

Accidental Surrogate For Alpha By Caroline Above

#Chapter 101 – The Princess is Dead

Ella

Once it became clear that Lydia wasn't going to be the solution to our problems, I decided it was time to call in some backup. I trust Sinclair to take finding a new Luna seriously, but I also know he doesn't have the time. Between running the pack, the campaign, and taking care of me, there's no room in his life to go out hunting for a mate. I, on the other hand, have nothing but time. Bed rest sounds like a nice, relaxing time, but all it really means is that the world is falling apart around me and I'm not allowed to do anything but lie around and get fat.

So I invite Roger and Henry over for a visit, with two main objectives in mind. First, it's long. past time that I come clean to Sinclair's father about my true identity. Second, if anyone can be trusted to help me wingwoman the father of my child, it's his father and his brother.

I persuade one of my faithful guards to carry me downstairs just before lunchtime, settling in the main sitting room in anticipation of my visitors. Roger and Henry arrive shortly afterwards, walking or in Henry's case, wheeling in with wide smiles on their faces. I start to get up, but they both immediately protest. "No, don't move, we'll come to you." Roger promises.

"Poor darling," Henry commiserates beside him, "we ought to get you some wheels so you can be mobile even on bed rest."

I hug them both, laughing at Henry's suggestion. "I'd like that, but somehow I think your son would think it's too much excitement."

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“You may have a point there.” The older man concedes with a knowing look, “I do lead a very exciting life rolling around an empty house all day, just waiting for my friends to retire so I can have a social life outside of evening poker games.”

“Henry!” I exclaim, sitting up in excitement. “I can’t believe I didn’t think of this before – if we’re both stuck at home all day, we might as well spend the time together! I need company, you need company, and Sinclair would probably love the idea of me having another babysitter

the bossy bastard.”

Roger laughs, and Henry is smiling, but it’s a hesitant look, as if he doesn’t want to get his hopes up. “Oh now, I’m sure you don’t want to spend all day long with an old man.”

“Henry, I would love to spend more time with you I mean, full disclosure: I’m so bored and restless that I’d probably take the company of a serial killer about now, but you are a much more preferable alternative.” I declare wryly.

They both chuckle, “You hear that dad? You beat out the homicidal maniacs!” Roger congratulates him.

Henry is looking less uncertain now, and his smile is verging on a beam. “Really?”

“Of course!” I insist, only hesitating when I remember the reason I’ve asked him over today. ” That is... assuming you want to spend time with me.”

“Ella, of course I want to! How could you think I wouldn’t want to get to know my new daughter better? Don’t you know fathers exist to spoil their pups and grandpups?” Henry offers gamely. The smile slips from my face at his words, and suddenly I’m fighting

back. tears. Henry looks confused for a moment, before a guilty expression identical to the one

Sinclair sometimes dons takes over his features. “Oh Ella, I’m sorry, I wasn’t thinking.”

“No, it’s not that.” I sniffle, knowing he assumes I’m hurt because I’m an orphan and don’t have any experience with fathers. “It’s just that... no one’s ever wanted to claim me as their child before, and you just did it like it was the most natural thing in the world.”

“Ella that’s a good thing.” Roger offers gently, reaching out to squeeze my hand.

“No,” I argue, shaking my head and burying my face in my hands. “I don’t deserve your kindness. I’ve been lying to you, we both have.”

Henry wheels forward, resting his palm on my shoulder. “Oh now, come on dearheart, I’m sure it’s not all that bad.”

“But it is! He knows!” I exclaim, gesturing to Roger and crying, “I’m a fraud!”

Roger’s eyes widen with alarm, clearly baffled by my sudden outburst of emotion, and completely out of his depth. Henry, on the other hand, rolls his eyes at his son and wraps his arms around me, encouraging me to lean my head on his shoulder. I surrender, leaning into him and letting his shirt collar soak up my hopeless tears.

“There now,” Henry murmurs, patting my hair, “why don’t you tell me what all this is about.” Little by little the story pours out of me, in between hiccups and sobs with small assists from Roger along the way. “There, you see?” I moan when it’s all over. “It’s all been a lie.” Of course, Henry is too much like his son to let me wallow in my misery. He continues fussing over me and rubbing my back,

and for the first time in my life, I feel the way I can only imagine it feels to be held by a parent – by a father. Of course, this only makes me cry harder.” Poor little mother, it’s no wonder you’re under so much stress. You’ve been making yourself sick over all this haven’t you?”

“Uh-huh,” I nod pitifully. “And I haven’t even told you about Lydia yet.”

When I get through the most recent chapter of our saga, they’re both swearing, and I can barely catch my breath. “That’s why I asked you both over today, I wanted you to help me find a Luna for Dominic, since he doesn’t have the time to search for himself... that is, assuming you can still stand the sight of me.”

“Ella, you listen to me now.” Henry instructs, sounding more stern than I’ve ever heard him. “You’re going to be my daughter whether you marry my son or not and it doesn’t matter one bit that you’re human. You’re giving me a grandpup, and that makes you family forever.”

I pull away from him slightly, tears streaming down my cheeks, “you mean you don’t hate me?”

“Of course not!” He admonishes. “I couldn’t if I tried. You didn’t ask for any of this to happen, Ella. You’re just doing the best you can and for what it’s worth, your best has been phenomenal.”

“He’s right, Ella” Roger agrees “You’re doing incredible. And of course we’ll help you find a Luna for Sinclair’

“Really?” I squeak

“Of course “Roger begins, “we’ll do whatever we can to help, even
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Before he can finish his sentence, one of the guards walls in, an anxious look on his face. "I'm

sorry, but you need to see this." He picks up the television remote from the coffee table, pressing a button that opens a sliding panel above the fireplace and reveals a big screen TV. The screen flickers to life, and the guard quickly switches the channel to the leading shifter news station.

A picture of the Prince and his wife is dominating the screen, with a bold headline reading: Princess Found Dead in the Royal Palace.

The reporter is speaking in a low even tone, reporting on the brief details available at this early stage. "The Princess was found unresponsive in her bathroom earlier this morning, after she failed to appear for a scheduled campaign event. Her cause of death has not yet been identified, but an autopsy will be conducted to determine whether or not foul play was involved. The Palace has not released an official statement about her passing, other than to request time for the Royal Family to grieve this tragedy in private."

"Well I guess that solves the problem of the women's event and the rogue attack." Roger observes dryly.

"I... what does this mean?" I ask, my voice still husky from all the crying.

"It's not good." Henry answers gruffly. "He just went from an abusive tyrant to a grieving, single father."

"So... even though he won't have a Luna anymore, this could help him in the campaign?" I surmise, hating that there might be a double standard like this.

“He already has his heir and a spare.” Roger reminds me. “That ensures his wolf is well grounded and balanced even if he doesn’t have a mate.”

“But I thought Lunas were supposed to lead the she-wolves of a pack, won’t he need one eventually?” I inquire.

“Not necessarily.” Henry frowns. “It’s different with you and Dominic, because as long as the mother of his pup is alive, she’ll be expected to lead unless we find someone to take your place. But the pack won’t fault the Prince for being a widower.”

“So basically you’re telling me that as bad as things already were... they just got worse?” I

assess.

“Yes, Ella.” Henry confirms gravely. “I’m afraid so.”

#Chapter 102 – Sinclair Gets a Scolding

Ella

Sinclair calls soon after the news about the Princess breaks, explaining that he’ll probably be stuck at the office until late this evening as a result. He was relieved to hear that Henry and Roger were at the house with me, and made me promise to call him if I need anything.

The three of us spent the afternoon discussing ideal qualities to look for in a potential second- chance mate for Sinclair, which proved surprisingly difficult. Apparently Sinclair had a few serious girlfriends in high school before Lydia came along, then a few more who were more akin to distractions while she continued to date Roger. There hasn’t been anyone since they divorced, which is why he apparently always got photographed with different

women – because he never wanted to lead anyone on with second dates when he knew it wasn't going to go anywhere.

Combined, this meant that his only serious interests amounted to boyhood dalliances, his evil fated mate, and me a human he can't ever be with. Try making a dating profile out of that. I wish there was some way I could just become a wolf. I think, standing in front of the bathroom mirror and staring at my reflection, just because it's an excuse to be on my feet. In horror movies all werewolves have to do is bite a human, then they're changed forever. I know all that isn't real, but part of me still wishes it could be.

I'd love to transform. My inner voice agrees wistfully. To be free to lope through the forest under the full moon.

Can you imagine what it would feel like to be so powerful? I reply, relieved that we're on the same page

for once. I've never felt powerful in my life. It would be nice to know what that's like... at least once.

We're powerful in at least one way. My conscience proclaims, ever the optimist when I'm trying to feel down on myself. We made a baby. We're growing Sinclair's pup. If that's not power, what is?

"You okay Ella?" Roger's voice floats through the door, and I push away my thoughts.

Pulling my gaze from my reflection, I swing the door open, eyeing the waiting wolf indignantly. "You know just because I'm on bed rest, it doesn't mean I can't stand up every now and then."

"And if I know my brother, his response would be that stalling and making up reasons to stay upright every time you have an excuse to be on your feet is cheating." Roger replies, flashing me a grin.

I narrow my eyes at him. That's exactly what Sinclair would say, but whereas Sinclair's scolding has the power to make me shake in my boots, Roger's just irks me. "Well, Dominic isn't here." I remind him, turning my nose up.

"Oh really?" A deep voice sounds from the doorway, and I jolt slightly, turning to find Sinclair watching us with raised brows.

"You're home!" I exclaim, glancing at the clock. It's already ten PM, but I barely noticed how quickly the night passed.

"I am." Sinclair confirms, prowling forward with lethal grace. "And from the sounds of it, not a moment too soon."

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I willingly melt into his arms when he reaches for me, lifting my feet off the ground as I'm enveloped in a warm hug. "I was only up for a minute." I tell him, breathing in his scent.

Sinclair trails kisses over my hair, "Now why don't I believe you?" He inquires, his amused voice a low rumble in my ear.

"Because you're a suspicious ogre who assumes the worst of people?" I suggest, batting my lashes at him and adopting an innocent tone as I add, "even the mother of

your child." The big Alpha chuckles, "Of course, it has nothing to do with the fact that you're a bundle of pure mischief."

Before I can respond, we're given a much-needed reminder that we aren't alone. "I think it's time for us to go, Roger." Henry observes, eyeing us with a guarded expression. "Dominic, walk us out?"

"Of course." He deposits me on the couch with a warning to stay put until he returns. I know I should do as he says, but at the

same time, I'm impossibly curious about what Henry might have to say to Sinclair after our visit today. Is this something about the Princess's death? Is he angry with us for keeping the secret about my identity for so long? Was he merely being kind when he told me he didn't care if I was human?

As stealthily as I can, I rise from the couch and tiptoe to the door, pressing my ear against the wood and straining to hear the hushed conversation in the entryway.

"What news about the Princess?" Roger asks, his voice slightly muffled by the distance and the shuffling of donning shoes and coats.

"Nothing yet, but I don't think this was some accident. The timing is too suspicious." Sinclair replies grimly.

"You don't think the Prince would have hurt her to help his campaign, surely?" Henry inquires, sounding aghast.

"I wouldn't put anything past him, Goddess knows he's beaten her bloody more than a few times over the years... but I don't know. It feels awfully cunning for his miniscule brains." Sinclair assesses.

"I agree." Roger confirms. "So far I haven't seen him come up with anything more creative than hiring thugs to try to take out the competition."

"Well, we'll see what the autopsy says, and I'll try to get some of my own investigators to look into it as well." Sinclair shares. "How were things here?"

There's a tense silence, and then Henry's voice rises, sounding more authoritative than I've ever heard it. "Well you have much bigger problems than the Prince." He bites, "Do you have any idea what this game of yours is doing to that poor girl?"

“Of course I do.” Sinclair replies sharply, his own voice growing harsh. “And it upsets me more than you could imagine.”

“What were you thinking, asking her to get involved in our politics?” Henry scolds, sounding furious “And don’t you tell me it was her idea, she thought she was going to lose her baby. Besides, you knew how dangerous this was going to be from the beginning she didn’t!”

“I also know that without her, I would lose the election.” Sinclair growls back. “I know I don’t need to remind you what the Prince will do to her if he wins – he’s already trying to kill them and he’s come damn close a few times without an army behind him. Besides, you’re the one who taught me my duty comes first. I couldn’t very well put one person over the well-being of the entire realm, no matter how much I care about her.”

“If you’d told me the truth we could have found another way – a she-wolf who could fake a relationship and a pregnancy so Ella could stay hidden.” Henry combats, and I’m amazed to realize that he’s taking my side over his own son’s. He’s defending me, even though I’m just some random human. As touched as I am, I also feel a nearly irresistible compulsion to defend Sinclair. I don’t like the fact that Henry is blaming him for all our problems, he already blames himself enough.

Without thinking, I push through the door and join them in the entryway. Henry and Roger blink in surprise, but Sinclair narrows his eyes at me. “You’re getting stealthier by the day, little one.”

I ignore him, defiantly crossing to stand between him and his father. “I appreciate you standing up for me Henry, but this isn’t all Dominic’s fault. It was my idea, and I wouldn’t take no for an answer. I put myself in this situation with full agency and I don’t regret it.” I continue, looking up at the hulking Alpha behind me. “Yes, I’m stressed and overwhelmed and hormonal, but I’ve

survived much worse than this. You have no idea what my life has been, and this is the safest and most secure I've ever felt."

"Ella, you don't have to do this," Sinclair tries to say.

"I know that." I assure him. "And I'm not saying any of this for your sake – I'm saying it because it's true. I'm an adult, I made my own decision. I know it's hard to remember that when I'm crying like a baby, but you have to understand that even being free to cry is something I've never had before. I've always had to do everything myself, I never had the luxury of falling to pieces, I never had anyone to comfort me. It sounds backwards, but the fact that I'm a mess rather than just repressing everything is progress. It's a good thing, and that's all down to you, Dominic."

I can see that he's recalling my behavior after the attacks at the club and the Wild Hunt, that he can sense the truth in my words. He softens slightly, and I hear Henry sigh behind us. "I'm happy to hear that, Ella." The elder man begins carefully. "You're right, I didn't know. But I still don't like this."

"None of us like it, Dad." This time it's Roger who's speaking. "But we all have to make the best with what we have, and we can't go back now. There's no space for could've, should've, would've. We just have to keep moving forward together."

Henry nods. "You're right. I'm sorry I gave you a hard time, Dominic. I know you wouldn't do anything to hurt Ella or the baby."

"Thanks Dad." Dominic leans down to hug him. "I'll call you tomorrow. For now, my little human and I need to have a talk about the meaning of bed rest."

"Good luck Ella." Henry and Roger laugh, exiting the house and leaving me with one very large, very unamused wolf.

“Well, trouble?” Sinclair asks, crossing his arms over his chest. “What do you have to say for yourself?”

#Chapter 103 – Flirtation

Trigger warning – mention of sexual abuse (not explicit)

Ella

I peek up at Sinclair from beneath my lashes, trying to gauge his frustration level. It’s obvious. he’s displeased that I defied him, but I can tell he’s also glad to be home after what was certainly a very long day. Moreover, I think my words to his father helped assuage some of his guilt, and he’s feeling more affectionate towards me than he might have a few minutes ago. “I have to say that I missed you?” I profess, sliding my arms around his neck. “And you’re the most handsome man in the whole world?”

Sinclair flashes his fangs, emitting a dark chuckle and swinging my legs up into his arms. Flirting with me isn’t going to get you out of this, sweetheart.” He ducks his head and steals a kiss before mounting the stairs up to his room, “though it’s very cute to watch you try.” “Who said I was just flirting?” I object, leaning my head against his chest, “I really did miss you.”

Sinclair doesn’t pause as he carts me up to the fifth floor, never breaking a sweat or getting short of breath. The way he acts you’d think I’m as light as a feather – though with his supernatural strength it probably feels that way. “I missed you too.” He finally replies, pushing through the bedroom door. “I hate being so far from home when these things strike.” “You must have had a really rough afternoon.” I observe, studying his drawn features and fatigued demeanor.

Sinclair drops onto the sofa, keeping me in his lap, “Rough is an understatement.” He sighs, sounding as though the weight of the

world is on his shoulders. Of course, this isn't far from the truth. I snuggle closer to him, wishing there was something I could do to ease the monumental burdens he's shouldering. A contented rumble vibrates in his chest, and Sinclair smiles down at me. "It's getting better by the minute though."

I tilt my face up to his, silently asking for a kiss. He arches a brow and for a moment I'm afraid he'll reject my affection, but I needn't have worried. Sinclair lowers his lips to mine, and my heart begins to race. The moment our lips touch electricity zings through my body, setting my nerve endings alight. It's every bit as thrilling and all-consuming as the first time, and I quickly find myself getting carried away in the experience. Unfortunately it ends much too soon. Sinclair pulls back, leaning his forehead against mine and purring, "You can't distract me with kisses either, little one."

He grimaces, and I know I'm not going to like what he says next. "Besides, kissing is a gateway drug. We've got to try to stop." His arms tightened around me as he spoke, as if his body didn't agree with his words or maybe it was his wolf.

Adopting an innocent expression, I reply. "I have no idea what you mean. A gateway to what?"

Sinclair laughs, kissing me again even though he just said we shouldn't. This kiss is longer than the first, because just like he said, it's getting harder and harder to stop the longer we continue. My blood heats to a sultry simmer, and wetness pools at my center as Sinclair's lips, teeth and tongue go to work, making me forget that anything exists outside of this moment Goddess, why couldn't you just be a wolf?" He breathes when we part.

A sharp sting punctures my elated mood, bringing me crashing back down to earth. It's a crushing reminder that I'm not enough for him that I'll never be enough no matter what I do. Seeing the

hurt painted over my face, Sinclair winces. “Oh Ella, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean that.”

“Yes, you did.” I murmur, trying to keep my voice steady. “And you’re right I’m not.”

Sinclair is shaking his head, looking miserable. “I didn’t mean that I want you to be anything other than what you already are just that it would mean we could actually be together, and I want that more than I can say.”

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I nod, fighting back tears as I disentangle myself from his arms, and move to the cushion beside him. “It’s okay, Dominic, you don’t have to explain.”

“I shouldn’t have said it.” Sinclair insists fiercely, reaching for me as if he wants to pull me back into his lap. He stops himself when I stiffen, seeming to realize I need some space at the moment. “I’m truly sorry, Ella.”

I nod again, not meeting his gaze. If I try to talk about this now I’m sure I’ll start crying, not to mention I’m still so turned on that I’m finding it difficult to sit still. The last thing I need is for Sinclair to know how excited my body is, when he’s just hit me in my weak spot.

Sinclair’s nostrils flair, and his eyes begin to glow. I wonder if he’s scenting my arousal, but a moment later he’s cursing and rising to his feet, “I’m going to go take a shower. You should try to get some rest. We can talk about your bed rest tomorrow.”

I watch him retreat into the bathroom, feeling strangely dismayed. Apparently flirting and kisses can’t get me out of trouble, but acting like a wounded butterfly can.

That's a good thing, right? It means we got away with it. Despite the statement, the little voice in the back of my mind doesn't sound pleased at all.

I know the feeling. Then why in the Goddess's name am I so disappointed?

3rd Person

Across town, in the hallowed halls of the royal palace, the Prince sat in darkness.

The news of his wife's death had been a blow, but the true outrage had come when he learned the medical examiner's analysis. They hadn't conducted an autopsy yet, but the coroner had immediately declared suspicious circumstances upon seeing the Princess's body. Apparently there was some sort of rash on her skin, and the perfume bottle in her hand made him. some kind of topical poison.

suspect

This was unacceptable. The Prince wasn't an overly sentimental man, but his wife was his. The idea that anyone would have the audacity to lay a hand on the Princess – on his property was an unforgivable offense. He couldn't believe that anyone would dare to do something so brazen, and his rage was spiraling out of control. As soon as he figured out who was responsible for this crime, he was going to make sure they paid in the most painful way possible.

He strode to the window then, glaring out at his city. His wolf was pacing back and forth in his head, positively rabid in grief and fury. She hadn't been his fated mate, but he'd claimed her all the same. And though he certainly had other lovers, the Princess was always his favorite.

As Prince he could do anything he wanted with the she-wolves in his bed – whether they liked it or wanted to be there in the first place. But none of the others responded so perfectly as his wife. It truly was like she was made for him she cried when he wanted her to cry, screamed in exactly the right way to make his blood sing, and she never fought or tried to put on a brave front.

While he stood there, growing hard just thinking about the way she'd begged him for the last time they were together, a shaft of light abruptly reflected in the window. The door mercy was opening behind him, and a woman's silhouette appeared in the frame.

It took a moment for him to recognize Lydia, but once he did, he growled, "How did you get in here? I told my guards I wasn't to be disturbed."

"I have my ways." Lydia shrugged, striding into the dim study.

"What do you want?" The Prince demanded.

"I wanted to offer my help." Lydia replied, taking on a gentle tone that didn't suit her in the least. "I know what it's like to have someone taken from me."

"Then you ought to know it's too soon for you to be here." The Prince growled. "It hasn't even been 12 hours."

"Maybe, but I didn't think you would appreciate me keeping the information I possess to myself." Lydia answered. "Since I know who killed the Princess."

The Prince surged to his feet, "Who?"

"Who else, but Dominic?" Lydia barely refrained from rolling her eyes, remembering who she was speaking to at the last moment.

The Prince paused, not convinced. “Why would he? He has to know this will help my campaign.”

“I don’t think it’s about the campaign.” Lydia suggested slyly. “It’s payback. You’ve been trying to kill his mate, haven’t you?”

The Prince narrowed his eyes. “How do you know that?”

“Because I’m not an idiot. And neither are you – it’s exactly what I would do in your shoes.” Lydia shared.

“So you’re guessing.” The Prince observed. “Are you guessing about Dominic too? How do I know he’s actually behind this?”

“Because he threatened to kill me – his own fated mate- over the bitch and I never laid a hand on her.” Lydia explained.

“But why her, why not come after me directly?” The Prince demanded, admitting to himself that few other people would have the motive to target his wife, even if he didn’t understand the bigger picture yet.

“He won’t risk the election. He thinks that if he steals the throne by force the Alpha Council will unseat him the way they’re unseating your father.” Lydia related.

The Prince snorted, Sinclair and his father were one in the same. They wanted the power, but they weren’t willing to do what was necessary to keep it. “And how do you expect to help me?” He groused, eyeing Lydia curiously.

“I know things about Dominic and the Sinclair family. I know their secrets, I know their weak spots I know how they think. And I’ll tell you everything for a price.”

“And what price is that?” The Prince inquired.

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“Protection.” Lydia stated simply, deciding that it truly was too soon to suggest he take her as his replacement Luna. All that would come in time, right now she just needed to get her foot in the door. “If you keep me safe, I’ll make sure you win this election.”

The Prince nodded, “You have a deal.”

#Chapter 104 – Three Little Words

Ella

“Ella, I love you, but you’re driving me crazy.” My sister’s voice floats through my phone, sounding more exasperated than irritated. After his shower, Sinclair went to his office, and I promptly called my sister for advice.

“What do you mean?” I inquire hesitantly, I’ve just finished explaining

“I mean,” She sighs heavily, “Who are you, and what have you done with my sister? You’ve always known exactly what you wanted and done whatever was necessary to make it happen. You are a strong, independent woman not some bratty, indecisive, emotional basket-case who’s too caught up in a man to know her own heart.” She groans.

I wish I could argue with her assessment of my behavior, but I know she’s right. However, before I can acknowledge as much, she continues, “It’s like: you like Sinclair, you don’t like Sinclair. You want to be with him one moment, and the next you’re trying to foist him off on another woman – just make up your mind! I swear, I don’t even recognize you anymore!”

“Can’t you see that’s the problem! I don’t even recognize myself anymore.” I exclaim, rubbing my sore neck. “My entire life has been turned upside down -”

“I know! Because that’s all you ever talk about anymore.” She bursts, interrupting me. “Do you have any idea when you last asked me about my life? That you showed interest in anything other than your own problems?”

Her words sting, and I realize she’s right. I have been so wrapped up in my own drama that I’ve been neglecting my sister. I hate to think it, but the truth is I don’t have any idea what’s going on with her. “I’m sorry, Cora. What’s going on with you?”

“Nothing, but it would be nice to know you care!” She snaps, sounding more than a little petulant.

And she had the nerve to call us bratty! The little voice in my head observes.

“Are you serious?” I hiss. “People are trying to kill me, Cora. A psychotic bitch drugged and attempted to rape the father of my child. I’m committing a fraud of epic proportions in order to save an entire fucking species from civil war. And you’re pissed because for the first time in our entire lives, I’m not ignoring my own needs to take care of yours?”

“I never asked you to do that!” Cora argues, “you made that choice all on your own.”

“Because I had to!” I growl. “I had to be the strong one because you always fell apart at the first sign of trouble.”

“Then maybe you should have let me fall apart!” Cora counters defensively, “maybe if you had, I would have learned to stand on my own rather than relying on you.”

Nausea seizes my stomach, and I clench my eyes shut. “You know what I went through in order to protect you.” I finally say, my voice hoarse. “Do you really wish that I hadn’t? Was I supposed to stand by and let my sister be abused?”

A shaky breath vibrates against the receiver, and Cora’s voice is small when she speaks again. You know that isn’t what I meant... but I have to live with the guilt of knowing you were hurt because of me. And sometimes I just think that maybe... maybe if you hadn’t protected me

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then at least we would have been in it together, rather than you being all alone.”

“And I would have never forgiven myself if I had.” I share, even as a wave of sorrow swells inside me to learn how she struggles with guilt. “Why haven’t you ever said this to me before?”

“Because you’ve never been willing to talk about it.” Cora scoffs. “I suppose that’s one thing I can thank Dominic for. Trust a bossy wolf to make you finally unlock your emotions.”

“He really did.” I acknowledge wryly. “I think maybe that’s why this is all so hard for me. I feel so... raw. I don’t think I’ve ever been so emotionally vulnerable, and I don’t have the first clue how to cope.”

“I can tell.” She laughs. “And it’s not your fault that you never learned how to handle feelings Ella, but you also have to take responsibility for learning now that you recognize the problem. You do realize this is why you’re having so many issues with Dominic, right?”

“No, it’s that our situation is insane.” I object pointedly. “It’s not like this isn’t the first time I’ve been in love.”

Oh my goddess, I think belatedly. I'm in love. I admitted that I was falling for Sinclair a while ago, but this is the first time I've been able to acknowledge that I passed the point of no return

even to myself. I'm not just falling, I'm completely in love with Sinclair, and avoiding a relationship with him isn't going to change that.

"I swear El, if you call your relationship with that little weasel love, I will come over there and smack you right in that beautiful face of yours." Cora threatens, completely serious.

"Hey, I know it wasn't great in the end, but it's not like it started out that way." I defend, wondering if I'm being honest even as I say the words. "I did love him."

"Ella, let me ask you something. Did you ever feel even a fraction of what you feel for Dominic, for Mike?" She inquires.

pause. It's been so long since I even thought of Mike, and I've been in such deep denial about Sinclair that I haven't even considered comparing my feelings for the men. As soon as I think back on the relationship, I see the truth glaring back at me, "No." I exhale sadly. "Never." "And why do you think you believed you were in love with him for all those years?" She presses. "Why do you think you let him treat you so terribly?"

I grimace. "Because I didn't have the first idea what a healthy relationship looked like?" I suggest.

"Bingo." She agrees. "That little shit preyed on you from day one we were just too young and inexperienced to realize it at the time." She has the grace not to say "I told you so." The fact is that Cora tried to warn me about Mike more than once over the years, but I was too stubborn to listen to her. Instead she continues, "I

wish I could go back in time and kick him in the balls before he could ever introduce himself to you.”

“Me too.” I chuckle, shaking my head.

“Now the real question is: What are you going to do about Dominic, now that you’ve figured all this out?” Cora asks sternly.

“What can I do?” I question, feeling very overwhelmed all of a sudden. “I mean, so what if I do love him? So what if my baggage is causing all these mixed-up feelings? That doesn’t change

the situation we’re in. I can’t make myself a wolf, and I can’t make him a human or non-alpha I probably wouldn’t even if I could, because then he wouldn’t be the same man I fell for.”

“Are you sure you’re not just trying to protect yourself from getting hurt?” Cora questions. “I mean I know you’re in hot water with the campaign and everything, but is it possible those are just excuses?”

The gravity of our circumstances looms above me, and I know that we made the right decision. Even so, I’m woman enough to admit that my sister isn’t wrong. “I think it’s both.” I murmur sadly. “I have been afraid, and I haven’t trusted him. But Dominic and I don’t have the luxury of being selfish we’re going to be parents, he’s going to be a king. Our responsibility is to the pack and our baby not our feeling:

“That’s fair.” Cora concedes. “But is knowing that enough to help you move forward and stop torturing yourself?”

“I don’t know.” I moan. “It just feels so unfinished. We never even talked about our feelings... I mean, he tried and I...”

“Ran away?” Cora surmises. I hum in confirmation, and her voice takes on a sympathetic note. “I’m afraid if you don’t make peace

with the decision, you're going to keep being confused and indecisive, El. You need closure."

"I wish there was some way for me to get it without making things worse." I agree. "I mean if I tell him, knowing Dominic he'll go all wolfy on me and insist we can find a way to make it work... assuming he even loves me back."

"Hey, he's not the one that's been avoiding this." Cora reminds me. "At the minimum you know he wants you. And I wouldn't discredit him without even giving him a chance to prove. you wrong, Ella. You're making excuses again."

"Maybe." I sigh.

"Maybe definitely." She snorts.

Suddenly, as if a lightbulb goes off in my head, I realize there might be a way for us to steal a night together. "Cora, I just remembered! Wolves can meet in their dreams. I accidentally called Dominic to me once. Maybe if I can figure out how to do it again, I can tell him and we can be together without complicating reality."

"That's amazing!" She exclaims, "Do you think you can figure it out?" "I don't know, but I'm certainly going to try."

Accidental Surrogate For Alpha By Caroline Above Chapter 105

#Chapter 105 – Dream Shift

Ella

As I start to doze, I force my brain to think of nothing but Sinclair, willing myself to dream of him. I don't let my mind focus on anything

else or get distracted, I just keep telling myself to call Sinclair, to make him come to me.

Darkness closes in, and then I'm back on that bed in the forest. Yes! I think, this is where we were last time! It worked!

It takes a few minutes for Sinclair to appear, but I tell myself to just be patient. He wasn't asleep yet in the real world. I have to wait for him to rest to see him this way.

I'm not sure how much time actually passes, but eventually he comes stalking through the trees. He's in his wolf form this time, but he shifts when he reaches the bed, giving me a tender smile. "Hello trouble."

"Hi." I answer, feeling suddenly shy. "I wasn't sure this would work."

"You mean you meant to call me this time?" He inquires, arching a brow.

I nod, feeling a hot flush work up my cheeks. "I want to tell you something."

"Okay." Sinclair replies, coming to sit on the plush duvet, but not reaching for me the way he usually does. A moment of doubt plagues my heart, but I'm sure he's just trying to use

restraint.

I'm fidgeting, and staring at my hands in my lap, but I slowly work up the courage to speak." I know I've been all over the place lately, and I wish I could tell you that it was all the pregnancy, or all the stress of our situation... but the truth is that it's a lot more than that. Those things are making all this more difficult, but I would have been a mess anyway."

Taking a deep breath, I continue, "You know I was orphaned, and that I never really got a childhood as a result. But I also never experienced love from anyone but Cora. I was so starved for it, that I basically

jumped at the first chance I had. I spent years just trying to get over my fear of men, and in hindsight, I'm not sure I ever really did. I think maybe I just got so desperate for some affection that I simply closed my eyes and leapt, and of course the person who caught me was Mike. I was a perfect mark for him young, naive, and willing to do anything to finally feel wanted. I had no idea what a healthy relationship was, and he groomed me to believe that everything he did and said to me was normal."

Sinclair is frowning deeply, and I can see questions weighing on his tongue, but he holds them back. "Of course, I eventually wised up... and then I met you." I share, my voice suddenly very small. "And my heart trusted you even though my brain screamed at me not to. Everything I've experienced in my life conditioned me to believe that if I let myself be vulnerable with you you would break me. It taught me to believe I wasn't worth love, so anyone showing me kindness must be out to trick me. So I tried to convince myself that what I've been feeling with you wasn't real. And at the same time, all those parts of me that I kept buried for so long burst out because my body somehow knew you wouldn't hurt me if I acted like a child, or broke down and let you see my sadness and anger. It knew you wouldn't use those things as weapons against me."

"You've been so patient and accepting. You've taken care of me like no one ever has

even

when I hate you for it. But I still couldn't tell you." There are tears in my eyes now, and I can see Sinclair's closed fists trembling with barely held restraint. His wolf is still glowing in his eyes, and I know how hard he's trying to let me simply speak my fill without interruption. I've been a coward. I've been hiding behind the challenges facing us, using them as excuses to avoid ever having to be brave... Even when you've tried to tell me your own feelings, my brain just defaulted to defending myself. I knew if you told me, I wouldn't be strong enough to

resist.”

And I know nothing has changed and that a relationship is still impossible for us... but I don't want to be a coward anymore. I want to be brave just once in my life.” I take a deep breath as I continue, “So I thought that if I could tell you here... that if we could be together in our dreams, then maybe it wouldn't hurt so badly that we can't be together in real life.” I explain, tears spilling down my cheeks.

“I'm... I'm in love with you, Dominic.” I whisper, too timid to look him in the eye.

There's a pregnant pause filled with the sound of my pounding heart and my blood rushing in my ears. Then Sinclair's hand is reaching towards me. He catches my chin between his thumb and forefinger, pulling my gaze up to his. I sob when I see the expression on his face. His eyes are shining not with his wolf – but with tears. There's so much affection and understanding on his rugged features, that I feel like he's wrapped me in a hug without even touching me. “I love you, Ella. I think I've been in love with you from the moment your stomped your tiny foot on me. You have no idea how hard it's been to hold my wolf back.” “Really?” I sniffle, because even though I was expecting him to tell me he had feelings, I wasn't prepared for love. I certainly wasn't prepared to hear that his wolf wanted me too. My stubborn mind is still amazed the man could be interested in me, let alone his inner animal. “Really.” He confirms firmly, “and if you don't get over here and into my arms this instant, I'm going to let my wolf out so he can pounce on you.”

Something inside of me perks up at this thought. I remember all Sinclair's warnings not to run from him at the Wild Hunt, and I remember how thrilling it had been to be chased... until everything went wrong. I think we need a do over. The voice in my head suggests slyly. And I can't help but agree.

I think Sinclair can sense my mischief, because his eyes narrow at me with suspicion as I lean towards him on the bed. Luckily, while he might

sense I'm up to something, he doesn't realize what. At first I worry he might reach for me before I can jump onto the ground, but when I change direction at the last moment, he's not quite fast enough to catch me. I immediately break into a sprint, and at first I hear the low rumble of Sinclair's laughter. A moment later, however, I hear his wolf's howl, and I know the hunt is on.

As I start to run, I feel the same intoxicating exhilaration that consumed me at the Wild Hunt. My legs stretch as far and fast as I can make them move, and I'm amazed at how much ground I begin to cover. The night wind whips through my hair as I dash through the trees, an ecstatic smile stretching across my features as my feet crash into the snow.

Somehow I'm not the least bit bothered by the cold, and when Sinclair's howl shatters the night, it's all I can do to stay on my feet. I stop and shudder every time he does it, but it only drives me to run faster and farther to force him to prove himself by catching me.

I don't know where these instincts came from, and while I might not be able to explain them, there's no denying how right this feels. Why have I never run barefoot through the woods

before? Why have I never bathed in the light of the moon? Every second I spend in this wonderful wilderness makes me feel as though I've been living in the wrong skin my entire life-like a piece of my soul has been returned even though I never realized it was missing.

I'm so caught up in the race that I don't even notice when my body begins to blur around the edges. My bones quake, my soul soars, and suddenly everything changes. A starburst of white light consumes me, and for a moment I'm blinded by its brilliance. When my feet hit the ground again, there are four, and I seem much lower to the ground. I look down in shock, amazed to discover fur covered paws where my hands used to be. I glance behind me to discover a bushy, white tipped tail swinging behind me, helping me maintain my balance as I speed through the darkness.

I'm a wolf.

I don't let the change slow me down. This is a dream after all of course magical things are possible. I can move so much faster on four legs, and if I still had the ability to laugh aloud I'm sure I'd be overflowing with euphoric giggles. Instead I howl gleefully into the chill air, leaping over the fallen branches and rocks dotting the forest floor. I'm free, I'm free!!! The voice in my head cries, loping gracefully through the wintry landscape, determined to never stop.

A deep, familiar howl sends me stumbling. I was so thrilled to transform that I almost forgot about Sinclair. I suppose my own howl tipped him off. It wasn't meant to – I was only celebrating. My conscience pouts.

I know, but now he's onto us. I think quickly. We have to move.

I don't know why it's so important that I don't let Sinclair catch me, but right now the only thought in my head is to get away. I have to make it as difficult for him as possible... for some reason. That's no problem, my inner voice brags, now that I'm free he'll have his work cut out for him. He might be big, but I'm fast.

Then let's go! I insist, spurring her on. Within seconds we're galloping through the snow, even faster than before. Somewhere in the back of my mind it occurs to me to cover my tracks, but I realize Sinclair will be following my scent anyway. It's hard for me to focus on him as distracting as he usually is my heart is soaring and for once it has nothing to do with the Alpha. I can't believe I thought I'd felt free on the night of the hunt. I'm beginning to realize I didn't even know the meaning of the word until now.

My paws, paws, can you believe it!? splash through the ice of a frozen creek, but I carry on without a care in the world. After all, wolves don't have to worry about silly things like frostbite I even have fur between my toes!

I can hear everything too! I can hear the distant pounding of Sinclair's feet, the low calls of owls flying overhead, and even mice and rabbits burrowing in the ground beneath my feet, with all their clicks and tiny squeaks. Then there are the smells who knew water had a smell! Sinclair's smell is more familiar, but it's doing things to this form which are nothing short of scandalous. The stronger it becomes, the more my insides seem to turn to mush, and wetness pools between my legs.

Too late, I realize why his scent has grown so strong.

He's caught up. One moment I'm flying through the night like a wild thing, the next I'm skidding to a stop when he bursts out of the trees ahead of me I what! How did you do that? I demand

To my amazement, his own voice rings in my head, Because, sweet Ella, I'm a hunter. I know how to drive my prey into a trap without them knowing. Besides, He adds, his deep rumble softening with affection, You were too caught up reveling in the fact that water has a smell to notice.

How do you know that? I inquire suspiciously, not sure how I'm managing to communicate

with him.

You were shouting it at the top of your lungs. He informs me smugly.

Hmph. I narrow my eyes at the cocky Alpha, trying not to think about how powerful he is in this form – how majestic. My body is urging me towards him like we're a pair of magnets, but my wolf isn't ready to give up. We're not done running yet, and if he wants to catch us, he's going to have to do more than stage an ambush. I lunge towards the trees on my left, but Sinclair bounds forward in a single, graceful leap. He's blocking my path, so I try to lunge in the opposite direction. To my fury he manages to block me again.

Glaring at him, I glance at his massive body, realizing that his legs are so long that I could probably slide right beneath him. Pure mischief fills me to the brim, and I pretend to timidly approach him. Sinclair isn't convinced, watching me with the same ravenous hunger he always manages to evoke in his human form.

I've almost reached him when I dive between his legs, sliding on my belly through the snow and thanking the goddess for the slight slope which lets me slip right between his proverbial fingers. Overjoyed with my own brilliance, I rise to take off again, but before I can a huge heavy weight pins me to the ground.

Such a clever little she-wolf. Sinclair's deep voice is all praise, and I can feel his tongue swiping kisses across the back of my neck.

Still, I'm not amused to have him interrupting my fun. I bare my fangs, and scowl at him. Over my shoulder, a pint-sized growl rumbling in my own chest.

And so vicious. From the sounds of it you'd think I was as cute as a button, and not a dangerous predator with built-in knives in my mouth and paws. But you're caught, baby. It's time to shift.

Accidental Surrogate For Alpha By Caroline Above Chapter 106

Ella

No, I just got out! My wolf rails defiantly. I want to run more! Let me go!

The kisses cease, and now Sinclair's fangs close around my scruff, applying pressure.

I immediately realize what he's doing. If he applies enough pressure – especially if he

lifts me off the ground-I'll be completely immobilized. I said shift!

I don't want to! You can be a wolf whenever you want – but this is my only chance. I

protest fiercely, snarling as ferociously as I can. Let me go you big bully.

I can tell the games are over now. Sinclair pulls me up, and suddenly I'm hanging from his jaws, my feet kicking helplessly. Yield Ella! I feel his authoritative growl deep in my bones, and even though I didn't agree to surrender, my rebelling limbs suddenly still. I

go limp, and when Sinclair returns me to the ground I roll onto my back, showing him my belly.

Good girl. Sinclair's huge black wolf gazes down at me, his emerald eyes blazing with unbridled emotion.

My wolf whimpers in my head. Why does his praise make me feel so incredible?

Because you're mine. His gravelly voice answers, and I realize that I've spoken aloud

again. Mine, mine, mine. Before I can think more about his statement, Sinclair is

groaning in my head, just look at you, he croons. Al rose gold and sass. I know he's

talking about my fur now, which is the same metallic sheen as my strawberry blonde hair.

And your little white tummy. He adds, nuzzling the patch of white fluff above my navel.

Mmm, my pup. My Ella. He sounds like a caveman, but his next words prove his mind is as sharp as ever.

Shift mate, it's time to finish this.

Finish this? I practically squeak.

Oh yes, Sinclair confirms darkly, his words are so animalistic that I tremble in

response. I'm going to mark and claim you before you can get away

again. You're
mine, and the whole world is going to know it.
All at once, I realize that the Sinclair I know is not in control. This is his
wolf talking
now, and suddenly I realize why he warned me not to run from him on
the night of the
Wild Hunt. The rational part of my brain understood. at least I thought it
did... but it's
one thing to imagine it, and a very different matter to experience it.
The last time I met his wolf, I hadn't been able to hear Sinclair's
thoughts. I hadn't
understood how different the two beings were – though it makes perfect
sense that his
most primal self would come out when his inner animal is in charge.
Still, I can hardly
recognize the Sinclair I've come to know and love in the beast towering
over me. Then
again, I hardly recognize myself right now. This is all so surreal.
He wants to claim us. My own wolf swoons, yes, yes, yes!
Listen to her, mate. Sinclair orders, she knows what you need.
I shiver With anticipation, but as soon as I contemplate shifting I realize
that we have
a problem. Dominic, I don't know how to shift. I don't even know how
this happened.
Sinclair's hulking black wolf studies me for a moment, before nodding
once in
understanding and determination. Don't be afraid, sweet one. I'm going
to help.
Before I can contemplate what this might mean, a wave of pure Alpha
energy washes
over me.
Sinclair lifts his muzzle and howls into the night, and my body shudders
and jerks,
slowly returning to its human form. I feel a sudden and devastating loss
to be back in

this skin, but the next thing I know Sinclair is a man once more. He bends down and scoops me up in his arms, carrying me back towards the bed we abandoned at the beginning of the dream. I'm staring at the bed with wide eyes, amazed to think that we're finally going to be together the way I've been dreaming about for so many months. Do you have any idea how long I've been waiting for this? Sinclair asks huskily, dipping his head close to mine. Feeling far braver than I can ever remember being, I grin. Yes, but that's done now. We don't have to wait a moment longer. His own beam is full of sultry promise. Thank the Goddess. My heart is hammering against my ribcage as Sinclair lays me down on the plush coverlet, and for the first time, I realize I'm naked. My night dress must have shredded when I shifted, and though I've been naked with this man dozens of times before, this is... different. It feels so momentous, because I know this time will be unlike any of the others. Sinclair towers over me, his heated gaze raking over every inch of my bared flesh as if he's been starving for the sight of me. It feels impossibly vulnerable, to be spread out in front of him like a feast to be devoured. I've never known a man who could light me on fire with a single look, but Sinclair manages it without even trying. I allow myself to peruse his own form in return. I've always avoided this in the past, but now I let my gaze travel south of the contoured muscles of his abdomen, to the huge, hard length standing at

attention

against his navel. I can feel my eyes widen in alarm – I’ve always known that Sinclair

is twice my size, but this just seems like overkill.

There is no way that thing will fit inside me.

Then the wolf’s deep laughter is washing over me. A fresh rush of defiance sparks in

my chest, and I briefly consider fleeing, but Sinclair shakes his head, still laughing.

“Oh no you dont, you naughty girl. You’ve surrendered. That means you’re mine to do

with as I wish.”

“Tyrant.” I accuse, shooting him a sulky look.

“Little wolf, you haven’t seen anything yet.” He responds ominously.

“You’re just lucky

I’m not putting you over my knee for running like that.”

“Oh please, you know you wanted to chase me.” I quip saucily, keenly aware of the

way he continues to survey my body, a lethal glint in his green eyes.

It feels incredible to know that I have this power over him, that his huge member is

hard and pulsing just for me. Feeling devious, I shift on the bed, stretching out my legs

and arching my back a bit, showing off my charms. For the first time in a and from

very long time, I’m enjoying my beauty the low purr Sinclair emits, so is he.

“You trying to tempt me, minx?” He rumbles appreciatively, the corner of his mouth

quirking up. “Don’t you know that isn’t necessary? I need no encouragement to eat you up.”

The sound of his pleasure encourages me, and I bat my lashes, adopting an innocent

tone. “You could have fooled me – you’re taking forever.” I trail my

fingers down the
valley between my breasts, drawing his eyes to their path. “You haven’t
even touched
me yet.”

A fierce growl rips from his chest, and the next thing I know he’s
pounced. I suppose it
serves me right for challenging his wolf, but I’m not complaining. He
settles in the bed
with me, balancing his weight on his elbows and settling his hips
between my spread
thighs. Sinclair lowers his head, his lethal grace belying the crushing
force he applies
as he slams his mouth into mine.

Any thoughts I had of teasing him further disappear the moment our lips
connect. I

immediately yield to his dominance, feeling butterflies that have nothing
to do with the
baby I’m carrying, explode in my belly. I give myself to Sinclair freely,
parting my lips to
let his tongue delve into my mouth.

I wrap my arms around his neck, nibbling on his lower lip and earning a
playful growl

in return. The world spins and freezes at once, and all my nerve endings
are frayed by

the surge of electricity he’s sending through my veins. When Sinclair
tries to draw his

lips away I chase them, suddenly incapable of remembering how to
breathe without
him.

He tsks and shushes me with stern affection, kissing his way down my
body. He

pauses to lave the soft spot behind my ear, and then to suck each of my
beaded

nipples into his mouth.

I’m not sure if it’s the pregnancy, or if it’s just Sinclair, but I swear I

could come from
this stimulation alone. His talented tongue flicks over the hard nubs,
sending pulses of
desire straight to my core. I wonder if Sinclair is still able to hear my
thoughts,
because he sets up camp here and doesn't move on until I'm whining
and moaning in
desperation.

Finally he moves down and hooks his arms beneath my thighs, though
he still doesn't
show me mercy. Instead he nibbles the inside of my thighs, moving
closer and closer
to my center and drawing away at the last moment. Seeming to know
exactly how
badly I need his touch, his own mischievous streak takes over. "Every
time I've
scented your desire, I've dreamed of this." He informs me, "of tasting
the source. I
kept telling myself you couldn't possibly taste as sweet as you smell, but
I can already
tell I was fooling myself."

"Dominic, please!" I finally beg, feeling close to tears.
"Poor darling, why didn't you ask sooner?" He teases. I want to reach
down and smack
him, but before I can he sucks my needy clit into his mouth, and I
explode.

For someone who has never reached Orgasm with a partner at all,
Sinclair's skill is
overwhelming.

He's only just touched my most intimate flesh, and I'm already falling to
pieces. Maybe
it's just been a long time coming, and it's certainly true that my body has
been wound
tight as a spring amidst the sexual tension building in our relationship.
Still, I'm seeing

stars and all I know is that Sinclair is to blame.
The most devastating part is that he doesn't stop there. I'm still reeling
from my
release, panting and trying to push him away from my sensitive skin,
when he simply
dives deeper. One thick finger enters me as his tongue continues to
devour me, and I
can only whimper. "Dominic, it's too much."
Another deep chuckle meets my ears, and I know I'm in real trouble.
"Sweet, naive
mate, we've only just begun."
At that, a second finger stretches my channel, thrusting and scissoring
apart in a
movement that tells me he's trying to make space for the massive
member between
his legs. I forget how to breathe, and when the vibrating motion of
Sinclair's tongue is
joined by the crook of his fingers inside of me, I fall over the edge again,
crying out.
"That's it." He praises me. "Come for me, Ella.
Good girl."
I barely know my own name by the time he looms above me again,
claiming my
mouth so that I can taste my own honey on his tongue. Velvet wrapped
steel presses
at my entrance, so thick I'm sure it will never fit, but little by little
Sinclair eases his
cock into me – proving me wrong.
With endless patience, he rocks into my heat, and too late I realize his
thickness
wasn't the true problem. His length seems endless, and I'm sure I can
feel him in my
throat. By the time Sinclair has buried himself in my sheath, I'm a
heartbeat away from
coming again – though such a thing should be impossible.

“Fvck Ella,” Sinclair swears, dropping his head to the crook of my neck.

“It’s like you
were made for me.”

I disagree, though I don’t say it. Any woman made for Sinclair would
surely be closer
to his own size.

And though he is so large that I’m fairly certain I’ll be ruined for all
other men, I can’t

deny how delicious it feels to be possessed by this powerful Alpha.

Sinclair begins to move, thrusting in and out of my slick heat with a feral
energy that

might have frightened me mere weeks ago, but now I simply wrap my
legs around his

back, urging him deeper.

His pace increases, and his thrusts tilt upward, slamming into that
special spot inside

me.

I fall over the edge again, and Sinclair purrs,” greedy girl, haven’t you
come enough

yet?”

I can only whimper, because by now I’ve realized that I’m a complete
goner. My body

belongs to Sinclair now, and Im just along for the ride.

I lose track of time, so consumed in the feelings coursing through me
that I can’t even

remember my own name. I know only that I’ll never be the same – in
dreams or

reality. Sinclair encourages and praises me every step of the way, even
though he

must know that no woman can withstand this much pleasure – at least,
no human

woman.

His thrust become more and more forceful, and then I feel his fangs at
my throat. He

waits until the moment is perfect, until I’m teetering on the edge of an

Orgasm stronger
than all the others. I'm beside myself, but he seems completely
determined. Just as I
topple over the edge, he sinks his canines into the tender flesh where my
neck meets
my shoulder, marking me as his own.
White lights burst in my vision, and warmth floods my body. I'm finally
complete.

Accidental Surrogate For Alpha By Caroline Above Chapter 107

Ella
My eyes jerk open, and I surge up in bed.
A moment ago Sinclair was buried inside me – in more ways than one.
My hand
frantically clamps down on the spot where my neck meets my shoulder.
I can still feel
Sinclair's fangs slicing into my flesh, but there doesn't seem to be a
wound in reality.
I'm not bleeding, and it doesn't hurt – though it hadn't hurt in the dream
either. All of a
sudden I'm remembering Sinclair's ominous words about how a mating
mark wouldn't
hurt if it was timed right, and now I understand all too well.
I'm still on an emotional high from the dream, I can't believe I became a
wolf! It had
been the most incredible feeling, unlike anything I could have imagined.
And then
there was Sinclair. My body is flushed with heat, and my heart is still
pounding.
It felt so real, and I'm so glad that we stole that moment.
At the same time, I wonder if the sex was only so good because it was a
fantasy? It
had to be, there's no way anyone could actually be that amazing in real

life... right?

The more I think about it, reliving every touch, every word we spoke, I quickly find

myself crashing back down to earth. I'm so grateful and ecstatic that it happened, but

I'm very quickly feeling depressed that it's over. Before those feelings can truly take

hold, however, I hear pounding footsteps. In the blink of an eye Sinclair is there,

standing in the doorway and raking his eyes over me in concern.

"Ella" my name is a relieved sigh on his lips. I realize that he must have fallen asleep

in his study, rather than coming to bed – but he's here now. He crosses the floor

quickly, reaching for me as soon as he's close enough. "Are you alright?"

You

disappeared from the dream so quickly!"

I nod weakly, my face framed in his hands. I'm still feeling sad that our stolen night

has come to an end, but I don't want Sinclair to know just how pitiful I'm feeling. "I

don't know what happened, one moment we were..." I trail off,

flushing, "and the next I

was here."

"Goddess, I can't believe this. Come here" Sinclair settles on the bed, pulling me into

his lap. He presses a lingering kiss to my upturned mouth, then rests his forehead

against mine, gazing lovingly into my eyes. "My poor little mate, you didn't even get a

chance to come back down to earth."

Pain blooms in my chest to hear him calling me his mate, but I snuggle in, eager to

steal a few extra moments of affection. "Well maybe if you hadn't ravished me so

completely I wouldn't need so much recovery time.”

“Surely you aren't complaining about too much pleasure?” Sinclair teases, kissing me

again. “If you weren't such an insatiable little thing then I wouldn't have had to work so

hard to satisfy you.”

I start to laugh at his ridiculous statement, but just as quickly, it verges on a sob.

“Don't.” I plead, “I'm already struggling to cope with the fact that it's over.”

“Over?” Sinclair repeats. “What are you talking about?” He pulls back far enough to

stare down at me in disbelief. “Stars, Ella don't you realize what this means?”

“It doesn't mean anything.” I argue. “It was just a dream, that was the point. A way for

us to get closure without complicating things in the real world.”

“Ella, you shifted, you became a wolf! That wouldn't have been possible if you were

truly a human.” He reasons, as if it should be obvious.

“But I am a human.” I remind him, feeling increasingly frustrated.

To my utter shock, Sinclair's face lights up like a firework. He's grinning down at me so

widely it's difficult not to return the expression, “No baby, I don't think you are. I was

too caught up in claiming you in the dream, but now that my wolf is satisfied I can

think a bit more clearly. Don't you see – this would explain everything: the reason I

was so interested in you before you even became pregnant; the fact that you were

able to conceive my child; how obstinate my wolf has been about claiming you; your

smell; how wolfish your behavior is.” He continues excitedly. “I've been attributing

everything to the baby because I didn't have any other explanation, but now it finally makes sense."

"What makes sense?" I exclaim, not following his logic at all. It seems like he's

operating with far more information than I possess myself. "And what do you mean

you were interested in me before, and that your wolf wanted to claim me?"

Sinclair chuckles, and I have to fight the urge to growl at him. "I'm sorry sweetheart, I

forgot you didn't know. Yes, I always noticed you- it was annoyingly distracting every

time I caught sight of you in the neighborhood. Every time I did, I'd end up thinking

about you for hours afterwards, and I even started hoping I would run into you and the

kids. I never did anything about it because I thought you were human."

"Then why the hell were you such a jerk to me about Cora, and when we found out I

was pregnant?" I demand grumpily.

Sinclair exhales heavily. "I was in a bad place. I'm not proud of the way I acted, and I

know there's no excuse for it. I can only say that I was an idiot. But my wolf is the

reason I agreed to your plans in the first place, that's what I meant when I said I've

been holding him back. He wanted you for his own long before I was willing to

acknowledge my feelings for you."

"I still can't believe you love me." I whisper, feeling shy now. I told myself those

sentiments would stay in the dream, but there's a very silly, insecure part of me that

needs to hear it again. As if I'm afraid the dream was just my

imagination, even
though I know it wasn't.
Sinclair's expression softens, his eye crinkling at the edges. "How could
I not?" He
croons, making me melt. "You're everything I could hope for in an amate,
Ella." I'm thrilled
to hear these words, but I'm also confused. I know I'm being very slow
on the uptake,
and it's hard not to feel stupid, but I simply don't understand what he's
on about. I
would know if I wasn't human, wouldn't I? Seeing my expression, some
of the elation
fades from Sinclair's features. "I should have looked into this ages ago.
but I suppose
hindsight is 20/20. In very rare cases, it's possible for wolves to be
hidden, buried so
that a person doesn't even know it's there."
"How?" I press eagerly, seeming to need this answer as badly as I need
to breathe.
Sinclair removes one of his hands from my body in order to rub the back
of his neck,
and I find myself glaring at the movement, affronted that he took away
the comfort of
his touch. Sinclair catches the look on my face and arches a foreboding
brow, forcing
me to soften and avert my gaze. It feels the way it had when I showed
him my belly in
the dream, and I understand that something inside me is instinctively
responding to
his dominance.
Only once I've submit, does he continue. "The strange thing about all
this is that
normally when a wolf is dormant, it's manifested in children who were
separated from
both their family and the pack. They grow up thinking they're human,

but when they reach puberty and go through their first shift, their wolf drives them to find their own kind.” He grimaces. “We call it dormant, but really it’s just when a child is too disconnected to know why they’re different. When they eventually figure it out a young teenager shows up at a pack’s doorstep – confused and traumatized to be sure, but finally understanding why they’ve always been an outsider among humans. I’ve never heard of a case where someone reached adulthood without their wolf manifesting.”

“But you think that’s what’s happened to me?” I clarify, needing to hear him say it.

“You think I’m a wolf, and somehow that part of me just hasn’t been able to come out?”

“Yes, trouble.” Sinclair beams, all the confusion and mystery forgotten for a moment.

When he looks at me this way I feel like I’m the center of his entire universe, and ‘Il be damned if it isn’t addictive. “I don’t know how or why yet, but it’s fairly clear to me that you’re the one I’ve been waiting for all along. The Goddess sent you to carry this pup because you’re my second chance mate.”

His hand moves to my belly, and Rafe kicks in reply. “You can be my Luna. We can finally be together – and not only in our dreams.”

“Really?” I squeak, not wanting to believe my ears, just in case they’re wrong.

“Really.” He confirms. “We’re going to figure out how this happened, and then we’re going to wake your wolf for real.”

Accidental Surrogate For Alpha By Caroline Above Chapter 108

Ella

Sinclair and I stay up late into the night talking, reveling in this new discovery. I'd believed our dream date would give us closure, but it turns out it wasn't the end at all

– it was the beginning.

“It's no wonder you've been feeling so off-kilter.”

Sinclair consoles, trailing his fingers up and down my naked back.

When he'd started stripping me, I thought we were going to make love again

something I was only too eager to experience outside of my dreams.

Unfortunately he'd informed me that his wolf wouldn't be able to resist marking me for

real, so we'd better wait until we know it's safe. Of course as soon as he mentioned

claiming me, the little voice in my head had gone wild with excitement.

I'd attempted to change his mind, showing off my curves and plying him with kisses.

However when my hand snuck down to close around his hard length, he'd put a quick

stop to my tricks, seizing the offending limbs and pinning me in place.

I'd whined and

growled, but he only growled back, giving my bottom a few hard swats.

Now I'm

sprawled across his chest, chastised and sulking, and he clearly thinks he can make

me feel better by sympathizing – the tyrant. “It's not just the pregnancy or the stress.

You've finally found your own kind, and your inner wolf has been coming out more and more.”

I sniff, preparing to argue, but then his words sink in. My inner wolf..

the little voice in
my head.. she's the one that's been urging me to behave so oddly lately.
I can never
recall her being so vocal before, or so unreasonable. I always assumed it
was my
conscience, but in hindsight... are consciences usually so defiant? Do
they usually
have personalities of their own, and feel separate and part of you at the
same time?
Suddenly I remember how that same inner voice had cried out her joy at
being free
when I shifted in the dream. Conscience? I think hesitantly. Are... are
you my wolf?
Well duh. She responds dryly. It certainly took you long enough to
figure it out.
Why didn't you tell me! I exclaim in reply, exasperated.
I thought you knew! You're always talking to me!
She counters hotly.
Sinclair is watching me closely, a knowing look on his face. "Wolves
can be very
contrary at times."
"I... I've always had this voice." I share softly, my eyes wide, "I had no
idea."
He nods. "When you grow up among wolves your elders teach you that
voice is your
inner animal, that's part of why it's so important that shifters are raised
among their
packs."
"I still don't understand." I admit, feeling completely overwhelmed. "If
this is all real,
then why did I ever shift when I was old enough, why is she only
coming out now?"
"I hate to say it, Ella." Sinclair begins gravely. "But I think it's likely
that someone did
this to you.. that they bound your wolf so she couldn't get out."

“What do you mean?” I inquire, my muscles tensing nervously.

“You have to understand that if a pack knows a child exists and something happens to their parents, then the pup will be placed with a relative or a shifter family willing to foster them. Our children are incredibly important to us, and it would be neglect of the worst kind to knowingly let them be raised among humans. The only time it happens is when the parents didn’t have any connections in the shifter world, usually they’re rogues or outside their own territory. Every case I’ve ever heard of a dormant wolf begins with a child being found by humans at the sight of an accident, or wandering unattended in the wilderness or a strange city.” Sinclair explains stroking my hair with a pitying expression.

“Okay.” I nod, not sure where this is going. “So maybe my parents were from a different pack?”

He shakes his head. “Sweetheart, I looked into your records at the orphanage when all this began. You weren’t found by the humans... you were given to them. Your parents surrendered you directly to the orphanage. There weren’t any names in the file – which shouldn’t have been allowed, but it’s part of why I never entertained the idea that you might be a wolf. I thought if you were dormant it would have shown years ago, and that no shifters would ever give their pup to the humans.”

It surprises me how badly this information hurts.

I’d never known my family history – I left the orphanage before I

reached adulthood,
and it wasn't the institution's policy to share details like this with
children. Still, I don't
know any orphan who hasn't concocted a fantasy that their parents
would come for
them one day. No one wants to believe they were just abandoned...
unwanted."

Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I thought it was in the past, and that it would only hurt you."

Sinclair frowns,
using the pad of his thumb to wipe away a rogue tear. "But now that we
know the
truth... it suggests that something much bigger is going on here, Ella. I
think your

parents must have been trying to hide you for some reason, and they cut
you off from

your wolf to make sure you wouldn't be found"

"So how do we find out for sure?" I ask, not sure how to feel about this
idea. Is it worse

to just be abandoned, or for people who are supposed to love you most,
to

intentionally cut you off from your true soul?

Sinclair hugs me close, seeing how badly I need his comfort. "We get a
DNA test, to

start." He proclaims. "And then we take it one step at a time."

The next morning I find myself sitting in the familiar doctor's office,
with two very

serious looking wolves towering over me. The nearest one, Sinclair,
looks as if he's

trying to glower the physician into the ground, and I suspect he's feeling
particularly

protective after watching the man withdraw my blood. Apparently his
wolf can't stand

seeing me bleed, even if it's just for a test.

I lean into his side, not sure whether it's to soothe him or myself.

“Well, it’s confirmed.” The doctor confirms, “You’re a wolf, Ella.” Sinclair’s arm squeezes my shoulders, and I feel his lips graze my hair.

“Then why didn’t I know, why can’t I shift?” I inquire, only sounding a little petulant.

“I don’t know.” He purses his lips regretfully. “All this test tells us is that you have shifter DNA. I can refer you to a geneticist to try and decipher a particular family line, traits, whether you’re an alpha or omega, but unless someone else in your family has given samples, we won’t know who you are or how this happened. That’s probably something you’ll have to figure out yourself.”

“Do you know how we can wake her inner wolf completely?” Sinclair questions. “It’s obviously been coming out since we met, especially with the baby, but it’s still buried deep.”

“Well the bad news is that you’ll probably have to wait until your pup is born.” The physician informs us. As soon as your wolf does wake, you’ll probably go into your first shift. Normally it’s perfectly safe for breeding she-wolves to shift because it’s instantaneous. But a first shift breaks all the bones and tears muscles – as you know, Alpha. There’s no telling what it would do to the baby.”

“But I shifted in the dream, and that was instant.” I remind Sinclair.

“It’s not the same, sweetheart.” Sinclair shakes his head sadly. “Pups can dream as their wolves too, the first time is still awful.”

“You mean I have to give birth and have all my bones broken sometime in the near future?” I demand indignantly.

Before Sinclair can reply, the doctor chimes in, let's just hope it's not the same day, Ella."

"What?" both of our heads jerk towards the man, and my heart stalls in my chest.

"Well, uh – that's the thing." The doctor hedges, watching Sinclair warily. A low growl is rumbling steadily in the Alpha's chest, and I wonder if it wasn't meant to be a purr to calm me, only he wasn't calm enough himself to manage it. "A couple of things could wake her wolf naturally. If you were to claim her as your mate, or giving birth.

It's also possible that neither of those things will do it and you'll have to find another

way." He holds up his hands. "These are just guesses mind you, but the fact that her

wolf has been coming out in response to you and the baby would indicate that her

mate or he child might be enough to break whatever binds her wolf. So if birth triggers

it, it might be... well, back-to-back."

"Why would you tell her that with so little tact."

Sinclair snarls. "She's already under enough stress. "

"I'm sorry, Alpha, these are uncharted waters for all of us." The doctor says, tucking an

invisible tail between his legs. "It just came out."

"And I suppose you have no idea how we might bring out her wolf if those things don't work?"

Sinclair interrogates through gritted teeth.

"No. I've never seen a case like this. I think you need to go to the elders, if anyone

knows about this kind of magic, it's them."

Sinclair growls, scooping me up off the table. “Then we’ll go to the elders.”

Accidental Surrogate For Alpha By Caroline Above Chapter 109

Ella

“What do you mean she’s not a wolf?” The elder to whom Sinclair brought me to meet looks vaguely familiar, and I’m sure I’ve met him at some event or another. Still, I’m in such a daze with all this new information, that I can barely keep up. I feel like my brain isn’t working properly anymore. I feel slow and stupid, but Sinclair is beside me every step of the way, being patient and loving, scowling every time I suggest there’s anything wrong with my mind. Now this elder is looking at us with barely contained horror, and I can only burrow deeper into Sinclair’s arms. I’m in his lap again, though again isn’t really correct – since he hasn’t put me down once. I’m technically still on bedrest, but I’m not complaining. I feel safe when I’m in his embrace, and I need that security now more than ever. “She is, but it’s dormant. We only just found out.” Sinclair sighs, scrubbing a hand over his face. He slowly shares our story with the older man, all the way from the beginning. With every word out of Sinclair’s mouth, the elder pales a little further. When he’s finally caught up, he glowers, “You should have come to me the moment she

conceived, I could have told you no human could bear a shifter child.
You young
pups,”

He shakes his head in exasperation, “You think you know everything!”
“I’m hardly a pup.” Sinclair responds dryly, though he doesn’t truly
seem bothered.

The elder looks down his nose at him. “I’d already been roaming this
world a hundred
years by the time you were born, boy. I might not have your power, but I
possess
wisdoms you could only dream about.” My eyes widen when I hear him
share his age.

I knew that shifters lived longer than humans, but I didn’t realize it was
this long.

The man in front of me only looks about seventy.

“That’s why we’re here now, Adolpho” Sinclair answers smoothly. “I
didn’t come before
because I thought protecting the secret was too important.”

His hand trails to my tummy, setting over the small bump of our pup. “I
just wanted
them to be safe “

Adolpho softens slightly, observing our closeness. “Aye, I know how it is.
Breeding is an

emotional time for mothers and fathers both” He wags his finger, “You
can be forgiven

for protecting your mate, but the deception is another matter” He’s on
his feet and

pacing, again proving how remarkably spry he is for a 135 year old, “Do
you have any

idea what you’ve risked here? If this gets out, your campaign will be
over. The pack

loves Ella, they’re obsessed with your romance, if they think this has all
been a lie- it

will be a betrayal of the worst kind.”

“My campaign was already going to be over before Ella came along. The

only reason

I'm winning is because of her" Sinclair responds fiercely. "I don't like lying to the pack

either, but I was between a rock and a hard place of the worst kind"

"The Alpha council aren't fools. If it truly looked like the Prince was going to win, they

would have come to your aid" Adolpho suggests tiredly.

"Neither the people nor the council were going to put a bachelor on the throne –

especially not one they believed was sterile." Sinclair insists, "We're in this situation

because King Xavier died without an heir – they want stability for the crown.. and

they're right to"

"Still, we could have found another way" Adolpho insists, sounding resigned now. Like

Henry, he seems to be wishing for a solution that doesn't exist – another way to have

handled this, though no other options are presenting themselves.

If you want someone to blame, you can blame me" I interject. "It was my idea. I

thought I could help Dominic win, and I was afraid for my baby if he didn't. I was afraid

to everyone.

You were protecting the pack before you even realized it." Sinclair praises, kissing my

cheek. "

And the way I see it this is what the Goddess intended. The fact that Ella appeared

and conceived my child right when I needed her most?

That this baby might save the united packs from a cruel, blood-thirsty tyrant? If that

isn't fate, I don't know what is."

"Maybe. The elder acknowledges, "or maybe it was the design of someone else. You

said yourself that someone powerful was involved in switching the sperm samples, and now that you have this piece of the puzzle? He surmises, gesturing to me.

Whoever it was must have known Ella wasn't truly a human. And the fact that she was

sent to that bank, right when your deposit was made—"

What do you mean, sent?" I interrupt. "I went there because my sister is a scientist at

the lab. My boyfriendMy dear, the reason you couldn't get pregnant with your boyfriend is because he was

human and you are not. The elder answers, almost as if he read my thoughts. "It also

means that human medications are unlikely to have damaged your body whatsoever."

"But the doctor told me—"I begin to object, trailing off as I recall the horrible

conversation that started all this, that sent me running home to discover Mike's

deception. The doctor who told me that I had to conceive immediately – that very day

even though I know better than to believe such a thing. I'd been so shocked and

frightened I hadn't questioned it, but is anything ever truly that cut and dry when it

comes to fertility? "Oh my Goddess, I've been so stupid."

Adolpho offers me a small nod, watching my expression. "Let me guess, was this the

first time you'd seen this specialist?"

"Yes," I gulp, "my usual doctor was sick and so another physician stepped in."

"And your sister – did she examine you?" He presses.

"No." I shake my head, feeling dizzy now. "She just looked at the report."

"Wait," Sinclair interrupts, in a tone that makes my stomach drop. Oh

Goddess, what
has he figured out? I don't think I can handle any more surprises."
If her body wasn't actually damaged... are you saying that Ella might be
able to have
more children?"

I freeze in place, looking to the older man with something between fear
and hope.

Everything is changing so quickly, I'm not sure how many more
surprises I can handle
– good or bad. "A shifter physician would have to examine her for sure,
but I can't see
any reason why not." The elder observes.

I can hardly breathe. Sinclair is hugging and kissing me, and then his
hands are on
my face, wiping away tears I hadn't realized I've been shedding. "I can't
believe this." I
murmur, looking up at him, needing to draw on his strength. "It's too
much."

"I know." He assures me, purring softly. "It's okay, we don't have to
talk about it now."

"But we do! We have to find that doctor." I realize abruptly. "If you're
suggesting that
they knew what I really was, and that they sent me running to Cora
knowing that
Dominic's sample was at her lab... I mean, it's all too crazy to be true.
Who could
possibly know so much, predict so much?"

"I suspect Dominic is right in part – the Goddess did play a hand in this.
But she didn't
do it alone."

Adolpho agrees. "More importantly Ella, if the people responsible for
this knew you
were a wolf, it means they know who you really are."

"Then, you don't have any idea about what her true identity might be?"

Sinclair

inquires, watching the elder closely.
Adolpho extends a hand to me, and I clamber out of Sinclair's lap, going to stand in front of the old wolf. His gaze sweeps over me, his eyes lingering on my own gold irises and strawberry-blonde hair. "Her fur, in the dream?" He inquires. "The same color as her hair, except for a splash of white at the tip of her tail and on her belly."
Sinclair answers, Sounding reverent as he describes my wolf
Adolpho smells me then, and I try not to move or squirm. He shakes his head in defeat."There is something there... it's familiar, but I can't place it. A rare smell for a wolf in these parts. I expect it will be easier to tell once your wolf wakes completely."
"Do you know a way to make that happen?" I inquire anxiously, "other than Dominic claiming me, or giving birth?"
Adolpho nods, "give me a minute."
When he returns a few minutes later, he's carrying a small ceramic box, painted with mysterious patterns I don't recognize, but which seem strangely familiar. He slides the lid open, revealing a collection of dried flowers. "Our people have used these herbs for centuries in rituals to the Goddess, they're meant to trigger a transcendent journey, a way to get in touch with your innermost spirit. If anything can reconnect you to your wolf, it will be them but I think the doctor was right to advise you to wait until the pup arrives."
I accept the box gingerly, and Adolpho continues.

It should only take a few. Wait, but keep it close... you might need them in an emergency, whether your baby is ready to be born or not.”

Accidental Surrogate For Alpha By Caroline Above Chapter 110

Sinclair

I decide to work from home for the rest of the day.

I'm so amazed by everything that's happening, and overwhelmed by how much our

lives have changed in the last 48 hours. Two days ago I was grieving the relationship I

believed was impossible, wishing against all logic that Ella could be a wolf. Now all

our dreams have come true, yet I feel reluctant to trust these changes.

It's all too

wonderful, even if mysterious forces have clearly been at work – pulling the strings of

our lives from far away.

I hate the idea that someone has been watching and manipulating us from afar – even

if it is the Goddess. Still, the Goddess isn't what frightens me most. The thing that

frightens me most is knowing that someone out there knows the truth about Ella, they

know secrets she and I have yet to uncover, and might use them against us. True, it

seems that bringing us together was for our benefit, but the picture is never clear until

it's complete. Shifters in this city know exactly how vulnerable Ella is right now, and we

can't wake her wolf for another three and a half months, at least.

Around seven I realize that I'm not going to get any more work done this evening.

Instead I head upstairs to my bedroom, expecting to find my sweet mate resting before dinner. Instead, I walk in to find Ella out of bed and pacing, overflowing with anxious energy. The second thing I notice is that every pillow, blanket and cushion in the linen closet has been piled onto the bed, and the canopy curtains drawn closed.

Ella stops in her tracks when she sees me, wringing her hands. “Baby, what is it?” I ask, crossing over to her. “You’re supposed to be in bed.” She shakes her head. “It’s not right. I’ve been trying to fix it but I can’t.. it’s not right.”

I pull her into my arms, purring softly as she tucks her head against my chest and

breathes in my scent. “What’s not right. How can I help?”

“The bed.” She huffs, gesturing to it sullenly. “It’s not cozy enough.

Your pillows are terrible, and none of the blankets are soft enough.”

For a moment I think she’s lost her beautiful little mind, but slowly it clicks into place.

How many times have I heard about other fathers coping with a mate in this exact

state? These instincts are as powerful as all the cravings and mood swings, and

they’re also further proof of Ella’s true identity. I chuckle happily, and Ella stiffens. “Are

you laughing at me? This has been a really stressful day you know, I don’t need to be laughed at.”

“No trouble, not at you.” I promise. “It’s just that you’re nesting.”

“Nesting, like cleaning everything and setting up a nursery?” She clarifies, her

adorably brow furrowing in confusion, “but that shouldn’t come until later, and we’ve

already picked out most of the baby stuff.”

“No, it’s a little more literal with wolves, Ella. These are just more of your maternal instincts coming out.” I explain. “It’s probably made worse by the bed rest, you’re stuck in this room with nowhere to go, it’s only natural that you want to make yourself as cozy a spot to welcome the pup as possible.”

“Except that I can’t because your dumb bed is giant and everything is wrong.” She complains, unbuttoning my shirt so she can nuzzle her face against my bare skin.

I hum in sympathy, scooping her up. “Well then let me help.” I suggest, my own alpha

instincts urging me to settle her. I deposit her on the bed, then move to the intercom by the bedroom door, sending my guards for every pillow and blanket in the house.

They gradually cart them up over the next half hour, and I dutifully let my sweet little mate direct me as she creates her nest. I hand her pillows and blankets, then accept them back if they don’t fit the indescribable qualifications she’s seeking.

I have no idea what’s going on in her mind, but I know enough to realize this isn’t a matter of logic.

Her inner wolf is pushing her to satisfy a powerful craving that she probably doesn’t

understand any more than I do when my wolf urges me to scent mark her. It’s all feelings and one word commands, primal and powerful – not to be ignored.

When the bed is finally right she climbs in, preening with maternal pride and offering

me a satisfied smile that makes me want to kiss her so badly it hurts.

“Am I allowed in there with you?” I ask, beaming down at her. Ella frowns for a moment, obviously contemplating this, She narrows her eyes, “As long as you don’t mess it up.” Laughing, I kick off my shoes and move onto the bed, careful not to dislodge any of her carefully placed pillows. Right as I settle beside her, I accidentally knock one of the overstuffed poufs out of position, and a kittenish growl rises in her chest. That’s when I snatch her up, replacing the offended cushion as I pull her small body onto mine. For a while I simply kiss Ella, elated that I’m finally able to be with her so freely. Every other time we’ve gotten carried away with affection, it’s filled me with guilt and distraction about our tenuous future. But now it simply feels right. “I keep daydreaming about what it will be like when your wolf finally emerges completely.” I share a little while later. “It was distracting me all day long.” I admit, stroking her spine as she nibbles my ear. “You’ve shown such ferocity already, and you have so much love to give – you’ll truly be the perfect queen.” I exalt, loving the shy blush that colors her cheeks. “We’ll usher in a new era for the united packs, while we raise a whole litter. I’ll give you so many babies that she won’t know what to do with them.” Ella offers me a sultry giggle, squirming against me in a way that tells me she’s getting excited just talking about this. Still, she sighs, a familiar look of

hesitance on her lovely features. “Don’t, we don’t know what the future holds yet. And I’ll be happy even if it’s just the three of us.”

“But you’d like more if you can get them?” I guess, understanding her reluctance to get her hopes up.

I know only too well how hard it is to let yourself dream after so much disappointment.

“I’ve never shared a bloodline or DNA with anyone ..I’ve never had that bond. Rafe is

the first person in my life who I’ll experience that with.” Ella confides, “it’s part of why I

wanted a child of my own. To be biologically connected at least once. And I love being pregnant... but I don’t need all my babies to have my genes.”

“What if I want my babies to all have your genes.” I tease, sliding my hand down over her luscious behind. “They’re damned good genes.”

Ella laughs but holds firm. “If we can’t have more pups on our own, I know how many

orphans out there need a good home.” There’s something haunted in her last words,

and I find myself squeezing her more tightly. Still, despite her pain, an incandescent

smile takes over her features, and she buries her head in my neck, laughing. “I can’t

even believe this is real.” She exclaims. “I never imagined that we’d get to have a life

together.. I wanted to be a wolf so badly, and I never thought I would be.”

Ella can’t see my face, so I don’t hide my grimace. “

I’m happier than I’ve ever been with you, you know that?”

She peeks up at me, a spark of mischief in her eye.

“You’re sounding awfully emotional there, Alpha.

You're not going to start crying, are you?"

When I only frown, the spark in her eye flickers out, and I hate myself for dampening

her high spirits. "I think we've been putting off talking about your past long enough,

Ella. It's more important than ever now."

"But I don't know anything." She insists, looking confused again. "I was a baby when

this all started."

"I know sweetheart." I confirm, "but if we're right about this.. then it's likely the people

behind this have been watching you for your whole life. The answer to all of this could

be somewhere in your own history." I explain. "And besides, I need to know

because... because you're my mate. I can't take care of you if I don't know what

you've been through. You did promise to open up to me eventually."

Her face falls, and I realize the naughty creature probably hadn't intended on actually

following through on that particular promise. Ella looks up at me from beneath her

lashes, as if she's testing my resolve. When I only stare gravely back, she sighs. "I

don't even remember everything." She confesses softly. "I've blocked so much of it

out."

"Then we can work with a therapist, or a hypnotist, but maybe you can tell me what

you do remember?"

Looking as though she's headed to the gallows, Ella nods. "Okay"

