

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 222

#Chapter 222 - Summit begins

3rd Person

James froze, staring at Isabel in shock and amazement. "Are you serious?" He inquired, not wanting to get his hopes up in case it was all a jest, or some strange test.

Isabel only flushed, starting to backtrack. "... well, I just thought... I mean She stammered, looking anywhere but at him. "I'm sorry, it was a silly

idea. You're just so fond of her, I don't know what I was think-"

"Of course I want to." James interrupted, wanting to hold her so badly it hurt, but settling for a firm hand on her shoulder. "Goddess Isabel, I'd love nothing more."

"Really?" Isabel squeaked, a tremulous smile stretching across her features.

"With all my heart." James confirmed, pinning her with a fierce gaze. "But I do have to warn you."

"About what?" She asked, going still.

"I'm not going to settle for Sadie alone." James informed her sternly. "I want you both. I was prepared to wait -to fight for you - but you need to understand that letting me bond with her this way will change things. There will be no getting rid of me now."

Isabel trembled slightly, peeking up at him from beneath her lashes. Her expression was somewhere between sullen and amused, "Was that ever an option?"

"No," He chuckled, "but now that I know you realize it, I'm afraid I'm going to make things very difficult for you."

Isabel flashed her fangs, but light sparkled in her eyes as she issued her own challenge. "Right back at you. It's not going to be easy to win me, James."

The soldier only grinned, at last pulling her into his arms. She didn't come quietly, but once she was there she melted into him - a perfect fit. "Don't I know it."

The next morning, Cora was getting ready for her shift in the medical tent when she heard a few of the Vanaran nurses gossiping. "They're increasing the evacuations, but I think they're worried about more than simple detection by Emperor shit-for-brains."

Cora smothered a snort at Damon's unflattering nickname. She wasn't usually one to eavesdrop, but neither did she see the harm in listening to this conversation - after all it's not as if it was personal. Besides, as Ella's eyes and ears in the camp, part of her job was getting a sense for the climate among local staffers and refugees alike. The others only saw her as a medical trainee, but the Luna had realized the value of having her sister on staff here early on.

"Why do you say that?" The second nurse inquired, unpacking her own supplies.

"Because they're not only sending guardians and enforcers this time." The first replied, in the tone of someone quite pleased to be in the know. "My friend in aviation saw the manifests and apparently the new Moon Valley Beta is headed out on the first transport this morning."

"Oh, the handsome one?" The second questioned, "Roger?"

Cora froze, suddenly extremely interested in the woman's response.

"That's right." The first she-wolf nodded, "And with as many people as they've already lost, I can't believe the Alpha would risk sending his brother without a damned good reason. Especially not with the summit kicking off later today."

Cora dropped what she was doing, swinging her gaze to the clock mounted on the wall. It was four forty five, and if she remembered correctly, the first flights departed at five. She raced out of the tent without a second thought, knowing she was probably causing a scene, and not caring.

She darted out of the main camp and headed straight for the airfield, not thinking about what she was doing or why. She acted on pure instinct, driven forward by the relentless pounding of her heart. When Cora reached the tarmac she searched for Jame's plane first. He was the most experienced soldier and the highest ranking pilot, so he was the most-likely candidate to ferry the pack's Beta across the ocean.

Her eyes landed on the two familiar figures just as they left the hanger and began approaching the aircraft, their bearing tired but alert. She set off at a run, and when she was within shouting distance, she called out to Roger. He turned immediately, genuinely surprised to see the woman hurtling towards him.

He caught her by the arms before she could barrel straight into him, "Cora!" He asked urgently, "What is it, what's wrong?!"

Unused to running for any distance, Cora bent double, trying to catch her breath. Roger leaned over her rubbing her back, "Easy now, it's okay, you caught me. Just breathe."

"I... you- why..." She gasped, frustrated with her inability to handle the brief exercise, "oh my god, why do people run for fun - this is the worst!"

Sensing that no one was in immediate danger, Roger relaxed slightly, taking full advantage of the opportunity to soothe her. "I've got you, just take a minute. I'm not going anywhere."

"Liar!" Cora accused breathlessly, pointing a finger at him. "You're... flying back... to the continent."

"I meant I'm not leaving right this second. James still has to get the engines warmed up. Come here," He guided her over to the rolling staircase leading up to the plane, "Sit down." He instructed, easing her down onto the steps and kneeling in front of her, "What's going on?"

"Why are you going?" Cora managed to demand, her eyes wide and worried.

"I need to see the situation on the ground. There's a lot of security concerns and I can't very well address them if I don't see them for myself." Roger replied, still not understanding her panic, "Why what's going on?"

Cora sighed in exasperation, unable to comprehend her own irrational reaction. "Nothing, I just... it's dangerous isn't it?"

Roger shook his head, preparing to tell her that he would be perfectly safe. However, before he got the chance, the pieces of this sudden puzzle clicked together in his mind. He realized that Cora was here for him, for no other reason than that she'd heard he was leaving and was frightened for his safety.

His eyes lit up, as he took her cheek in his large hand. "Cora?" He prompted slyly, "You're not worried about me, are you?"

"What?" Cora snapped, thoroughly affronted. "Of course not. I just..." She trailed off again, looking confused. The big wolf almost felt sorry for her - almost.

"Just what?" He arched his brow, "voluntarily did more cardio than you've done in a year to demand why I was leaving? Abandoned your duties to run over here, shouting my name like your life depended on it?"

"It wasn't like that." Cora replied haughtily, finally calm enough to breathe normally. She sat up and pushed his hands away, trying not to think about how nice they'd felt on her skin. "I thought maybe you two needed medical support." Roger could see her making up the words as she went, getting more firmly behind the idea as it came together in her mind. "Yeah, I thought you might be going because something had happened and emergency personnel would be helpful."

"And it didn't occur to you that we would have requested medical staff if we required them?" Roger countered skeptically.

"What can I say, it's very early, I guess my brain isn't entirely turned on." She shrugged, digging her heels in. "so, do you need a doctor to come along? Just in case?"

Though he was enjoying her performance, the suggestion of taking Cora along for the flight aroused his wolf's protective instincts. Before he could get a handle on his inner animal, he'd growled, "Not a chance."

Cora's chocolate gaze sharpened, "Why not, if it's so safe?"

Her suspicion returned the smile to Roger's face, "You don't have anything to worry about, little one. I promise I'll come back to annoy you. If you like, I'll even stop by the medical tent as soon as we land."

Cora scowled, "Don't call me that." She shoved at his hand when he reached for her again. "I already told you, I don't care about your safety. And the last thing I need is you interrupting my work again."

"Are you sure?" Roger posed, "Maybe you should give me a goodbye kiss before we take off, just in case."

The human's lip curled, and she began putting distance between them, "I would rather kiss a rabid bat."

Roger grinned, giving chase. "Now how can you know such a thing without putting it to the test? I'll tell you what, kiss me now, and when I come back I'll bring you a bat to compare. But I'd be willing to bet my bite is the nicer of the two."

"I said no!" Cora glared, holding out an arm to keep him at bay, "there will be no kisses and no biting."

"Come on, Cora, don't knock it until you've tried it." Roger teased, still tracking her.

With an exasperated groan, Cora spun around and began stomping back to the medical tent. Roger watched her with a wide smile, but he kept his next thought to himself. I could watch her stomp away from me a thousand times, as long as she keeps coming back.