

Accidental Surrogate

Chapter 263 – War

Sinclair

God damn it, I think, looking around at the hastily set-up headquarters that looks like a little more than a rickety table surrounded by anxious wolves. If this isn't hell, then I don't know what is. We arrived at the edge of the capital days ago and set up here, in an abandoned warehouse that Damon didn't bother protecting because it's not worth his time.

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A mistake, I think, one of many that he's making. The fact is that Damon made a huge misstep in releasing the secret of our being to the humans he expected, I think, to cow them with fear, to take control of their resources and use them against mine. What he didn't expect was that the humans would entrench and fight back. And now, his army is fighting on two fronts – against the humans and against me – stretched thin. Being pulled in two directions is making him miss things, like this warehouse at the edge of his territory, which we were able to sneak into and set up shop.

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Still, though, looking around, it's nothing like the quality of accommodation that I'm used to. The walls are crumbling, the ceiling has fallen in a few places, and what rusted rafters are left look ready to fall down at any moment. My wolf grumbles within me, pacing unhappily. Let's get this moving, he growls, we have to get back to her – we have to get to the baby –

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"I know," I mumble to myself aloud, angry. God damn it, I know. I don't need my wolf inside me constantly nagging me about it. My mind is on her every minute my beautiful mate, with her rose-gold hair and that troublesome smirk. God, what I could do to those smirking lips if she were here now with that teasing mouth. I'd use my tongue to part those lips, slip inside. I'd holding her against every inch of me while I tasted her, feeling her moan reverberate in my own mouth...

I press my eyes tightly shut, forcing my mind back to the subject at hand and gritting my teeth almost to dust as I dismiss these thoughts of what I'm going to do to my mate the moment I have her in my arms again. This is better, at least, than the thoughts of what can go wrong with her not by my side at every moment, but –

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Damn it. I take a deep breath and open my eyes, forcing myself to look at the tactical maps on the table in front of me. This would all be much easier if she was here with me, so that I could protect her. I can't stand her being away. Inside of me, my wolf gives a little howling yip of agreement. He wants her back too, wants her near.

"Sir," James says, walking over to the table where I consult with a handful of the other Alphas." The mission is in place. We are ready to proceed."

I take a deep breath, straightening up from the table and looking around at the men around me. Okay, everyone," I snap. "This is the big push. Our only shot at the element of surprise. Are we ready?"

We've been working on this plan for days, putting it together piece by piece. Everything needs to happen just so but...if it works? We could take the city by nightfall.

Around me, all of the Alphas nod. Everything in its place, everyone ready, It's zero hour and time to attack.

"Goddess's speed, then," I growl, my eyebrows drawn down and my eyes alight with the fire of the wolf within me. "And good luck."

With that, everyone springs to action. And the war truly begins.

3rd Person

Damon stands at the head of the empty table in his board room, his arms crossed, his gaze fixed on the door. His left eye twitches slightly with the intensity of his gaze. Any minute now, he thinks, almost willing the door to open so that his plans can finally come to fruition.

He received a message this morning, from his ally.

We've got him.

That's all it said, but that was all he had needed to hear. He knew that he could use Sinclair's foolish trust in his so-called allies against him. That all it would take was one well-placed bribe, and all of his little soldiers would fall one by one. Like dominoes.

As the prince stares, the door begins to creek open. With it, Damon's smile grows.

"Welcome, Kieran," Damon purrs, quickly scanning the group he sees before him. "So nice to see you on this...momentous occasion."

"My Prince," Kieran replies, giving him a deep bow.

"King, now," Damon growls, glaring at the weak Alpha to whom he has promised a kingdom. Promised, Damon thinks, but not yet delivered. He smiles at his own cleverness, knowing that this is just the start of his plans.

"King when you are crowned," Kieran replies evenly, stepping into the room. "Until then? Prince"

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"Formalities," Damon snaps, watching the rest of Kieran's group filter in. Guards, mostly – his own, as well as Kieran's – the stupid man had insisted upon his own troupe – but...there. Damon's grin glows as he sees Alpha Sinclair being dragged into the room, his huge shoulders struggling against the chains wrapped around him, against the handcuffs behind his back.

The guards bring Sinclair forward, throwing him to the floor at Damon's feet.

"Well well," Demon teases, his cruel smile showing all of his wicked teeth. "How the mighty have fallen."

Sinclair glares at him from his spot on his knees, shouting some curses that are muffled by his gag.

Damon just laughs, lowering his face so that it's nearly even with Sinclair's.

"Do you not wish," Damon jeers softly, "that you had just bent the knee weeks ago? When you had a chance? All of this could have been avoided. You would have been powerful, under my rule. Comfortable. At peace. And now? Now you have lost everything."

Sinclair glares at Damon as if the look could burn him. As if he could light him on fire with just the force of his eyes. Damon just laughs, straightening up and shaking his head at the man.

"I don't like this," Kieran insists, looking around the room anxiously, drawing Damon's eyes to him. "Killing him like this – I don't think it will have the effect you think it will"

"Cut the head off the snake," Damon responds, his voice harsh. "And the body will..." he draws a hand through the air and then lets it fall limply to his side. "Die."

"I don't think it works like that here," Kieran refutes, shaking his head. "It's not like with you, with one leader to whom everyone bows. In the past weeks Sinclair has rallied many to his cause – has convinced them of the morality of his position. If you kill him here," Kieran looks seriously at Damon, hoping he will understand. "Another will simply rise to take his place. Perhaps you should let him go, or keep him as prisoner instead. Don't make a martyr for them to rally around."

"Never," Damon snarls, glaring at Kieran. "He will die today, solidifying my position as King. And if you suggest any alternative again, you will go with him. Am I made clear?" The last word is a horrible growl that sends shivers down Kieran's spine. His eyes go wide as he takes a step back, clearly believing Damon. "Besides," Damon continues, looking back towards his prize, taking pleasure at how Sinclair looks on his knees. "I'm going to enjoy killing this one. And we wouldn't want to take away any of my fun. I've been deprived for so long."

Damon takes his time pulling a wickedly bladed knife from his belt, pressing it close to Sinclair's throat. "After all," he whispers, low enough that Sinclair is the only one who can hear. "It's been so long since I killed your first mate. And then I'll take you. And then, when I'm done, I'll bring this knife to your new mate's pretty little neck. And I'll drink the blood I spill with it."

A menacing snarl rips from Sinclair's throat as he hears this threat. As the knife presses closer, a single drop of blood begins to drip down his neck.