

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 230

#Chapter 230 - The Summit Continues

3rd Person

Roger watched the delegations warily approach the refugee camp, unloading from an identical convoy of shiny black cars parked at the entrance of the air field. Some appeared far more curious than others, keeping their expressions open and interested, if somber. A few Alphas however, most notably the Storm Forest and Midnight leaders, appeared as though they had no intention of letting the harrowing scenes ahead sway their opinions.

Even so, the new Beta could only focus a fraction of his attention on their mindset. He was far more preoccupied ensuring the airfield and camp were as secure as possible before the visit, and his wolf was always somewhat distracted when Cora was near. He'd yet to see her today, but he knew she was somewhere in the medical tents, her faint floral scent discernible through the cool morning air.

Maybe we should go ahead of the group, Roger's wolf suggested, to make sure everything is ready and do a final threat assessment.

And flirt with a certain stubborn human, since we probably won't get another chance today? Roger replied, sorely tempted by the idea but knowing he couldn't abandon his duty for such a frivolous reason.

It's a thought. The mischievous canine answered, we haven't spoken since yesterday morning. It would be a wasted opportunity when she's clearly warming to us. The beast is whining like a pup, and I have to fight the urge to roll my eyes. There's nothing more determined or impossible than a besotted wolf. Come on, he cajoles eagerly, wagging his tail. Think of how cute she'll be, trying to act all grumpy even though we can hear heart racing.

We can't - we can't afford to get distracted. I want to see her as badly as you do, but this isn't the time.

Hmph. His wolf grumbled, spoilsport.

Roger glanced at the slow moving party behind him. The Alphas and their advisors were being led into the camp by the King, Sinclair and Ella. His brother kept his mate tucked safely under one arm as they approached the airfield. The planes were due to arrive any moment, and Roger knew they were all a bit tense for the first transport conducted without James's leadership.

Sinclair scanned the open area, his sharp gaze landing on his brother. At this short distance, there was no difficulty communicating through their new bond as Alpha and Beta. All clear?

So far. The entire camp has been swept and the pilots have all signaled imminent landing with no signs of trouble. I can either stay here to help with the disembarkment, or I can go ahead of the group with a few soldiers and act as an advance team. Roger offered, secretly hoping his brother would choose the second option.

So much for not getting distracted. His wolf scoffed.

I'm not saying it for Cora, I'm saying it because it's a valid tactical strategy and might be helpful. I'll only approach her if I have a good reason... otherwise I'll just look. Roger insisted, wondering if he was trying to convince himself or his wolf of this plan.

Look and touch?" His inner animal pleaded.

No! No touching, no scent marking, and certainly no kissing... or biting... or licking... arggggh this is useless!

What on earth is happening? Sinclair's deep and slightly amused voice drowned out Roger's tortured musings. You look as if you're short-circuiting. Have you had a stroke? He didn't need to say more. Roger could feel his left eye twitching, not to mention his hands were trapped in white knuckled fists and his jaw was clenched so tightly his fangs felt as though they might grind each other to dust.

Nothing important. We can talk about it later. Roger gritted out, What do you want me to do?

Oh, I know what this is about. Sinclair smirked, keeping his eyes on the approaching aircraft on the horizon. I meant to tell you, Cora was visibly anxious yesterday when you were late for the welcome event. She kept asking if everyone was there and didn't calm down until I explained you were back safely.

That is not the kind of information I need right now, Dominic. Roger growled.

Sinclair chuckled, Alright, I'm sorry. Stay here for now. Once the planes are down do me a favor and get eyes on all the refugees coming in. Our men are well trained, but this is James's operation and they've never flown solo before. If everything checks out then catch up with us.

Roger nodded, moving closer to their group, One more thing. Sinclair interjected, raking his cool gaze over their visitors. See if you can't get close to some of the other Betas. See if you can get a leg up on their packs ' needs and strategies, their Alphas' mindsets.

Oh so I'm a spy now? Roger inquired, not the least bit bothered.

I thought you might enjoy that role. Sinclair replied. And don't worry I'll talk you up to Cora if you're not with us when we get to her section. From what I've seen you need as much help as you can get.

Thanks, Roger thought wryly, trying not to think about the information his brother had just shared. Cora's anxiety was further confirmation of what he already sensed, and he needed to think about how to play this moving forward. Cora was stubborn and skittish for reasons that he both understood, and couldn't know unless she told him. She was also brilliant and beautiful and stop it... Roger hissed at himself. No distractions right now.

Of course, this became much more difficult once the arriving refugees had all disembarked and Roger joined the delegations on their meet and greets through the camp. He watched the Vanaran Alphas like a hawk, trying to assess their response to the suffering shifters in the camp. Luckily they all seemed very engaged, but Roger couldn't help thinking about the welcome feast. They had two main hurdles to overcome - the first was making the Vanarans pledge their allegiance to the cause. The second, and much more challenging task, was dealing with the fallout from the broken secrecy pack. Thus, they already cared about shifters, so seeing the refugees might help forge alliances, but it wouldn't open their eyes to the bigger picture.

Soon enough they were in the medical tents, and then she was there in front of him - even more stunning than he'd remembered. However, not everyone was so impressed. "You have a human administering medical care? You've given her access to Vanaran technologies?" The Silver Dawn Alpha was aghast to find Ella's sister actually working in this place.

"And why not?" Cora asked, before Sinclair, Ella or Gabriel could reply. "I was already working in shifter medicine back home - at the highest level. My expertise is equal to that of any continental physician, so why shouldn't I continue practicing here?"

The Storm Forest Alpha shook his head. He hadn't been thrilled to learn Gabriel had allowed a human over their borders in the first place, and this was clearly a step too far. "Alpha what is the meaning of this?" He asked, the formal address not doing a damn thing to soften his sharp tone. "If Sinclair's Luna wants to keep a human orphan as a pet that's one thing but this is proprietary technology, you can't just-"

That was a mistake. No sooner had the words left his mouth that both Ella and Roger surged forward with steam pouring from their ears, while Cora stood frozen in shock. Only the dual force of two terrifying snarls prevented the situation from coming to blows. Sinclair and Gabriel unleashed their power on the room, and everyone else winced in response.

"That was out of line." Gabriel growled fiercely. "Do not forget you are a guest here, Kieran. You forget our origins - we are not alike in all ways, but the the Goddess created us equal."

"If that were true she wouldn't have made the humans so weak and backwards." The Alpha, Kieran argued. Roger scented salt, and was horrified to realize Cora was on the verge of tears.

"I have news for you," Cora's soft voice sounded behind them, and Roger was furious to see she was shaking. He moved beside her, and his wolf puffed up with pride when the scent of her fear faded in response to his nearness. "Humans might not be as strong, fast or advanced as shifters, but that doesn't mean we have no knowledge to contribute. You may think we're brainless and backwards, but I've made scientific discoveries unknown to shifters and published groundbreaking research in top peer-reviewed shifter journals. I have the intelligence and experience to help both of our kinds advance, and your prejudice - your exclusion - only holds you back. However far ahead of us Vanara is now, it would probably have an even larger lead if you considered perspectives and experiences other than your own."

"Well-said." The Black Alder Alpha, Callahan praised. "Get your head out of your ass, Kieran."

Ella was trying to go to her sister, but Sinclair still seemed to fear she might attack the Storm Forest leader. He was probably right too, because her ravishing features were twisted with rage and she was wriggling against him like a fish out of water. Sinclair growled low and deep, combining the sound with a purr, and Ella calmed enough to draw in a few deep breaths.

"You should be ashamed of yourselves." She finally hissed. "And I don't only mean you, Alpha Kieran. I know he's only saying what some of you are too cowardly to speak aloud. We called this summit to generate collective action against a dire threat facing us all. As we already agreed, this war is not only Damon's, it is not only shifters', and Vanara can no longer escape the fallout by turning a blind eye the way you have been doing for so many centuries. Change has come and you cannot pretend otherwise. You call yourself Alphas, but you sound like nothing but spoiled pups who don't want to share their toys. Mark my words, if you keep up these racist, isolationist attitudes, you will destroy the way of life you so love, and cost the world dearly."

As she spoke, Roger noticed that Ella truly seemed to be glowing. Not in the way pregnant women are supposed to, but in the literal sense, wherein radiant light shimmered around the Luna, as if she was lit up from within. Not only that, but her words carried a weight unlike anything Roger had ever felt - stronger even than Sinclair and Gabriel's devastating power.

The chastised Alpha's hung their heads and shuffled their feet, but a few looked as confused as Roger felt. They exchanged curious glances, but Sinclair only kissed his mate's soft cheek, and guided the group forward.

As the others moved on, Roger stayed behind with Cora. He didn't bother getting permission from Dominic, because not even an order from his Alpha could tear him away from her right now. "You were brilliant." He murmured gently. "Are you okay?" "No." Cora wouldn't look at him, "I'm not." i