

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 205

#Chapter 205 – Boom

Sinclair

"Where are you now?" Ella asks, her beautiful face looking up at me from my phone screen.

"We're headed to the Storm Forest pack, but we've got quite a few hours on the road before we get there." I sigh, wishing we hadn't needed Gabriel's planes for the refugees, so that we might have flown these long distances.

"Storm Forest." Ella murmurs, her eyes lighting up, "Does that mean you're going to get to see some trees at last?"

Chuckling, I turn my phone towards the window, so she can see the rolling salt flats flying by in the distance. "No, unfortunately they chose their name to honor the ancestral lands they left before coming to the hidden territories. I'm afraid that the only trees here are the ones planted in Gabriel's gardens."

Ella's face falls, and her lips form an adorable pout, just begging to be kissed. "I don't know how they can stand it."

"My poor little forest wolf." I purr in sympathy, "our dream forest isn't enough, is it?"

She shakes her head. "It's not the same, just like being with you there isn't the same as being with you in reality."

"I know, baby." I share honestly, "I feel it too." I don't add that it drives me crazy; that getting to hold her and love her in that secret place only our wolves can find, is nothing compared to actually having her with me. Every morning I wake up aching for her – in more ways than one.

"How many days?" Ella asks, giving me a sultry look that tells me she knows exactly how badly I'm longing for her. How I wish I wasn't in the back of a car surrounded by my men, and that she wasn't currently cuddled up with the pups in the nursery.

We could pull over. My wolf suggests slyly. Sneak off into the distance and have her do the same.

No. I respond, not liking it any more than he does. We need to keep moving, and she needs her rest. "Five." I eventually answer, resisting the urge to adjust my trousers. "Five more days and we'll be together again."

Ella pouts again, and my wolf rumbles in my head, Naughty mate, tempting me this way. Doesn't she know how delectable she looks? It should be illegal to have such full, luscious lips.

She visibly shivers, and I realize I've growled aloud. Unintentional or not, I don't regret it – I love seeing my sweet mate squirm with anticipation and desire. She drops her gaze in submission, and my growl turns to a pleased purr. "I can't wait to see you."

"Me too." She confirms, flushing. "Though, there is something I need to talk to you about."

"Oh?" I ask, not liking the sudden somber note in her silken voice. "What's that, gorgeous?"

"Well, I was talking to Henry, and he offered to help track down my mother." She confesses, sounding nervous now.

My heart softens, "Of course, we'll all help you sweetheart. As soon as Damon is dealt with, we'll find her."

"No Dominic, that's the problem." Ella admits with a grimace. "I don't think it should wait. I think I need to find her as soon as possible."

I try to keep my face blank as I absorb this information. She hasn't said it, but I understand she's talking about another separation. There's no way I can go searching with her, which means she wants to do it alone. My wolf positively rails against this idea, and I'm not any happier about it. Still, I don't want to shut her down without consideration for her feelings. "Ella, are you sure that this is what we need, and not simply what you want?" I ask. "I understand that you feel compelled to find her, but I have to tell you that I don't like the idea of rushing it this way."

"You mean you don't want to let me run off on my own, even though you just did the same thing in the name of duty." Ella assesses, her golden eyes narrowed.

"I mean you're entering the final stage of your pregnancy and we're at war. If you want me to even consider letting you out of my sight, you need to give me a damned good reason." I reply sternly.

Ella huffs and rolls her eyes, and my responding growl sends shudders through the other men in the car, but not my defiant mate. She simply glowers at me, "Based on my memory, my mother met the Goddess – she spoke with her and was convinced to give me up. I think there's a chance she has information – answers about all this, things that might not exist in my past."

"I'm hearing a lot of maybes and might's, little one." I reply gently, trying to keep in mind that she's been waiting to have a mother for more than thirty years. I hate the idea of keeping Ella from anything she wants, especially this, but I can't abide the thought of her taking even more risks than she already is.

"But maybes and might's that could turn the tide in this war." Ella argues. "Isn't that worth finding out, Dominic?"

"And if she's somewhere you cannot follow? Somewhere so far away that it will take months to find her?" I ask sharply. "How far are you willing to go for answers? Is finding her important enough to risk our pup? To miss the war you were born to fight?"

"That isn't fair." Ella answers, her hurt plain in her voice. "I didn't ask to be born to fight this war. I didn't ask for any of this – the only thing I did ask for was our baby, I wouldn't ever do anything to risk him."

"I know," I exhale, regretting my words. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have suggested that." I'm desperate to put a smile back on her face – to ease the pain I can see in her eyes, but which our distance keeps me from feeling through the bond. "You didn't ask for me either." I remind her with a smirk. "And look how well we've turned out."

Ella scoffs, but there's clear mischief in her expression. "Ha – as if I enjoy having a giant, grumpy wolf bossing me around every second of every day."

I chuckle, "Deny it all you want, trouble, but remember I can hear the way your heart races every time I take you in hand."

"Ogre." She accuses, sticking her little pink tongue out at me.

My wolf groans in my head, "That's a dangerous thing to do sweet mate, you're lucky we're not together or I'd teach that precious tongue a lesson." Hugo clears his throat and shoots me an exasperated look, an important reminder that I'm not alone. Ella hears it too, and my temporary distraction comes to an end. Though she giggles and flushes, she also glances at the pups snuggled around her to make sure they're still sleeping, and turns the conversation back to tamer territory.

"I wasn't saying any of this just because I want to meet my mother, Dominic." She pauses, averting her gaze. "I mean I want to... of course I do... but I can be patient. I've waited this long and I can wait longer... but every time I go into a session with Leon I learn something new and overwhelming... I just thought that if there's someone out there who has all these answers then maybe I wouldn't have to keep doing this – learning bits and pieces every few days in the most agonizing ways..." Ella peeks back up at me with wide eyes. "Maybe that makes me a coward – wanting the answers without doing the work."

"You are the farthest thing from a coward I have ever seen." I inform her seriously. "And I'm not just saying that because I love you or want you to feel better. It's natural to want to avoid unnecessary pain, and I don't blame you for feeling this way one bit."

"But you don't want me to go." She assesses, slightly mollified.

"I don't want any of this." I confess, hoping she realizes just how deeply I understand and share her own frustration. "If I had my way, you and I would have a little cottage in the mountains where we could raise our children and run in the forest, and never have to think about politics or prophecies."

"But that will never be our life." Ella laments huskily, her eyes shining.

"Maybe one day, when this is over and our pups are grown. When Rafe takes the throne and I retire, we can go and find that place. We'll get old and grey and fat, and all of this will seem like a bad dream." I suggest.

"Not all bad." Ella protests, and I can see her arm moving, caressing her belly. "There's been a lot of good too. It's just hard to appreciate sometimes when everything else is so terrible. It feels wrong to enjoy what we have when so many other people are losing everything they hold dear."

"I know." I agree, "but it's also why we have to cherish what we have and not take it for granted. This war is a horrible reminder of how quickly it can all end."

"I won't ever take you for granted." Ella promises with a smile, "no matter how bossy you get. You're my everything, Dominic – I never felt alive until I met you."

"I won't take you for granted either." I vow, and these promises remind me of the mating ceremony we never had. We told the pack we were waiting until after Rafe was born, and by the time we finally confessed the truth and might have considered having one sooner, all hell broke loose. A new idea occurs to me and as soon as I think it, I know it's right. We should have our mating ceremony before I go into battle, before we can be separated again. "Ella –"

Before I can make my proposal, a deafening explosion detonates all around us, and the world goes black.