

Accidental Surrogate

Chapter 245 – Sinclair Visits a War Zone

Ella

“Dominic, this isn’t fair, I want to come!” I’m staring down my mate as he pulls on his shoes, my arms crossed stubbornly over my chest. I have to fight to hide my yawn from him, as I’m barely awake. The sun isn’t even up yet, but Sinclair looks as alert and energetic as ever. His adrenaline is probably surging already, as he’s leading the summit delegations on an excursion to the embattled continent this morning.

My wolf is furious with Sinclair for ordering us to stay behind, even though I know I can’t fly now that I’m into my fifth month of pregnancy. The summit is as much my baby as it is my mate’s, and I don’t want to be left out on one of the most crucial events of the entire endeavor. Not to mention that I want to go for our people as well, all the ones still languishing in fear and uncertainty about whether they’ll be able to escape. I want to help them, speak with them and learn their needs – to comfort them if it’s possible.

Unfortunately Sinclair doesn’t look the least bit sympathetic. Last night I shared the news of my mother’s location with him, and he did not take it well. He shifted on the spot and went for a run, working through his feelings before finally returning and claiming me with all the ferocity he possessed. Afterwards he agreed to let me go, but he obviously wasn’t happy about it.

“Pout all you want, trouble. I’m not taking you into a war zone,” Sinclair declares sternly, “surely you realize how strongly I feel about this if I’m willing to let you out of my sight?”

He has a point. Ever since we decided that finding my mother was too urgent to delay, he’s been like my giant, furry shadow. His protective instincts are in such a state of overdrive that I’m reminded of the early days of my pregnancy, when he growled and snarled at anyone who so much as looked at me.

“But I should be there, people need to see that we’re in this together!” I insist, stomping my little foot before I can think better of it.

Sinclair arches a brow and unfurls his huge body from the edge of the bed, towering over me. He stares into my wide eyes for a few long moments, probing our mating bond and reading my wolf’s stress all too easily. I wish I could hide it from him, but I can’t seem to withdraw my gaze from his piercing scrutiny. The truth is that underneath my genuine interest in the trip, there’s a churning sea of anxiety over the fact that he will be going into a war zone without me. My wolf hates this more than anything, no matter how inevitable the eventuality.

Seeing this, Sinclair’s foreboding expression softens to something unbearably tender. “This will be good practice, little mate.” He murmurs, pulling me close. “Neither one of us likes it, but we’re going to be separated one way or another. You have to find your mother, and I have to fight Damon.” He sighs, kissing my temple. “The timing is terrible, but we can’t control that. We just have to get through it.”

“How?” I ask, in a voice so small I barely recognize it.

“By taking it one day at a time.” Sinclair replies, sounding so steady and sure that it’s hard to believe this is the same wolf who is currently sending waves of rabid possessiveness through our bond. “If we can just get through today then we’ll be together again this evening. And when it comes time for you to leave, then we just have to remember that every day we’re apart is one day closer to being reunited.”

I nod, my throat feeling thick and scratchy. “I knew it was going to be hard... I just didn’t realize it would be this hard. I mean, we’ve already done it once.”

“I know, baby.” He purrs, clutching me even tighter now. “But it’s different this time... and it’s for the best. I won’t be able to focus on the refugees or the other Alpha’s if you’re with me, I’d be too worried about your safety to give them the attention they deserve.”

He’s right. I know he’s right, but that’s never been the problem.

“Okay, but if you’re even one minute late coming back then I’m coming after you.” I threaten sulkily, my voice muffled by his sweet-smelling chest.

“I won’t be late,” he promises, kissing my hair four times in quick succession. “You have my word, Ella. I’ll be back before you know it.”

Sinclair

When this war began I told myself that when I finally came home, it would be to defeat Damon once and for all.

It isn’t easy to come to terms with the fact that I’m going to be returning to Vanara in only a few hours, especially not when I see the throngs of bodies clamoring to board the planes when we land. My family is a thousand miles away, which hurts to no end, but at least I know that I’m doing what’s best for them no matter the distance. It feels different to turn my back on my people when they languish here alone, for how can I do what’s best for them when I’ve escaped and they still live in fear?

As we disembark hundreds of wolves press around me, crying out with a mix of joy, relief and desperation. They beg for my help, cry out questions about my plans for the war, beseech me to overthrow Damon and pledge their lives to the struggle. It’s all so overwhelming, and I’m not the only one who feels this way.

I can see the pain, concern and pity on the faces of every Alpha in my company, even those who haven’t been particularly cooperative. There may only be a plane ride between these refugees and the ones they met in Vanara, but this experience feels entirely different. These people are not recovering, licking their wounds and trying to figure out what to do now that they’re safe. These people are still in the throws of fight or flight, unsure whether or not they will live to see the sun rise again.

The scent of their fear is crushing, and I wonder at how James manages to do this every day – to know he can only save a few and pray that nothing happens to those he must leave behind. I rest a firm hand on his shoulder as the delegations spread through the crowds, listening to their stories with grave expressions. “I’m sorry I didn’t come sooner.” I confess to the soldier. “I want you to know how much I respect and appreciate the work you’ve been doing. If I hadn’t been so determined to come back the right way I would have understood what you’ve been going through sooner.”

“Alpha, that’s your guilt talking.” James replies simply. “These people are thrilled to see you, no doubt, but they know you can’t be here and plan a war at the same time.”

“He’s right.” A she-wolf chimes in. There are so many shifters surrounding us that private conversations are impossible, not that I mind. “Trust me, Alpha. We don’t want you here every day.”

“What do you want?” I ask, noticing a young boy leaning against her legs. “Is there anything I can do for you while I am here?”

“You can get us on one of those planes today.” The she-wolf requests, a stark burst of vulnerability crossing her countenance. “We’ve been waiting three weeks.”

I nod, unable to refuse them. “And you?” I ask the boy, “would you like to fly today?”

He peeks up at me with a confused frown, “Can my Daddy come with us?”

I glance at his mother, who kneels down beside him, “Finn, you know Daddy is fighting in the resistance. We’ve talked about this, honey.”

He looks up at her unhappily, then turns his eyes to me, obviously hoping I might tell him otherwise. “I don’t wanna go without Daddy.”

“You’re Daddy must be very proud of you,” I tell him gently. “He’d have to trust you a lot to leave his mate in your protection. It’s a very big job.” I continue solemnly. “And I’m sure he misses you every bit as much as you miss him, but I think he’d want you to get your Mommy to safety, since he can’t be here to do it himself. She’s in your care until he returns, after all.”

The boy looks up at me with wide eyes, his chest puffing up with pride as he reaches for his mother’s hand. “Come on then, Mommy. We should gets you on the plane before it’s all full.”

The she-wolf mouths a tearful thank you at me as they depart and I feel a split second of warmth as I watch them move towards the aircraft, but it’s quickly replaced with a fresh barrage of guilt and helplessness as more shifters rush forward, eager to gain the same privilege. I know I’ve opened the floodgates, but I can’t bring myself to regret helping those two. I want to help as many as I can, but it’s hard to hear individual stories with so many voices competing to be heard.

“Please, I have pups!” One woman cries.

“My grandson is injured, we need help!” An elderly wolf counters, waving his arms.

It goes on and on, breaking my heart. “What will happen if we stay?” “How much longer before the usurper comes after us?” “The humans are getting closer by the day!”

“The human armies?” I clarify, zeroing in on this surprising news and wondering why my spies haven’t reported such movements.

“No, sir. I mean the human refugees. The camps started small but the governments aren’t helping so they’re incredibly disorganized. The more numerous they become, the closer they come to encroaching on us.” The same man responds.

“Are you telling me that there are human refugee camps near here?” I demand, stunned by this news and feeling as though I’m completely incompetent for not learning of this sooner.

“Yes Alpha,” The man confirms hesitantly, clearly confused by my sharp tone. “There’s one only three miles from this spot.”

“Take me.” I command, “now.”