

# Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 218

#Chapter 218 - Chasing Butterflies

Ella

I haven't been to the nursery since the news of Sinclair's supposed death broke, and when I walk in I'm greeted with a chorus of excited cries from the children. I kneel down and open my arms to the pups, making sure to kiss every cheek and nose I can reach. "Ella where have you been?!" novelxo One of the older girls demands hotly, crossing her arms over her chest, "It's been ages and ages!"

"Miss Izzy said you were sick." Someone else interjects before I can answer. "You can borrow my stuffy if you want, she always makes me feel better."

They're all clamoring for answers at once, novelxo and all I can do is offer hugs and apologies for my absence. "Oh thank you! I know, I've been gone too long - but I didn't want to stay away. That mean doctor ordered me to stay in bed. I promise I'm better now, and it's a good thing because I've missed you all so much."

More questions rain down, but then Isabel's firm but loving voice sounds from somewhere above us. "Alright pups, let's not overwhelm our Princess. Give her some space to breathe." I look up to find Sadie strapped to a front facing carrier on her chest, and though Isabel is trying to look stern, the infant is grinning and giggling as she bounces in her cloth seat. novelxo Of course, none of us take kindly to the matron's suggestion, and I simply bare my fangs and hug the little ones closer, laughing when their immature growls join my own defensive noises.

Isabel throws her hands up in exasperation, "suit yourselves then." She retreats, but keeps an ever-watchful eye on us as we continue to catch up.

"Is it true that the Alpha is back?" A little boy asks softly, his eager breath fluttering against my neck.

"A course he is!" Another small voice chastises him, just a tiny bit smug for being in the know. "Everyone saw him carrying her through the halls." A number of the girls titter excitedly, but the first pup only huffs at their antics.

"Well I dunno!" He complains, sounding thoroughly affronted as he cuddles a bit closer to my side. "The other day everyone was saying he was dead."

"We did have a scare." I explain carefully, "but we were wrong. Alpha Dominic is alive and he's home now."

I regret the words almost as soon as I've said them, because a number of the pups look suddenly hopeful. I can practically see the thoughts racing through their minds - wondering if we were wrong about Sinclair, then maybe we were wrong about their parents too. "How come you were wrong?" The boy in my arms inquires, confirming my suspicions.

"Well, I never believed he was dead." I share, wondering if it's better or worse to be transparent when the/re this young, "but that's only because he's my mate. The King and the other Alphas don't have the same connection with him, so they didn't have reason to hope." It's not the full story, but it's the best I can do in the circumstances. "Does that make sense?"

I see a number of their young faces fall, no doubt reflecting on their own experiences with broken bonds. My heart aches for them, even as one of the girls nods glumly. "It's like when we lost our Mommies and Daddies. We felt them go - even though they didn't want to."

"That's right." I confirm soberly. "I never felt Dominic go, so I had to believe he was still out there somewhere, fighting to get back to us. Thankfully I was right." At this point I'm sitting on the floor with half a dozen pups in my lap, and another six gathered around me in a circle. However I also notice a few unfamiliar pups skirting warily around the edges of our group - as if unable to keep themselves away. "Now tell me what you've all been up to while I was away? I see some new faces hiding over there - do we have new friends?"

A four year old leaning against my shoulder laughs. "They're scared cuz they heard you're the Goddess's daughter."

"Well that's just silliness." I shake my head. "Haven't you told them how nice I am? That I'm so fat I have to waddle when I walk, and I spend all my time sleeping?"

The children laugh and I see a small boy lurking closer, novelxo encouraged by the happy sounds. "Hello there." I say, peering through the assembled pups to catch him in my crosshairs. "Would you like to join us?"

He freezes and looks at the other pups for reassurance. I carefully shift the boy currently in my arms to make room, and extend my hands to the skittish toddler, "don't be afraid angel, you have all your brothers and sisters here to look out for you."

His face closes off, "They're not bwothers or sisters."

"Oh but they are." I correct him gently. novelxo "When I was a little girl I grew up in a home for pups without parents, but it wasn't anywhere near as nice as this place. There weren't lovely grown ups like Miss Izzy to care for us, or warm beds and yummy food. All we had was each other, and we became each other's family. I had dozens of brothers and sisters to love, who understood exactly how I felt - how lonely and sad I could get when I thought about my Mommy and Daddy." Some of the other pups are staring at me in surprise, having never heard this story. "Family isn't just about who we're born, it's about who we choose, and you can choose to have as many brothers and sisters as you want."

"You didn' have a Mommy and Daddy?" The tot inquires, edging a bit closer. "But they said you're a pwincess." novelxo There's a note of accusation in his voice, and I wonder just how recently he's joined the nursery - and what he went through before arriving.

"I didn't know I was a Princess until very recently." I explain. "In fact, I didn't even know I was a wolf because I was raised with humans."

"Wow." The boy utters, coming close enough for me to pull him into my lap. He goes very still when my hands first make contact, but after a moment he melts against me, his defenses falling away.

"I didn' thinks anything bad happened to princesses." Another new face has joined us, a clever little girl who snuck up behind me.

"Bad things happen to everyone." I relate sadly, offering her my other arm. She slips into my embrace, and I kiss her hair. novelxo "There now, you see? I'm not so bad." I croon. "What a pair of cuddle bugs."

"You smell nice." The boys murmurs, novel.xo nuzzling his head against my chest.

"So do you." I answer honestly, breathing in his pure scent just as Rafe flutters in my belly.

"Hey, your tummy kicked me." The girl exclaims, jolting slightly.

"That's my baby," I chuckle warmly, guiding her hand to my navel. "He's saying hello."

"Oh, hello baby." The pup greets, patting my stomach and looking up at me with wide eyes. "Will he be a prince?"

"I suppose he will." I realize this is already true by my own bloodline, but for their benefit I add, "Now that Alpha Dominic is back, he's going to make Damon pay for everything he's done. One day we'll all be able to go home, and when my pup is old enough to lead, he'll take over from his father."

The boy who asked about Sinclair's death is still sitting in my skirts, novelxo and now he gazes up at me with wonder. "When I grow up, I wanna have a mate just like you." He proclaims, "I wanna be every bit as strong as Alpha Dominic, so that no one can ever hurt me or take away the things I care about."

"Do you want to know a secret about Alpha Dominic?" I ask, exchanging mischievous looks with the others.

They nod emphatically, leaning closer. I catch my mate's scent nearby and know he's on his way here, so I alter my words for his benefit.

"Well, he's all the things you say. He's big and strong and brave, and he can be very scary when he wants to be, but deep down he's a big teddy bear." I reveal, smiling broadly. "He loves cuddles and gooe romantic books and movies. novelxo He chases butterflies and even takes bubble baths that smell like flowers."

The pups are giggling almost uncontrollably now, and I feel Sinclair behind me a millisecond before his booming voice detonates. "What on earth are you telling these pups!"

The children squeal and scatter with playful screams, and I turn to face him, batting my lashes invitingly. Sinclair places his hands on his hips, adopting a convincing scowl even though I can feel his raucous amusement. novelxo "Such a naughty mate, telling such tales to impressionable children. What am I going to do with you?"

I'm about to respond that I only spoke the truth, but before I get the chance, the boy who just shared his wishes to be like my mate steps between our bodies, matching Sinclair's pose. "She's not naughty, she's the nicest, prettiest she-wolf in the whole world!" The poor boy is shaking like a leaf, but he stands proud and tall, determined to stand up for me.

I want to intervene, to reassure the poor pup it was only a joke, novelxo but Sinclair sends a warning glance and kneels down in front of the boy. "You must feel very strongly, to challenge me this way." He remarks coolly.

The boy's lip quivers, and his voice shakes. "I do. Ella is the bestest, you should only be nice to her."

Sinclair settles a colossal hand on the boy's shoulder. "Good man." He nods, and I can sense the boy's immense relief. "You're exactly right and I'm glad Ella has you in her corner. I could use a hundred soldiers like you."

The child perks up, "Really? You mean you'd let me fight?"

"Actually I was thinking of a much more important job." novelxo Sinclair replies, "Maybe you could help look after my mate while she's here in the nursery. She has guards of course, but I could use an extra pair of eyes."

I feel my jaw drop in disbelief that he's turning the pup into a spy against me, but then I see the way the boy puffs up with pride. novelxo "I'd be honored, Alpha." "Then we have a deal." Sinclair nods, before gracefully joining me on the floor. He tugs me close and kisses his mating mark, before winking at the boy, "Besides she was telling the truth. I love chasing butterflies."