

Accidental Surrogate

Chapter 270: All Just a Dream

Sinclair

The doctor knocks gently at the door then. I slide my eyes to him, annoyed to have another person in the room. Is this best for her, all of these interruptions?

"How is she," the doctor asks, coming to Ella's side. Cora moves to stand at Ella's head, making room for him.

"The same," I murmur, returning my eyes to my mate's pallid face. "No changes."

"What does that mean, doctor?" Cora asks, wringing her hands.

"Well," the doctor replies, leaning down to study Ella's face. "I can't say that I'm encouraged by it. I think that if she were getting better, she would have woken by now." He moves away from her and over to some of the machines, lifting the tape they've been printing for hours to read the report. But," he murmurs, studying them. "It doesn't seem like she's getting any worse."

"Is there anything we can do?" Cora asks, looking at him with pleading eyes. She, like me, wants to do something, anything.

"Go home," the doctor says frankly. "Get some rest. There's nothing you can do for her here. So go home, prepare yourselves."

"Prepare ourselves?!" Cora gasps, her eyes going wide. "For —"

"For whatever's next," the doctor interrupts, meeting her eyes evenly. "It's not going to do any good to panic. If she survives, she's going to need you, all of you." He glances around at the rest of us as he says this. "She's going to need you to be strong for her, so it doesn't do any good to stand around her worrying. I would recommend that you go home and let us care for her here."

Cora nods anxiously, but I can't help the anger that builds in me.

"I am going nowhere," I snap, my eyes fixed on the doctor, who comes back to the bedside now.

"I understand," he replies, meeting my gaze. "But you two," he says to Cora and Roger, "I don't recommend that you stay."

"All right," Cora murmurs, steeling herself and nodding. Then, she looks to me. "But we'll be back-tomorrow. And if anything..."

"We'll keep you informed," the doctor replies bruskiy, heading out of the room without another look at me. "Leave your number at the nurse's desk."

"Abrupt, that one," Roger says, frowning a little as looks at the empty door through which the doctor just passed.

"I kind of like him," I mumble begrudgingly. "He's no coward."

Roger just shrugs as Cora moves to his side. "Sinclair," she says, her voice serious. "How long have you been awake?"

I just glare at her. What a stupid question.

"Seriously, Sinclair," she insists. "The doctor is right — we're not doing Ella any favors exhausting ourselves. When she wakes up, she's going to need you at full strength."

I just shake my head. "I'm not...I can't rest. Not when she could..."

I can't finish the sentence. Can't even think the thought.

Cora nods, seeming to understand. But then she starts, suddenly blinking rapidly.

"Wait, Sinclair," she rushes. "Ella told me, once, about how you...you meet? In her dreams?" I snap my head, looking towards her. "Can you..." she waves a hand towards Ella's still form. "Can you do that? Can you meet here there? Maybe...give her some hope? Some encouragement?"

I shake my head slowly, grinding my teeth. Why the hell hadn't I thought of that? But still...

"No," I growl. "Not without her invitation. She has to bring me into the dream, and I don't know..." I lean forward to look at her. "I don't even know if she's dreaming, let alone in a state to offer me..."

I feel a sudden flutter of hope within me. Could it be possible though?

"Sinclair," Cora begs. "Please, try. It can't hurt."

I consider it for a moment and then, slowly, I begin to nod. "All right," I agree, against my better judgement. If I fall into a sleep...and she's not dreaming, or I don't...god damnit, the waste of time. I would never forgive myself if she...if she slipped away while I...

"Go," I command, not looking at them. "I do this alone."

I hear them murmur something to each other and then slip from the room, closing the door behind them. I take a long moment, then, to look at my mate. To lean forward, pressing a kiss to her precious forehead.

"I'm coming to meet you, trouble," I murmur to her. "Please, let me in."

Ella

Spin Spin Spin, I think, giggling to myself as I spin around in my little dream forest. It's so good to be back here — where the air is cool, and damp, and I have the trees above me and the roots below.

I'm spinning in circles, like I used to love to do as a little girl, laughing as I go. "Spin, spin," I sing, biting my lip for the joy of it.

How long have I been spinning like this, though? My wolf yips, jumping just beyond my vision. But when I turn towards her, she's gone. Silly pup, where is she of to? I hear her again, and spin towards her, seeing a flash of her rose-gold fur. But then, again, gone.

I stop myself, frowning, looking for her, and am hit with a sudden waive of nausea.

"Oof," I say, falling to the ground, my hands going to my stomach. "Ohhh, too much spinning." I giggle again, laughing at myself. Silly girl, making myself sick. I throw myself back on the grass then, enjoying the feeling of it against my skin, waiting for the nausea to pass.

It doesn't though. It worsens, making my head pound with it.

"Ohhh," I moan, lifting my hands to my head. Silly girl, silly dream. Suddenly my head spins of its own avail and I close my eyes against it, not wanting to see the trees twisting above me while I lay still.

I wish, suddenly, for my mate. For his arms around me. For his chest pressed against my back, his delicious scent overwhelming my senses. That, I know, could fix me, wipe away this horrible feeling. After all, he makes my head spin in precisely the opposite direction. He might even me out.

And then, quite suddenly, he's there. I know it the moment he arrives and I smile, propping myself up in the grass on my elbows, looking for him.

"Hello, gorgeous," I murmur when I finally see him at the edge of the woods. I soaking in the gorgeous look of him, all tall rippling muscles and dark power. But...something is off. His image... flickers, a bit like my wolf was doing. One moment he's there, the next he's gone, only to come back again shimmering like he's in a haze.

"You stay put," I command, frowning at him and pointing a finger in his direction.

"I'm trying," he says, laughing a little, his voice calm. "Concentrate, baby. Bring me in."

So I do. I close my eyes and take a deep breath, letting myself want him here.

And when I open my eyes, there he is. He's closer this time, standing only a few feet from me. And

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— yes — when I sniff the air, I can smell every minute detail of him on the breeze. I allow myself to close my eyes, relishing that scent.

His warm chuckle brings me back to him, though. "Well, trouble," he murmurs, smiling softly down at me. "We've been waiting for you to wake up. What have you been doing instead?"

"Spinning," I say, laughing and throwing my arms back above my head. And then- bloop! I'm gone. Somewhere else the clouds, perhaps totally alone, spinning again. Spin spin spin, I think,

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turning around in the soft nothing of the white fluffy clouds.

Was I just talking to someone? I can't remember.

Spin spin spin, I think, giggling. Somewhere, in the distance, I hear my wolf howl. I pause, but then ignore it. What is a wolf anyway? Here, there are no wolves, only clouds...maybe I, too, am a cloud...