

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 229

#Chapter 229- Roger Forges a New Bond

Sinclair

Sleeping with my pregnant mate is becoming increasingly challenging as her body grows with our pup. Even though Ella takes as many naps as the pups in the nursery these days, she's still exhausted by the end of the night and I'm not faring much better amidst all this stress and activity. Still, exhaustion isn't enough to get us off to dreamland when getting Ella comfortable enough to rest is a nightly struggle.

The nest is a blessing, as the incredible abundance of pillows surrounding her on all sides can easily be shifted and fluffed to perfectly cradle her precious form - the difficulty is figuring out where I fit into the cozy retreat. Most of the time Ella just treats me as an extra large body pillow. More than once, I've woken in the middle of the night to find her sneakily trying to rearrange my limbs to her liking. Each time I've told her to simply wake me so I can help, or to turn the light on for her late night bathroom trips so she doesn't risk running into something or tripping in the dark. Of course, my instructions go in one ear and out the other because Ella feels too guilty to willingly rob me of my sleep.

This morning is worse than most, because I have to be up at the crack of dawn despite the fact that Ella managed to completely sprawl herself over my body last night. If it wasn't for my prior engagement, it would be picture perfect: she's on her side with her arms and legs tangled around my own, her round belly resting on my torso. Her long rose-gold hair cascades over my chest, and her heartbeat is in perfect sync with the baby's. Rafe and Ella's sweet smells overtakes my senses, and my groggy wolf sighs with utter contentment.

I mentally curse this summit. The last thing I want to do is get out of this bed, shortly followed by waking the angel on top of me. I try to extract myself as carefully as I can, rolling her small body away from me and attempting to replace my mass with pillows. I almost manage it, but every time I manage to free one limb from her clutches, she latches onto a different part of me. Eventually she stirs and I emit a hushed swear, knowing the battle is lost.

"See is not nice waking your mate." She mumbles, her words slurred with speech as she nuzzles my bare chest.

"I'm sorry baby, I have to get up." I confess, kissing her her hair. "I have to meet with Roger before today's events get started."

Ella sighs, snuggling closer, "uh-huh." She sighs, her soft breath fluttering over my skin. "Stay."

"I wish I could." I answer honestly, once more trying to pry her determined paws from my body. "I'm so sorry little wolf, but you have to let me go."

"But you're my pillow." She murmurs. Her wolf begins whining pitifully in my head, which only upsets my own wolf and sends my temper spiraling further downward.

Exhaling miserably I make a third escape attempt, to no avail. "Goddess you're like an octopus, when did you get so strong?"

Ella's eyes stay closed as a glorious smile splits her cheeks. "I'm not. You just don't have the heart to deny me." She's right, I could easily overpower her and walk away, but that is a last resort.

I finally manage to get out of bed, but I'm in a right foul mood by the time I reach my brother's suite. To make matters worse, Roger has clearly slept through his alarm. The lights are off and I can hear a persistent beeping from the direction of the bedroom. Groaning, I bang on the door with my fist, not giving a damn how boarish I'm behaving. "Wake up!"

After some grumbling and fumbling around inside, the door swings open and Roger appears. He squints at me in the low light, looking completely baffled. "What crawled up your ass?"

"Damon. This war. The bloody delegations. Take your pick." I bite back.

Roger purses his lips and nods. "Fair enough." He swings his door wide and ushers me inside, yawning and stretching. "Care to tell me why you wanted to meet at this ungodly hour."

"I don't want to meet now." I growl. "There's just no other time." As I enter I notice that my brother's once impeccable rooms now look like the scene of some natural disaster. All the furniture is broken, now neatly leaned against the walls and leaving a huge empty space in the middle of the room. And though someone has clearly been sweeping, there is still a layer of dust and sawdust on the floor. "What the hell happened to your room?"

"I lost my temper." Roger shrugs, but there's an expression I don't recognize on his face. "It didn't feel right to have Gabriel's servants to clean up after me, so I've been trying to put it to rights slowly - but there's not much time." He waves the wreckage away. "It's not important, don't worry about it."

Abruptly, I recall my brother's ferocious energy when I returned from the storm forest pack alive and well. And without asking, I know exactly what caused Roger to lose his temper. I feel a deep pang in my chest, and without thinking I pull him into my arms, enveloping him in a bear hug. He tenses, but quickly relaxes into the embrace. It's an improvement from the hugs we've shared in the past - normally it takes him ages to accept the affection.

"Look at you, big brother." I tease in a saccharine voice, "you're learning all about feelings aren't you?"

"Oh shove off." He complains, pushing me away. "Enough of that, tell me what's going on!"

I drag one hand through my hair, "Listen Roger, obviously when a new Beta takes power under normal circumstances, there's a ceremony and celebration. I wish I could give you that, but everything is moving so fast and I need to be fully bonded to you before the summit really takes off."

Roger's lips quirk, "you're going to have me take the oath at five o'clock in the morning, without any witnesses, in a dark room when we're barely awake?"

"Can you think of a better way?" I question, hating that I can't honor him the way he deserves.

Roger laughs, and shakes his head. "Okay, how do we do this?"

I extend my fangs and raise my hand to my mouth, quickly slicing a gash in my palm. I use my left hand, because my right still bears the scar where I forged this bond with Hugo, and I can't bear to mark over it. Hot, sticky blood seeps from the wound, and I offer my bleeding paw to Roger. He follows suit, biting his own palm and letting the blood pool forth before taking my hand in his.

"We already shared blood, but the bond of an Alpha and a Beta goes beyond brotherhood." I declare, needing to make sure he's truly ready for this - to submit to me from here on out. He may have felt confident he could go through with this arrangement in the high emotions following my near death, but reality may seem colder now that the shock and grief have passed. "As my second in command, it will be your duty to support and balance my wolf. But it will also be your responsibility to carry out my orders, even when you don't agree - even when you think I'm being as dumb as a brick. You may advise, you may debate and I will always do my best to listen and understand, but at the end of the day my word is law."

"I understand, Dominic." Roger replies soberly. "I'm committed to serving you, as well as the pack."

"Thank you." I exhale, feeling that the worst is past. "You will be my right hand in all things, and the pack will rely on you as a cornerstone of our leadership. If anything should ever happen to me, it will be your obligation to take over from me until the Alpha Council confirms your permanent role, or another Alpha steps forward."

"Assuming we ever have an Alpha council again." Roger quips, earning a low growl.

"These oaths weren't made with the apocalypse in mind." I remind him. "Do you, Roger Sinclair, vow to always put the united packs before all else? To be loyal and just in all matters, to serve me and our people until your dying day?"

"I do." Roger confirms.

"Do you vow to govern and protect the united packs, advise and inform your Alpha and Luna to the best of your abilities, further the aims and agendas of shifter kind, and always maintain the natural laws imparted to wolves by our Goddess?" I ask, recalling these words from very long ago. Already I can feel the magic beginning to take hold, sparking through our joined blood and entering our veins.

"I do." Roger says again.

"Do you vow to take my place as leader should I perish or be otherwise incapable of governing, and to act as a mentor and guardian for my family, if there ever comes a time that I cannot?" I continue, deciding that it may be time for a new line in this ancient oath, one to address the tumultuous future we're facing. "And do you vow to make these same commitments to non-shifters in our territories, should our societies unite?"

Roger's eyes widen only slightly. "I do."

"Then I shall vow to always appreciate and respect your opinions, expertise and perspective. I vow to do everything in my power to help you be successful in all things, and to honor your service and sacrifice." I profess. "I vow to never ask you to do anything in opposition to these same values, or to put you in a position which might risk you and your family's health, safety and happiness. I vow to always appreciate the demands and complexities of your role, and to care for you as you care for me."

In that moment a searing pain pierces my hand, and white light fuses our palms together. I feel as though a grenade is detonating in my chest, as if my entire being might be torn to shreds with the intensity of these strange sensations. They end just as quickly as they begin, and when the rush of magic fades, I feel a new bond taking hold in my heart.

I've heard my brother's voice in my head a thousand times in our wolf forms, but this is the first time we've ever communicated through this kind of bond, and I feel steadier and more connected to Roger than I ever have before.

Alright brother, let's get to work.