

Kids from One Alpha By Selena Lynch Chapter 16

Kids from One Alpha

Chapter 16

Chapter 16: Ethics

The phone in Serena's kitchen was ringing. She had just gotten back after her rounds at the hospital, and Dana was already back with the kids. She had them in the bathtub. It was a relief to Serena that she didn't have to immediately jump into "mother" mode. She did rush to the kitchen without even taking her shoes off, picking it up while tossing her keys onto the counter. "Hello?" she asked. "Serena, it is Adriana," the familiar voice on the other line said. "Adriana, hi, how are you?" she asked. For a moment, she had the desire to question Adriana about hiring Dana, but she heard the kids laughing and splashing in the bathroom, Dana's soft voice murmuring to them. She really was quite good with them! "I'm well, thank you," Adriana said. "I take it you are settling in well, seeing as you came in for an unscheduled shift today." Serena chuckled. "I hope that's alright," she said. "I wanted to check on Carson, and once was there, I figured I'd make myself useful." "Any time," Adriana said. "We can always use more hands. The reason I'm calling is because I'd like you to come to my office tomorrow morning so we can touch base and talk about what's next for the hospital." "Tomorrow morning?" Serena asked, thinking quickly about whether or not she'd planned anything. She couldn't think of anything off the top of her head. Technically, she was still supposed to be settling in, but she had already started work on her own, so it made sense that Adriana would be giving her more work. "Yes, how about, ten o'clock?" Adriana asked. "I'll be there," Serena assured, nodding even though Adriana couldn't see her.

"Great, see you then. Have a good night," the other doctor said. "Good night," Serena repeated before hanging up. She sighed, her shoulders relaxing. Serena went back to her front door, sliding her shoes

off and hanging her keys on a nearby hook. When she got upstairs, Dana already had the kids in their pajamas. "Mommy, you're home!" Olivia said, jumping off the edge of the tub and hugging Serena. She smiled, bending down to kiss her daughter's head, and holding out her arms to invite Oliver in for a hug: "Did you have fun at daycare?" she asked. "I beat everyone else on the monkey bars," Olivia said, beaming proudly. Serena kissed her cheek. "You're so strong," she said. "How about you, Oliver?" "I drew with chalk," he said. "That sounds like a lot of fun," Serena said. "They were both on their best behavior" Dana assured. Serena looked up at her and smiled. "Thank you," she said. "I can put them to bed if you'd like to relax yourself," she offered. Dana grinned. "I'll be downstairs if you need anything," she said. Serena put the twins to bed, reading them a book that Olivia let Oliver pick. It was rare that Olivia let Oliver take the lead. She was the more dominant of the two. Their conversation about books with the Alpha must have had an impact on her. Serena was pleased to see how perceptive her

children were, and she loved that, even with how different they were, they would still be kind to each other.

The next morning, Serena made sure her children were in the capable hands of Dana, and then she left for the hospital. This time she had her stethoscope and lab coat, to look more official. Coffee in hand, she headed to her first official day on the job. Adriana's office was on the first floor of the hospital. Serena knocked on the glass paned door. Adriana looked up from the files on her desk and waved her in. Serena took a seat across from Adriana's desk. "Good morning," Adriana said. The two piles of files on her desk were almost taller than Adriana when she was sitting in her desk chair. There were another two piles on the floor next to the desk, just as tall, or taller.

"What's all this?" Serena asked, motioning to the piles of files. Adriana sighed and laughed. "This is why I asked you to come in today," she said. "Everyone in the pack gets a physical, annually. It includes a full blood panel work and a physical exam. It takes several days to get through everyone, even with all hands on deck." Serena nodded. "I guess I chose a good time to come in," Serena muttered. Adriana laughed and nodded.

"We start with the Alpha, Beta, omegas, warriors, and their families," Adriana said. She slid a stack of file folders towards Serena. Serena took the files and held them on her lap. She opened the top folder to see Logan's name printed at the top of the chart. She had been contemplating the likelihood that Logan really was the father of her children. There were certain signs that pointed in that direction. Though she hadn't slept with anyone between their one-night stand and when she found out she was pregnant, it wasn't like she hadn't had some romantic encounters in her undergraduate program before returning home.

With Logan's medical charts in hand, she had the opportunity to take a separate blood sample of his and send it to a human lab for paternity testing against her twins. Ethically, and as a doctor, she knew it was a bad decision. She was bound to do no harm. Lying to a patient, running a blood test based on her own selfish needs...it wasn't ethical. It wasn't that selfish though. Her twins would need to know who their father was, eventually. If it was Logan, he had the right to know too, and she didn't want to make that confession without being absolutely sure. It wasn't the best idea, but it was the only way she could be sure. If she didn't when she got around to telling Logan, he could demand a paternity test anyway. She thought it would be a lot more horrific for her children to be subjected to paternity testing by the male that was supposed to be their father. Especially if the results came back negative. They'd already grown fond of him. Serena had to know, for the sake of her kids. She made the decision to get a sample of blood from Logan and run the test in a human lab.

"Ready to get started?" Adriana asked. Serena nodded. For the rest of the day, Serena shadowed Adriana. The physicals and blood draws were done as available, and she didn't encounter anyone from Logan's family on that first day. A few times, Adriana asked her to do some of the blood draws and double check her findings on physical

exams. It was good to get the hands-on practice, and annual physicals seemed like the best way to go

about getting her hands on as many patients as possible in a short time! “You did great work today,” Adriana told her as they cleaned up for the day. “And we will do it all again tomorrow,” Serena said with a chuckle. Adriana chuckled. “Great. I will see you tomorrow,” she said. Serena waved and departed from the hospital. Dana had sent her a message saying that she had brought Olivia and Oliver to daycare again. Serena headed to the daycare to pickup the kids. They were happy to see her. Even Oliver seemed like he had really enjoyed his day at the daycare. Serena was happy to see it. She’d been worried Oliver would have trouble fitting in and making friends. He had in the human world. Being around other werewolves seemed more natural to him though, and he was already getting involved. It made Serena optimistic for when they would be starting school. When they arrived home, Serena saw her mother standing on her front porch. “Grammy!” Olivia called, jumping out of her car seat the moment Serena had unhooked her. Oliver was happy to run off and hug Charlotte when he was free too. “It is good to see you, my little ones,” Charlotte said. Serena noticed the pickup truck parked outside of her house, filled with boxes. “Mom, please tell me this isn’t your truck, and all those boxes aren’t for us,” she said, slowing walking up the porch steps. “It isn’t my truck,” Charlotte said, winking. “I rented it.” Serena groaned, shaking her head.

“Mom,” she said. “That is...a bit much.” Charlotte chuckled. “Besides, that stuff isn’t for all of you. It is just toys and new things for the kids,” she said. Again, Serena groaned, but she unlocked the door. “I want my new toys!” Olivia insisted as she went inside. “Me too, me too,” Oliver said, following his sister. Serena eyed her mother, but invited her inside. “Fine, but you can’t do this all the time,” she said. “I’m just making up for the years I missed,” Charlotte said. Serena didn’t think that was too unreasonable.

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Chapter 17: Too Human

Serena helped her mom bring all the boxes of toys and clothes into the house. The kids were wildly running around in excitement, chattering about what they thought was in each box. “Alright,” Serena said, getting their attention. She set the last box down. “If you two want these new things, you’re going to have to bring them all up to your rooms and put them away, okay?” “Yes!” Olivia said jumping up and down. “Can we start, mommy?” Oliver asked. Serena nodded. “Go ahead,” she said, waving her arms over the boxes. The kids giggled and cheered, diving into the boxes. They started divvying things up and then running them up and down the stairs. Serena sighed, going to the kitchen to get herself a glass of water. “Do you want anything?” she asked Charlotte when her mother followed her into the kitchen. “No, I’m fine,” Charlotte said, taking a seat at the kitchen table. “You don’t seem that grateful for my contribution.” Serena sat across from her mother, looking at the glossy surface of the wooden table. When she’d

been in medical school, her parents had paid her tuition and sent her monthly installments of money to support her. She had used most of it on the twins, even though they didn't know that's what it was

used for. While she'd been grateful for the support, she'd felt guilty accepting so much from them.

"Mom, it isn't that I don't appreciate it, I just..." she trailed off, meeting her mother's eyes. Charlotte waited expectantly. "You and dad supported me all through medical school. I took the job here in Night Sky to become more independent." Charlotte laughed, tossing her hair over her shoulder and waving her daughter's concern away. Serena crossed her arms, narrowing her eyes at her mother.

Upstairs, Serena could hear Oliver and Olivia running around with their new things. They were playing some elaborate game to sort the toys and

decide what belonged to who. Every now and then, they'd run back downstairs and collect a new armload of things to bring back to their rooms. Everything was an adventure to them. To be a kid again, with no worries and no responsibilities. Serena shook her head. No, she loved being a mother and a doctor! "Serena, you became a little too human while in school," Charlotte teased her. Serena rolled her eyes. "What is that supposed to mean?" she asked. "Honey, this is what a pack does," Charlotte said. "We support each other, we help each other." "This is different," Serena argued. "You can't just drop by and give my kids all these toys. They need to learn that they can't have everything they want." Again, Charlotte shook her head. "These notions of 'independence' and learning they can't have everything, these are human concepts. They have no place in the head of a pack doctor," she said. Serena sighed. Maybe her mother was right. She had missed being in a pack when she'd lived in the human world. Being back, she suddenly felt like the pack was overbearing. It was possible to have her independence and still be part of the pack. At least, she hoped it was. "You're just going to have to get used to this again," Charlotte said. "When you and your brother were younger, pack members doted on you all the time. I'm not just your mother, I'm their grandmother." "Fine, fine," Serena said, holding her hands up in surrender. "Thank you for helping out." Charlotte smiled. "Olivia, Oliver, get in here!" she called to the kids when they came downstairs for more toys. The twins appeared in the kitchen, big smiles on their faces, cheeks flushed from all their running around. "Thank your grandmother for the new gifts, please," she said. "Thank you, Grammy!" Olivia said, throwing herself across Charlotte's lap. Serena smiled at the teary look in her mother's eyes. Oliver hugged Charlotte next.

"Thank you so much! We love it all," Oliver said. "Anything for you two, my little loves," Charlotte said. "Can we go back to playing?" Olivia asked, looking to Serena for permission. "Yes, that is fine, go on and play," Serena said, waving the kids away. They

took off once more, happily sifting through another box. "It makes them happy," Charlotte said. Serena nodded. "Tell me about their father."

"I told you, mom, I don't know who he is." Serena said, shifting her weight uncomfortably in her chair. Charlotte raised an eyebrow at her daughter, resting her elbows on the table. "You don't have a clue who it could be?" she asked. "You never struck me as that promiscuous." Serena growled. "If you must know, I had a one-night stand and due to... alcoholic influences, I can't remember who it was with," she said bluntly. Charlotte hummed in her throat. It was as much of the truth as she could give without giving away too much. "You made no effort to track him down?" she asked. "I was in medical school," she said. "I didn't have the time to track down an unnamed wolf whose face I could barely remember while raising twins and focusing on my studies." "That's a fair point," Charlotte agreed. "Well, I think you should make an effort now." Serena shrugged. She couldn't tell her mother that she thought she had met him already. Based on the timing, similarities in appearance, and how good Logan was with them, it was hard to dispute. But she was working on getting actual proof. "Mom, can we not talk about this?" Serena asked sharply. "My life is fine the way it is, so are the twins'." "Very well," Charlotte said with a dismissive wave.

Serena sighed, biting back her anger. She understood why her mother wanted to know, but even if she could get the proof that Logan was the father, what could she do about it? He was very involved with Holly, and knowing he had kids could disrupt that. She still didn't know if he'd reject

them or welcome them. Serena didn't think Logan would be thrilled beyond all belief. "I won't ask about it anymore," Charlotte offered. Serena nodded. "Thank you," she said. As much as it bothered her to have her mother ask about it, Serena knew that it was an issue that would continue to come up. Her own twin was curious, her father was too. The people she worked with and made friends with in Night Sky. It would always be there, whenever someone found out she was a single mother. It was a question she would never get to escape now that she was back in the pack. "I did want to ask one more thing," Charlotte said, pulling Serena from her thoughts. Serena winced, expecting it to be something else she didn't want to talk about. "What is it?" she asked.

"On the weekends, do you think I could take the kids?" she asked, giving her daughter a pleading look. "I want to spend time with them. So does your father and brother. It would give you a break too." Serena thought about it. She wanted her kids to know their family. She had plenty of help with the kids within Night Sky, but it wasn't the same as having their blood family help them. "As long as it is okay with them," Serena said. "I think they would love spending time with you, dad and Santino." "Great!" Charlotte said, jumping up. Serena stood too and walked with her mother to the front door. They went out onto the porch together, "You could at least stay and help clean up," Serena said, teasing her mother. Charlotte sighed, rolling her eyes. "Take care of yourself, and my grandbabies," she said, hugging her daughter.

"I will. We will see you soon," she promised. Charlotte left and Serena headed back inside. It was later than she wanted it to be, and she still had to feed the kids.

Directly into the kitchen, she went to the pantry and found something easy to make. One pot on the stove, she brought water to a boil and

tossed in the pasta. In a sauce pan, she began heating the meat sauce. Thinking back, Serena did remember that all of Starseeker pack had been there for her when she was younger. Before Moonshine had left the Federation, all three packs had been incredibly close knit and she had never lacked for friends, toys, clothes, or anything. Things were different in the human world. She had to give herself the time to readjust to pack life. "Dinner's ready," Serena called to her kids who were still having some fanciful adventure with their new gifts. She dished up their plates while they ran down the stairs. Once they were seated, she got them each a cup of milk. "Mommy, we got so many new things!" Olivia said, 'pasta sauce smeared on her lips. "I can't even fit it all in my room," Oliver said. Serena sighed. She would force herself to be okay with this, hoping that her mother wouldn't get so much stuff for the kids, they'd have to move to a larger house!

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Chapter 18: Running Free

When the kids were well into their dinner, Dana let herself in. The kids waved to her, slopping pasta sauce on the floor. Serena shook her head, grabbing a wet paper towel to clean up the mess. "It's late, isn't it?" Dana asked. Serena nodded, tossing the paper towel out.

"My mother brought a lot of gifts over for the kids," she explained, motioning to the boxes stacked on the floor. Dana chuckled.

"Very good. I wanted to talk about schedules, making sure we are coordinated," Dana said. Serena nodded, motioning to the couch. While Dana sat, Serena broke down the boxes and folded them up. "Adriana has me working regular office hours at the hospital, unless there is an emergency or some kind of special event," she said. "That is what I expected," Dana said. "I will be at the daycare most days and can watch the kids then. I can help with breakfast and dinner too since those are around the times you're coming home or leaving." Serena smiled, surprised by how relieved she was at the offer. "That sounds great," she said. Boxes flattened and stacked, she sat on the couch with Dana.

"Any time you want me to put them to bed, I'm around," she said. Serena smiled and nodded again. "I really appreciate it. I thought I was busy in medical school, but

rejoining a pack has been a lot more complicated than I remember," she said. "As a single mother, it is nice to have an extra pair of hands." "Do you have a boyfriend, or any kind of regular social life?" Dana asked. Serena creased her brow. "I'm sorry, I don't understand," she said. Dana chuckled. "Are there any standing nights you'd like me to watch the children when you're not here?" she clarified. Serena sighed, smiling. "No...My social life has been...almost non-existent for five years," she explained.

"Because of the kids?" Dana asked, raising an eyebrow. "Oh, no! I was in the human world. It is hard to get close to people while hiding a big secret from them," she said. "Alpha Logan told me that you lived in the human world for a while," Dana said, putting her feet up on the coffee table. Serena curled her legs under her, resting her arm on the back of the couch and leaning her head against her arm. "What is the Alpha's story?" she asked. Dana sighed, looking around the room a little.

"Logan had to take over the pack very young," she said. "It was hard on him. There are times when it still seems like he thinks he isn't the right fit, but none of us have any complaints." Serena hummed in response, her eyelids drooping. It had been a long day working and visiting with her mother. She watched her kids from over the back of the couch, feeling sleepier with each passing moment. "You look exhausted, dear," Dana said. Serena jolted up, yawning and stretching. "I am," she said. "Annual physicals at the medical facility. No end to the patients for the next several days." "Oh yes, it is a busy time," Dana said with a chuckle. "I can put the children to bed, if you'd like." "Thank you," Serena said, reminding herself that Dana was there to help. She was drowsy, watching through blurry eyes as Dana went to the kitchen, cleaning up the kids and the dishes before ushering them both upstairs.

While she was partially asleep, her ears were working just fine! She listened as Dana got them washed up and into their pajamas. Oliver decided he wanted to sleep in Olivia's room with her. It didn't surprise Serena; they'd gotten used to sleeping in the same room. She hadn't had the means for a three-bedroom place while she was in school. The house was big and empty in comparison. They just wanted to be close together. She remembered climbing into Santino's room a lot as a child too. It would take them a while to get comfortable enough to sleep on their own. They'd already crawled into bed with her too.

Serena forced herself awake when Dana came downstairs. She stood up, stretching, her skin feeling tight. It had been a long time since she shifted. Too long! In the human world, it was hard to shift into a werewolf regularly. There weren't a lot of places to run around as a wolf in the city without raising suspicion. She could have been caught by animal control. She could have been seen as a threat and hunted with guns or by an angry mob. With two young kids, getting a babysitter around her class schedule and going out of the city where she could run free wasn't as easy to plan as she would have liked. It had been so long since she had been able to shift and run whenever she wanted to, it was something she had to remind herself she could do! "I'm going to go for a run," Serena said. "Are you okay to stay with the kids?"

"Yes, of course. It is a good night for it," Dana said. "The stars are out in full." Serena peeked out the window. She was right, the stars were so bright! "The moon is full too," she said. Dana smiled. "Enjoy yourself. I do not think you had the chance as much as you should have in the human world," she said. "No, I did not. I won't be gone long," she said. Dana nodded. "Thank you." Once outside, Serena made her way to a small patch of bushes near the house. She shed her clothing. She looked up at the sky, the moon was large and perfectly round. A full moon night was always the best to run on, the night sky just hummed with wolf energy. She was sure there were other pack members out running on a night like this! Serena shifted into her wolf form, the transformation from two legs to four fluid and smooth. She pressed her paws into the ground, feeling the cool, damp earth beneath her. Yes, it was a good night for a run! Taking off into the forest, Serena leapt over a fallen log, running at full speed, dodging through the trees. A howl burst forth from her throat, calling to the moon and the pack. In the distance, she received several howls in response, members of Night Sky that were taking advantage of the night.

It was good to feel like part of a pack! She couldn't see them, but through their howls she could feel them. Through the moon, they were all connected. She could practically feel that connection buzzing through her entire body! Serena slowed to a walk near a little stream that cut through the forest. She leaned down, lapping at the cool water. It sank into her stomach hard, but made her feel more alive. Her fur rippled with a night breeze, and she lifted her head to the sky. The full moon was so bright, reflecting in her eyes, drowning out some of the nearby stars. Away from the human city that was littered with lights, cars, and loud sounds. She had such a clear view of the sky out in the woods, and she began counting the constellations. Twigs snapped nearby, and Serena snapped her head in the direction of them. She lifted her nose into the air, sniffing for the scent of whoever was nearby. She knew there was a chance that whoever it was, she wouldn't recognize. She hadn't met very many members of Night Sky yet. She was looking forward to connecting with more people than her boss, her babysitter, the Alpha, and the Alpha's jealous mate. The scent was faint at first, wind blowing in the opposite direction of where she was standing. When the wind shifted, she caught it full in the face, Logan! She didn't want to see him. The more she was around him, the more she worried she would get too comfortable and slip around him. She couldn't speak to him in wolf form, but any scent she gave off would be far more potent. She couldn't risk it! Swallowing the instinctive growl that rose to her lips, Serena gauged where the wind was blowing. She went to the nearest patch of bushes that was upwind from Logan and lowered herself down to be out of sight. She hoped he wouldn't smell her, but he was too close for her to try and run. Serena held her breath, waiting for the moment when Logan was far enough away that she couldn't smell him anymore. She couldn't tell if he was moving. Was he smelling her too? She kept herself low in the bushes, hoping the wind wouldn't change direction again. It took several heart stopping minutes before Serena heard the padding of feet and the rustling of leaves. The sound was receding, and so was

Logan's scent. She let out a low whine of relief.

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Chapter 19: Mates?

It had been a long day working on the reports from the attack. Logan stood from his desk, stretching and going to the nearest window. The full moon was rising, and he felt the hairs on the back of his neck prickling. Logan looked back at his desk with the stack of reports he still hadn't gone through. Sighing, he returned to his seat, but he remained standing. He lifted the cover of the top file on his desk, contemplating whether or not he wanted to sit and go through more reports. Deciding against it, Logan headed out of his office. He wanted to breathe the fresh air, run as a wolf under the full moon. It was too nice of a night to be cooped up inside. He pulled his shirt off, tossing it aside as he prepared himself for the change. Once on four legs, Logan trotted into the woods, ears turning back and forth as he listened for any sounds that could alert him to other nearby wolves. He knew he wasn't the only one out for a run tonight! The woods were quiet, which let his mind wander. The stack of reports on his desk still weighed on him heavily. If things had been different, his father might still be Alpha, but Logan had taken control of the pack at age 21. He was one of the youngest to ever become Alpha, and it had not been an easy transition. All his father had left behind was wealth from some good investments, and a vision to modernize the pack. He'd picked up his father's vision where it was left off, renovating the medical facilities and the pack houses. Even now, after he had been Alpha for over five years, there were times when he still felt as though he would have preferred not having the weight of the whole pack on his shoulders. Logan sniffed the air, heading deeper into the woods and further from the pack town. Leaving his office, clothes, and skin behind, he could pretend for a while that he was free of his duties and responsibilities. Not that he didn't love being Alpha and appreciate all his father had done. He had a good plan and roadmap to follow. His father had been very prepared and left detailed notes of what he had been planning for the pack. What worried Logan the most was when he got to the end of that list of notes. What would he do then when he no longer had a careful roadmap to follow?

The question became heavier and heavier in his mind. Finally, he snarled, growling into the darkness to break away from that thought. He missed his father, but he had plenty to do in honor of him: Moonshine's break from the Federation hadn't made his life any easier as a young Alpha. He'd had to further assert his authority and strength to prove that he was strong enough to lead with the instability that Moonshine's void left in the Federation.

Starseeker had been supportive, for the most part. Logan had Serena's parents to help with that. They'd known his father and trusted him to take up his father's call.

Still, the situation with Moonshine was getting more complicated, if the recent attack was any indication. Sighing out of his wet nose, the Alpha picked up his pace, trotting through the underbrush, picking his padded paws up high to keep himself from tripping over branches and sticks. He moved gracefully and fluidly through the trees, hardly needing to pay attention to where he was going. His wolf instincts kept him from running into trees or bushes. If Moonshine continued to press their borders and try to hurt their convoys, it could lead to all out war. The Federation had been created for a time of peace. Logan did not want to be the Alpha that saw that come to an end, that perpetuated it.

Moonshine's Alpha wasn't even a legitimate leader, but when a coup for power is staged, the only way to prevent it is to go to war. Logan hadn't wanted that, neither had Alpha Thomas, so allowing them to leave the Federation was the easiest option. Of course, that only remained true if they weren't attacking his pack! Night Sky's greatest export to the human world was fruit. It was income and trade relations that they needed. Moonshine's interference with their

trade convoys would only increase. They thought they could get away with it, and Logan had to consider the safety of the entire pack! Growling again, he headed in the direction of the stream. His mouth was drying out from all the growling he was doing at his own thoughts. He'd adjusted well enough, and he'd known that being Alpha would come with trials and conflicts. He was bred from a line of Alphas, and Logan knew that he could do what was required of him. It wasn't always easy, but it was his responsibility. He'd been entrusted with it, and he wouldn't abandon that or take it for granted. The pack relied on him, and he was their leader, their defense. Moonshine pack would be dealt with, and Logan knew that with Starseeker still as an ally, they could keep peace and would do anything to avoid an all-out war. He'd like to think that if it came to war, Night Sky and Starseeker could take on Moonshine, but numbers didn't necessarily win battles.

He needed more support, personal support. Having a pack Luna would help take some of the burden off his shoulders. Someone to share the responsibility, to confide in, someone who would understand the pressure he was under. Logan looked up at the full moon again. It was so beautiful, the stars in the sky the forest laid out before him. There was a part of him that longed for someone to walk by his side through the woods under the moon.

Holly had joined him before. He cared about her. She was incredibly insistent that they were mates. Logan didn't doubt it, but he also wasn't fully committed to the idea. They'd always had a good time, but she wasn't his Luna, and she didn't share the same responsibilities he did. There were things she couldn't understand about what he did and the pressure he was under.. Although, she helped immensely with the stress relief. Logan was fond of her. He was also happy that she had been able to find refuge with Night Sky. Left in the Moonshine pack, she probably would have been killed by the illegitimate Alpha. An attempt to remove all traces of the former Alpha's bloodline, Holly's father. She had adjusted well in the wake of her father's death. It was

something they shared, and part of what had allowed them to bond. Her desire to become mated and the mild pressure she put on him to declare them mates had started to grate on his nerves. She was a lovely woman and from a good bloodline. She'd make a good mate, a good Luna, and a good wolf to have pups with. It was the direction she was pushing him in. Logan felt like he couldn't be bothered by that with everything else that had been going on. He didn't know if that feeling came from thinking Holly wasn't his mate, or just not being ready to commit on that level. He knew he needed a Luna, but that didn't encourage him to take Holly as a mate with any more urgency. It was hard to say if that was because he was waiting for someone different or because he just had too much else going on. He didn't want to make anything official with Holly until he was sure she was his mate. Logan made it to the edge of the clearing with the stream and he stopped walking. His front paw snapped a twig he was standing on. Downwind from the stream, he smelled something! He'd never smelled it before, but he knew it was another werewolf!

Mouth opening, Logan's tongue slipped out the side and he began to pant. The scent was too delicious! Saliva built in the back of his throat, and he unconsciously let out a soft whine. Who was that!?! He tried to get closer to the edge of the clearing to see if anyone was there that he could recognize. With the full moon, seeing wasn't complicated, but he didn't want to reveal himself and scare off the other wolf.

He couldn't see from his position. He was about to risk stepping closer, but the wind shifted direction, taking his scent right into the clearing. Logan remained still. The mouth-watering scent wasn't as strong anymore, but he still felt it straight into his bones. He had to know who it was!

He waited to see if they would reveal themselves. After several moments of silence, with the wind blowing against him, he wasn't sure if the wolf was even in the clearing anymore. Logan gave up and headed back out of the forest.

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Chapter 20: The Checkup

Serena made it back to her clothes and shifted into her human form before anyone saw her. She was glad that Logan hadn't tried to pursue her. It was too complicated to face him alone when in her wolf form. She went straight home and straight to bed, thoroughly tired from her run, as wonderful as it had been! The twins were already awake when Serena got down to the kitchen in the morning. Dana had made them breakfast and gotten them dressed. Serena had her stethoscope and was getting ready to head off to work. "Morning, lovelies," she said, moving to the table and kissing them each on the top of their heads. "How was your run?" Dana asked, handing Serena a mug of coffee. "Wonderful," she said. "I'm sorry I was later than I thought." Dana

shrugged. "That's alright," she said. "Would you like me to take the kids to daycare?" "That would be great!" Serena said, smiling and sipping her coffee. "Do we have to go to daycare?" Olivia asked, pouting. Serena looked at her children. Oliver didn't look excited about daycare either. "I thought you both liked the daycare," she said. "I want to see Logan again," Oliver said. "Me too. I want to go 'touring' with him," Olivia said. Serena sighed, setting her coffee aside. It broke her heart to see how attached her kids were to Logan. How much they wanted to spend time with him. He'd really made an impact on them! "I know," she said. "We can see if he can do that, but another day." "Okay," the twins grumbled. Serena kissed them on the heads again. "I'll see you after work," she said. "Love you." "Love you too," they chorused back. Serena headed out the door, her heart aching at thinking of her kids wanting a relationship with Logan.

There was a commotion in the street, a pack of teenage wolves in their wolf form running by. Olivia and Oliver heard the noise, running out to the porch with Serena. "Wow!" Olivia said, pointing at the pack. "Are those wolves, mommy?" Oliver asked. Dana came rushing to the

door.

"It is daytime," Olivia said. "Wolves only come out at night."

"Those are wolves!" Oliver argued. Serena glanced back at Dana. She hadn't told the kids of their werewolf heritage yet. They wouldn't need to know until they started shifting, and she hadn't wanted them to have to keep that secret in the human world when they were so young. "They are wolves," Serena said. "It is very strange. Goodbye, kiddos." She waved and left them on the porch with Dana before they could start asking more questions. When she got to the hospital, Serena went to check on Carson first. He was the most critical patient, and Adriana was already working on the annual exams. She had to wait to check in with her until she finished with her current patient.

To Serena's shock and dismay, Logan was sitting by Carson's bed. They were laughing and sharing some kind of joke when she entered. "I'm sorry to interrupt," she said, keeping her eyes on Carson. "No worries," the Beta said. He sat up, hand on his side over the stitches. "How are you feeling?" she asked. Logan leaned back in his chair, watching her. Serena didn't want to know what he was thinking, his eyes making her uncomfortable. She couldn't help feeling like he had recognized her scent out in the woods! "Fine," Carson said. "I'm healing quickly." "Good," Serena said, checking his vitals and making notes in his chart. She opened his hospital gown to check the stitches. "How's it look?" Logan asked. Serena glanced up at him, then back down at the stitches.

"No swelling, no bruising," she said. "A little redness from irritation, but nothing that would indicate infection."

"That's all good, right?" Logan asked. Serena nodded. "You shouldn't have to be here much longer," she said. Carson grinned. "Good, I am getting antsy," he said. Serena rolled her eyes, fixing his gown and the sheets on the bed. Adriana entered the room, her stethoscope in hand. "Good morning, Serena," she said. "I see you're already checking on the patient." Serena nodded. "Everything looks good," she said. "Well, we might as well get their blood for the annual blood panel," she suggested. Serena nodded. "The room next door is free if you and Logan want to do the work there." Again, Serena nodded. "Come on," she said, motioning for Logan to follow her. He grinned and obeyed, his eye's still on her uncomfortably. Alone in the next room, Serena motioning for him to lie down on the exam table. "I'll do a quick physical, and then get your blood," she said. Logan nodded. He could never figure out what it was that Serena was thinking. He pulled his shirt off and lay back on the table. Her hands were warm as she poked and prodded various areas on his arms and chest. Her face was so serious, but it was hard for him to be serious. He was curious about her, not only because she was new to the pack, but also because she'd lived among humans. She'd lied about her kids, even if it was through omission, and he knew absolutely nothing about her!

Naturally curious, he wanted to know. He winced when she put her stethoscope against his chest, the round pad cold compared to her pleasantly warm.

"Stay still," she told him. Logan smirked at her, but she had her eyes closed. She checked his heart, then had him sit up so she could listen to his lungs, taking deep breaths. She set her stethoscope aside and opened Logan's medical folder, making notes.

"Well, Alpha, you are in peak health," she said. She poked the end of her pen into the cut on his side she'd stitched up. It was already closed on its own. "Even with this injury." He chuckled. "I told you I'd be fine," he assured. "Let me get your blood," she said. He nodded. She went to a cabinet and got a tourniquet some cotton ballas, a band aid, a few vials and the syringe. Logan held his arm out for her when she turned back to him. "You're so serious today," he said, teasing her a little. Serena shrugged. "I'm working," she pointed out. Logan sighed. It was good that she was professional on the job. The antiseptic pad she used on his skin was cold, the rubber tourniquet pinched his skin. Serena drew his blood, focused completely on the task. She filled two vials and set them aside. In years past, only one vial was needed. He wondered what the second one was for, but he didn't ask. "How are the twins settling in?" he asked. Serena blinked at him. The surprise on her face evident.

"They're fine," she said. "The house is bigger than what they are used to and my mother has supplied them with more toys than they'll ever need." Logan smiled, holding the cotton ball against the needle prick while Serena labeled the blood vials. "I'm glad they're making themselves at home," Logan said. He wasn't sure if talking about the kids was something that would allow him to get to know her more. He didn't think regular small talk would work with her. "You're concerned about my kids?" she asked, raising an eyebrow at him. Logan shrugged. "I'm sure they are a big part of your life. I just want to get to know you more," he admitted. Serena gave him a half smile. A small

chink in the armor she wore. He felt triumphant. When she leaned in to put the band aid on his harm, a soft scent wafted off her hair, reminiscent of the mouthwatering scent he had encountered the night before. He was instantly reminded of that encounter, thoughts of whether or not the faceless wolf had been his mate.

The scent had been so strong, he couldn't deny that he'd never smelled anyone that appealing before! It could have been his imagination, capturing a new scent. He hadn't realized it, but he'd leaned in slightly, getting closer to Serena's hair. The moment he did realize it, he pulled away. "I'm having a dinner party at my house)" Logan told her. "You should come." Serena stepped back, picking up his medical file again. "I'll think about it," she said. Logan sighed, shaking his head. He reached for his shirt. "Don't think about it," he implored. "It will be a good way to meet more pack members." "I'm meeting everyone through these annual exams," she pointed out with a cheeky grin. Logan chuckled. "I'm sure sticking pack members with needles is the best way to get to know them," he teased. "I could be wrong, you are the medical expert, after all." Serena raised an eyebrow at him. "I'll think about it," she repeated pointedly. Logan nodded, leaving her to her job.