maybe it would help the situation to give her a chance to redeem herself.

But, at the same time, I couldn’t quite decide just yet. I needed a little time, and my next appointment wasn’t for a few days.

“I think I’d like to take some time to consider it,” I said. “Is that alright?”

Edrick nodded. “Of course. Take all of the time you need.”

There was a pause between us. As our eyes met, I knew at that moment that something other than Kelly, Michael, or even Ethan was on both of our minds. I could still practically taste his sweet kiss on my lips. I could still feel his hands traveling along his waist, and as I saw him subtly lick his lip and saw his eyes wander down to my belly, I knew for certain that he was still tasting and feeling me, too. But it was only for the briefest of moments, because as soon as he realized that I was thinking the same thing as him, he suddenly sat down in his chair and began shuffling through paperwork.

“Let me know once you’ve made up your mind,” he said without even looking at me.

I nodded and made my way over to the door. Just before I left, Edrick called after me one last time. For some reason, the wishful part of me thought that he was going to say something romantic, something hinting at our kiss. But he didn't.

“Oh, and send Ella in, please. I want to apologize for frightening her last night.”

I spent the next day with nothing but Kelly proposition on my mind. Whether or not she could really be genuine was still uncertain to me. It was very possible that she was still up to something. I could only remember her slap and the evil, cunning look she gave me from behind Michael. But, at the same time, if Edrick was right about Michael simply putting ideas into her head and putting her up to it, then I supposed that it made sense. Everyone deserves a second chance, right?

However, if I did open myself up to her and she wound up doing something vindictive that would ultimately hurt my baby, I would never forgive myself. Edrick had already expressed concern once that Michael would potentially do something to the baby if he found out this early, and it was still early enough in the pregnancy for something to easily be done to end the pregnancy. If Kelly really was working for Michael, then I wouldn't be surprised if he paid her to do something to me and the baby when we were alone together.

Even then, I did trust Edrick. He wasn't an i***t; in fact, he was incredibly intelligent, and I trusted that he would be able to read Kelly well enough to know whether her intentions were truly sinister or not. Even though I was still uncertain about it, and even though Mina was even more

uncertain about it, I decided to go with Edrick's decision and give Kelly a chance. It was just one doctor's visit. How bad could it be?

The next day, I finally made my decision and knocked on Edrick's office door.

"Did you decide?" he asked, looking up from the pile of paperwork on his desk.

I nodded. "Yes. Kelly can come with me to my appointment tomorrow."

Chapter 108 A New Woman

Moana

The next morning, I reluctantly woke up and got ready in preparation for my appointment visit with Kelly. As I got dressed, there was a pit that slowly grew inside of my stomach, filling me with dread.

“I don’t like her,” Mina said. She had been surly with me since I made the decision to meet with Kelly. “I’m getting bad energy from this. I really don’t think you should go.”

“It’ll be fine,” I replied out loud with a sigh as I put on my makeup, not realizing once again that someone might overhear me and think that I was talking to myself. “It’s just a doctor’s visit.”

“It could be more than that,” Mina insisted. “It could be a trap.”

I fixed my hair then, pulling it back into a half bun, and shook my head. “It will be fine. She won’t do anything. Besides, if anything starts to get weird, I’ll just go home by myself.”

Mina fell silent. I knew that she was furious with me, but I couldn’t just live my life assuming that everyone was out to get me. This wasn’t just about me; it was about Edrick, Ella, and the baby, too. I needed to try my best to be diplomatic, because that would be the only thing that would potentially make Michael hate me a little less. Maybe, once it eventually came out that I was a werewolf, the fact that I had also been kind might

sweeten the deal even more. That way, I wouldn't need to worry about Michael trying to get me removed from Edrick's home again. Over these past couple of months, the penthouse had become my home, too. I didn't want to raise my baby in a home without its father, either.

Once I was finished, I took a step back to check my outfit. Kelly was always a bit degrading when it came to my body, so for that reason I felt compelled to put a bit more effort into how I looked today. I knew that it was childish of me to be worried about how she thought of me, but I couldn't help it.

Satisfied with my appearance, I headed out of my bedroom to eat breakfast. Selina had promised to take care of Ella until I returned, and when I entered the dining room, there was already a plate set out for me. Selina, who was pouring a cup of coffee for me as I approached, offered me a weak smile.

"Are you sure about this?" she asked quietly, finishing up with pouring my coffee and handing me the pitcher of creamer and the dish of sugar. "I can go with you instead, if you're not sure. Amy and Lily can watch Ella."

I shook my head. "It's fine," I lied, although I really wasn't so sure at this point if it would be fine. "It's just a doctor's appointment."

Selina seemed a bit dissatisfied with my response, but didn't bring it up again.

I slowly ate my breakfast; a bit too slowly, in fact, because the elevator doors slid open and Kelly stepped into the foyer before I was even finished.

"Hello?" Kelly called. I could hear the sound of her heels clicking on the wooden parquet floors, and I quickly put down my fork and wiped my mouth, swallowing my half-chewed eggs and toast.

"In here," I responded, standing.

Kelly's head poked through the door. Much to my surprise, there was a warm, apologetic smile on her face without a hint of sarcasm or deviance behind it. Without a word, she scurried up to me and surprised me once again: she hugged me, and as she hugged me, she whispered into my ear:

"I am so sorry for the way I've treated you. And I'm sorry that I slapped you the other night. I promise I'll make it up to you."

I didn't know what to say, but before I could even speak, Kelly pulled away and spoke again.

"I'm so glad you decided to do this with me," she said as she pulled away. "We're going to have a lot of fun today. I picked out this really cute lunch spot, and then I figured we can even do a little shopping afterwards, if you're feeling up to it."

"U-Um—" I stuttered, throwing a glance at Selina, who only shrugged at me over Kelly's shoulder. "Sure, Kelly. That does sound fun."

Kelly's smile widened even more. "Great!" she said, then glanced at my half-eaten breakfast. "Oh! If you're still having breakfast, I'll wait."

"No, it's okay," I said. I grabbed my purse off of the hook along with my sun hat and turned back to face Kelly, trying my best to act polite even though I was absolutely astonished by her sudden and dramatic change in demeanor toward me. This didn't even feel like the same woman who slapped me in the Morgan mansion's garden the other night.

"Okay, then," Kelly said, pushing the button on the elevator. "Let's go."

Suddenly, a tiny voice called out.

"Wait! Moana!" Ella called. She appeared in the doorway, out of breath, and was fully dressed with her shoes on. "Can I go? Please?"

"Honey, this is more of an adult thing," Kelly began, but her voice faltered as Ella shot her an angry, stony glare.

Just then, Selina appeared in the doorway. “Come along, Ella. You’ll make Moana late for her appointment.” Selina tried to pull Ella away, but the little girl wasn’t having it and folded her arms, pushing her lower lip out in a pout.

“Moana, please let me go with you!” she said. “Please! I need to go!”

Both Kelly and Selina went silent and looked at me. I was a bit taken aback by Ella’s sudden insistence on going when she had been perfectly fine with it before. Why was she acting so serious about it now? It didn’t even seem as though she wanted to go because she would be missing out on some fun, either; she genuinely seemed distressed at the idea of not going with me, and as I looked at her, I could see tears welling up in her eyes.

“Ella, why don’t you stay home?” Kelly asked, crouching down to Ella’s level. “Moana will be back soon. I promise.”

But Ella didn’t even look in Kelly’s direction. She kept her gaze fixed on me, unwavering and stern, just like her father. And at that moment, somehow, I knew that she had a real reason for wanting to go with me. I couldn’t explain it, but for some reason, I felt as though it was important for Ella to come. It was almost like a sixth sense; even Mina reacted strongly, urging me to let Ella come along.

“Please?” Ella whimpered one last time.

I finally nodded. “Okay,” I said, holding out my hand. “You can come.”

Ella let out what almost sounded like a sigh of relief and ran up to me, taking my hand. I mouthed the words “It’s okay,” to Selina, who continued to stand in the doorway in confusion, as Ella and I stepped onto the elevator. Kelly paused for a moment, still crouching, before she finally stood again and stiffly walked over to join us.

Kelly was silent for the ride down in the elevator. Ella stayed between us, clinging to my leg almost protectively.

Even though part of me thought that it was something more than it seemed, I pushed that part of my mind away and told myself that Kelly and Ella were only acting like this because they just didn't get along very well.

Chapter 109 A Sudden Stop

Moana

As we took the elevator down to the lobby, Kelly's demeanor almost instantly shifted from warm and apologetic to stiff and uncomfortable. I thought that maybe she was just acting like this because she and Ella didn't always get along very well, so I tried not to think too hard about it. Besides, with Ella here, I was certain now that Kelly wouldn't try to pull anything. She wouldn't start any fights or play any tricks with a child around. It almost felt as though Ella knew that somehow, and that was why she wanted to come so badly. But I knew that was silly; Ella was only eight years old, and too young to understand these sorts of things. In my mind, Ella probably just wanted to come because she overheard that we would be having fun and didn't want to be left out, and after the way that she reacted the last time Edrick and I went out without her, I didn't want to disappoint her again.

Kelly had her car pulled up front. Much to my surprise, there was no driver; she got into the driver's seat herself, which was a bit of a shock to me since she was so wealthy. Either way, I got Ella safely situated in the back seat and then climbed into the passenger seat. Kelly then pulled away from the curb and began to drive.

"So, um... Does anyone want to listen to music?" Kelly asked as she reached forward and began to fiddle with the radio.

“Sure,” I replied, just wanting to fill the awkward silence caused by Ella’s presence, which clearly made Kelly uncomfortable. Kelly finally settled on a classic rock radio station, and none of us spoke.

As Kelly drove through the city, however, I eventually began to realize that she wasn’t headed toward the hospital where my appointment was. I tried to push it off as a detour at first, but I began to get nervous. Meanwhile, Mina started to get even more uneasy, and urged me to start prodding Kelly for answers as to where she was headed.

“Isn’t the hospital that way?” I said, pointing.

Kelly nodded and smiled. “Yes. Sorry, I just have to run an errand really quick. It’ll only take a moment.:

“Oh,” I replied, shifting uncomfortably in my seat. “Okay.”

I couldn’t help but wonder why she would be running an errand now, right before my appointment. But then again, I figured that she did come to pick me up a little early, so we had time.

And yet, as we drove further and further away from the hospital and into some of the more sketchy neighborhoods of the city, I couldn’t deny the growing pit of dread in my stomach as I wondered where Kelly was taking me. Was she really going to try something sinister now, with Ella in the car? I turned around momentarily to check on Ella, whose eyes were glued to the back of Kelly’s head. Even just seeing the fervor in Ella’s eyes made me worry even more; I had never seen her look at anyone like that. She was watching Kelly like a hawk, like she knew Kelly would do something wrong at any moment.

“How far is it?” I asked with a light chuckle, not wanting to raise any red flags.

“Oh, not far,” Kelly said with a smile. “We’re almost there.”

I swallowed, sitting back in my seat. My palms began to sweat nervously, and inside of me, Mina was furious. I knew I should have listened to her.

But finally, Kelly pulled over in front of a pharmacy and put the car in park. “See?” she said, smiling warmly at me. “We’re here. I’m just gonna run in for a moment, and I’ll be right back.”

I watched as Kelly got out of the car. It was a bit of a relief to know that she was just going to the pharmacy, but at the same time, I wondered why she would be going to such a run-down pharmacy in a sketchy part of town.

“Moana?” Ella asked a few moments later, pointing. “Who’s that?”

I looked up and followed Ella’s finger to see who she was pointing at, and when I did, my heart dropped. Three men in black hoods were headed our way, and as they approached, they split off. Two of the men went on either side of the car, while the third man stood in front, watching. The men were large, clearly werewolves, and all of them looked equally scary with face tattoos and sinister expressions. I gulped and tried to lock the doors, hoping that they would just go away, but the locks wouldn’t work; and it was already too late.

The masked man by my side of the car suddenly swung the door open with a grimace. Ella began to scream as the man hit me upside the head with his fist, making my head reel. While I was too stunned to react, he grabbed me, unbuckled my seatbelt, and yanked me out of the car with so much force that I could hardly even fight back. He was far stronger than me as a werewolf; I was helpless. But I wasn’t worried about myself.

I was only worried about Ella.

“Don’t hurt her!” I shrieked, struggling against the man as he pulled me away from the car. “Stay away from her!”

“Calm down,” the man growled in my ear. “We’re not here for the kid.”

Had someone sent them? Was Kelly in on this? They spoke as if they were specifically here for me, as though they had a specific goal in mind. The way that they walked straight up to Kelly's car not even moments before she disappeared made me realize now that I never should have trusted her, and neither should Edrick. I felt Mina raging inside of me, but she still wasn't strong enough to fight back, and I wouldn't have been able to fight against these three huge, muscular men myself, even with her power.

"Who are you?" I replied, sobbing. I tried to struggle harder against the man, but it was no use. He was too strong. He dragged me, screaming, over to the man who was standing in front of the car. I yelled as loud as I could for Kelly, but she didn't come; and even when I screamed for help, no one came. This was not the part of town where anyone bothered to get involved with situations like this.

I didn't know what they were going to do, but I was terrified. "Look away, Ella!" I yelled at the car while Ella screamed inside, trying and failing to get the door unlocked. Before, the doors wouldn't lock, and now... She was stuck inside. I kept my eyes on her, begging the men to stay away from her as they zip-tied my wrists.

Then... A sack went over my head. I heard the sound of screeching tires, and then felt myself being shoved into the back of a van.

And all I could do was scream for Ella, praying that she would be safe. I could only hope that Kelly would get her home safely, and that Kelly didn't have an equally sinister plan for her.

Chapter 110 Sinister

Edrick

Everything seemed to be working out, at least for now. Kelly realized the wrong in her ways, and Moana was willing to give her another chance. Maybe now, with Kelly on our side, my father would eventually lose any footing he had before when it came to trying to drive Moana away.

I was at work while Moana went to her appointment. By now, she was probably already at her appointment. In fact, she was probably already done, and was enjoying a nice lunch with Kelly. I felt relieved to know that those two were making up. Despite Kelly's transgressions and bad attitude over the past couple of years, I always knew that she was still my sweet childhood friend. Maybe she realized that she needed to get her act together, and was now working harder to be a better person again.

But when my phone rang and I saw Selina's name pop up on my screen, my heart instantly sank. Did something happen with the appointment? Was the baby okay? Was Moana okay?

"Hello?" I answered.

"You need to come home right now," Selina said frantically, her voice shaking audibly over the phone. "And you need to hurry."

“Wait— What happened?” I asked. My mind began to race with a million different things. What if Moana had a miscarriage? What if they got into a car accident on their way to the doctor’s office? What if...

“It’s Moana,” Selina answered. “Someone... Someone took her.”

My eyes widened. My hand slipped out of my phone and clattered to the floor. My mouth hung open, but no words would come out. I stood there in stunned silence for a few moments, processing in disbelief, before I scooped my phone up and grabbed my car keys. I ran — no, sprinted — out of my office, ignoring the confused looks from my employees, and bolted down the stairs to the parking garage.

Someone took Moana? As in... Someone kidnapped her? But why? How? Kelly was supposed to be with her! She was just supposed to go to the doctor, get lunch, and come home!

I must have broken several traffic laws as I sped back to the penthouse, but I didn’t care. I came to a screeching halt outside the apartment building and ran inside, punching the elevator button with my finger over and over while I cursed under my breath. Of course, the elevator took its sweet time, but I finally stepped out and into my foyer.

Ella, Selina, and Kelly were sitting in the living room. Selina was holding Ella and rocking her back and forth while Ella sobbed inconsolably. Off to the side, Kelly sat there dabbing at her tears with a handkerchief.

“Daddy!” Ella cried, reaching out for me when I ran in. I ran over to her and scooped her up.

“What happened?” I asked, my eyes wide and frantic.

“It’s all my fault,” Kelly said through sobs of her own. “I went into the pharmacy, just for a moment, and... and...”

“Three big, scary men came and took Moana out of the car,” Ella continued. “T-They p-put a bag over her head and put her in a big black car and d-drove away.”

My eyes widened even further. “Where was this, Kelly?” I demanded, whirling around to face her with Ella still held tightly in my arms. “Where is this pharmacy?”

“I-It’s downtown,” she replied, dabbing at her tears some more. “Down by... Down by the Rogue district.”

“By the what?” I growled. “What the hell were you doing down there?”

Kelly didn’t answer right away, and that told me all I needed to know: she did this on purpose. I gently handed Ella back to Selina, whose eyes were red with tears of her own, then stormed over to Kelly and grabbed her wrist. Kelly yelped, but I didn’t care. I didn’t want to scare my daughter even more, so I yanked Kelly away and into my office and slammed the door behind us.

“What the f**k did you do, Kelly?” I growled. I stormed up to her, towering over her, and caused her to cower in the corner.

“I didn’t do anything!” she whimpered, holding her hands up defensively. But I knew that she was lying. I could see it in her eyes; she was crying, but there was no real empathy there for what happened to Moana. She planned this all along, and I was sure of it.

Fury took over me. I punched the wall behind her, causing her to yelp again and tremble. “That’s a lie, and you know it,” I said. “Tell me where Moana is.”

“O-Okay,” Kelly finally said. “I was just trying to pull a little prank, I swear! I wanted to give her a little scare by hiring some Rogues to come and shake her up. I just thought that they would bang on the windows or something and scare her a little, but they took it too far.”

I couldn’t believe my ears; why would anyone in their right mind choose to scare a pregnant woman and a child like that? Who would willingly choose to hire Rogues, drive to a sketchy part of town, and do something like that to someone? I knew I shouldn’t have trusted her. Now, more than

ever in my entire life, I felt like a complete and utter gullible fool. Because of my stupidity, Moana and our baby were both in danger. For all I knew, they were already dead, or close to it. Rogues could be brutal, especially toward humans, and lacked any shred of empathy. That was why the mayor pushed them into their own district; to keep them from hurting people. And yet, Kelly, someone who was supposed to be my childhood friend, had taken a pregnant woman and a child to the Rogue district for some “prank”. I was lucky, at the very least, that these men didn’t take Ella.

But I didn’t have time to scold Kelly, even though I sorely wanted to yell at her until she begged for forgiveness. That could wait; I needed to find Moana, and I knew where she must have been. Those Rogues must have taken her to their district.

I stormed out of the study and passed by Selina as I made my way over to the foyer. Selina suddenly stood and followed behind me on my heels.

“Aren’t you going to call the police?” she said, tugging on my arm.

I wrenched myself free and pressed the button for the elevator, shaking my head as my fury became so overwhelming that all I saw was red. I wanted to shift at any moment, but I knew that I needed to wait in case I needed to fight off Rogues. “The police will take too long,” I said. “Just take care of Ella. Call my mother and tell her to come and get Kelly, and don’t let Kelly leave before then. I’m going to look for Moana in the Rogue district.”

Selina’s eyes widened. “The Rogue district?!” she shouted. There was nothing but frantic worry spread across the old housekeeper’s face. “Even as an Alpha, that’s incredibly dangerous!”

I merely shook my head as I stepped onto the elevator.

“It’s more dangerous for Moana,” I said as the elevator doors closed.