

Accidental Surrogate

Chapter 269: The Waiting Game

3rd Person

The hours pass slowly for Dominic Sinclair as he sits at his mate's side in the post-surgical suite, willing her to live.

Her hand is held tight within his and his eyes are trained on her face, watching her eyelashes flutter every minute or two. Her chest raises and lowers slowly, shallow breaths coming less frequently than they should. She had survived the night. But just barely.

Sinclair wipes a hand down his face, willing himself to stay awake. The surgery took hours and he had stood stoically at her side for every moment of it. It had been agony, watching them cut her to ribbons,

listening to them mumble words he couldn't understand, trying to fix her like some kind of broken car

As if she wasn't the most important thing on earth. As if she wasn't the daughter of the Goddess, the future Queen, the mother of his child and – most important of all –

His f**king mate.

It had taken everything in him to stand there and not wrench the tools from the doctor's hand, to do something, anything, to fix her out of the sheer will of his desire for her to live.

But in the end, after hours of work, the doctor had just nodded to Sinclair, wiping a bloody hand across his forehead. "We've done everything we can," he had murmured, looking down at Ella. "It's in her hands now."

Then, they'd wheeled her into this room, hooked her up to what looked like a thousand ridiculous machines, and just left. Left Sinclair here, holding her hand, waiting to see if she lived or died. But damnit, he wasn't going to let her die. No f**king way.

Nurses come and go periodically, of course, checking on her, checking on him, letting him know that there have been no turns for the worse, asking if he wanted any food, any water, anything at all. He'd ignored them all, focused only on her. His Luna. The light of his world.

A few hours later, a knock comes at the door. Sinclair glances towards it, expecting another nurse, and blinks and surprise when he sees Cora and Roger standing there.

"Dominic," Roger, his face full of sorrow, his eyes not going to Ella and instead focusing on Sinclair. Roger opens his mouth to say something else, but Cora interrupts.

"Is she alright?" Cora breathes, hurrying to her sister's side, glancing between Ella and her mate.

"No," Sinclair murmurs, unwilling to lie to spare Cora's feelings. "She survived the surgery...but the doctor says it could go either way. And that it's it's not..."

Sinclair covers his face with his hand, unable to say it.

"The child?" Cora asks, desperate. "The baby?"

Sinclair just nods, letting Cora know that he's still there. He can't feel my son anymore, can't feel the bond, but he hopes that Ella can. He hopes that they're holding on to each other, in their unconscious state. He hopes...

God damnit, but he doesn't know what he hopes.

Cora refocuses her attention on Ella, running her hand over her sister's forehead, brushing some hair behind her ear. "Come on, kid," she murmurs. "You have to fight, Ella."

Sinclair doesn't say anything, letting Cora have the moment with her sister, but he takes the hand from his face when he feels Roger grip his shoulder. Sinclair looks up at his brother, shaking his head. Roger says nothing, looking at Ella's fragile form laying limply on the bed.

A long moment passes before Roger looks up at the television, which has been playing lightly in the corner for hours on end, the dialogue a bare murmur.

"You have the television on?" Roger asks, frowning.

"The nurses did it," Sinclair responds, shrugging noncommittally. "I asked them to turn it off, but," he lifts a hand lightly before dropping it, not understanding. "They said something about... unconscious patients. The sound of human voices. It's better, apparently. Makes them feel grounded or something." Roger frowns at his brother, confused, but Sinclair just shakes his head. Whatever. It can't hurt."

Roger nods, but then looks back at the television. "Have you seen any of this?"

Sinclair blinks and then looks towards the television. The news is on, but he glares at his brother." No, Roger, I'm not sitting here watching the news while Ella slips away from me. I'm concentrating on her, obviously

"Would you just look, Dominic?" Roger throws back, frustrated. "I wouldn't draw your attention away if it wasn't important. Obviously."

Sinclair growls a little, irritated, but he does as his brother asks and turns towards the television. To his surprise, it's an image of Cora. Sinclair blinks, paying more attention now to the words that scroll across the screen, to the picture of Cora glowing with a bright white light, her clasped hands raised above her head.

As he watches, Cora's body seems to brighten. He sees her mouth fall open in a gasp, her eyes press closed as a great flare of light erupts from her, turning the screen white as her brilliance overloads the capacity of whatever camera was trained on her. It's an unrefined image, probably something taken from a security camera, so no wonder.

But when the light fades, Cora stands panting, looking out onto the square. Sinclair squints, leaning closer, and he can see – yes, himself, in the corner of the screen, with Ella in his arms, dashing away towards the hospital.

"I was there," Sinclair murmurs, leaning back in his chair. "I don't need to see it again on the news."

"Yes," Roger replies, sliding his hands into his pockets, his eyes still on the screen. "But do you know what she did?"

Sinclair briefly shakes his head, slumping back in his chair raising one hand to his forehead, his other still wrapped around Ella's in the bed. It doesn't really matter to him what Cora did, not really. Because whatever it was, Ella had tried to do it first, and it may have killed her. He doesn't give a f**k what it was.

"Dominic," Roger growls, frustrated again. Sinclair snaps his eyes to him, his lips pulling back in a snarl. Roger puts up a hand, calling silently for peace. "I know that you're focusing on Ella, brother, but you're our King now. Or if you're not, you will be soon. And you need to know what the hell is going on in your nation."

"Fine," Sinclair grinds out, not taking his eyes from his mate. "Tell me, and be done with it."

"In that moment that flash – Cora gave the Goddess's gift. To everyone. Didn't you feel it?"

"No," Sinclair grumbles, frankly not interested. But, if he thinks back... he had been distracted, of course, frantic at the feeling of Ella's weak body in his arms. But he had felt... something. Hadn't he? Some kind of...of hope? Running through him?

"Well, I did," Roger continues. "And so did everyone else in the nation, at that very moment. She spoke to us, Dominic. The Goddess did. Through Ella, through Cora. She made clear to us her love for all of us for humans, for wolves. Communicated to us that her love for us all is equal, and that she holds neither as superior. And that, in the name of her love," Roger holds out a pleading hand here, begging Sinclair to see, "that we must stop fighting. That we must work together to love each other, to find peace."

Sinclair says nothing, just staring at Ella, his fingers still pressed to his forehead.

"Don't you get it, Dom?" Roger insists. "They ended the war. It's over. A ceasefire, a real one. The humans have stopped attacking, and so have the wolves. There need to be talks, of course, negotiations, but —"

Sinclair snaps his head up, looking at his brother. "It's over?" he asks, a little shocked. "For real?"

Roger nods emphatically, raising his eyebrows. "For real, Dominic. It's done. You're going to be crowned King in a new era of peace."

Sinclair leans back in his seat at this news, his eyes still on Ella. He lets out a deep breath, one perhaps he hadn't known he was holding. Then, his eyes travel to Cora.

"Thank you," he breathes. He means it, deep down, even if he can't muster the power to express it properly. "We are...in your debt."

Cora meets her eyes and just shrugs. "She did it," she says, glancing down at her sister. "She did all of the work, paid all of the price. She just...handed it to me, and I took the final step. Ella is the great peacemaker here."

Cora slowly shakes her head, taking her sister's other hand. "I just hope she can fight as hard for herself as she did for everyone else," she murmurs. "She needs to come back so that we can thank her. Not me."

Sinclair growls his agreement and stares at his mate. God damnit. Why wouldn't she wake up?