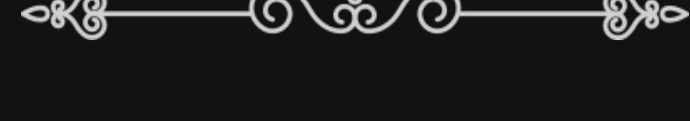


Accidental Surrogate

Chapter 279: Just Like Old Times



Sinclair

“Hey baby!” I say cheerfully to Sinclair as he appears in the doorway to our room late that night, leaning against the frame and smiling tiredly at me. “Do you want some pizza?” I hold up the greasy square box perched on the edge of my nest. “There’s only half a slice left but…” I shrug, “it’s really good.

“No, Ella,” he replies, laughing and coming into the room, sitting on the edge of the bed. “That’s your cold, hours–old pizza. You keep that for you.”

“Right answer,” I murmur, snapping the box closed, pleased. I was saving that half–slice for my inevitable midnight craving, when I knew I’d be starving for it. “Is it normal?” I ask suddenly, turning my head to Sinclair. “To be this hungry in a werewolf pregnancy?”

He nods, smiling at me and laying down to bring his face closer to my stomach, placing a warm hand on it and saying hello to our pup through the bond. “Yes, it’s normal,” he says, looking back up at me. “There’s a notable uptick in feeding habits in a wolf pregnancy. Baby is hungry and mostly formed, all he has to do now is grow. He needs lots of food for that.”

“Good,” I murmur, running my hands through Sinclair’s hair as he gently strokes my stomach, murmuring little nothings to our pup. “I didn’t just want to be a pig.” As soon as I say the word, though, I have a sudden, striking desire for bacon. My stomach grumbles with longing, making Sinclair laugh.

He looks fondly up at me. “Can I get you anything, oh hungry one?”

I laugh and swat at him. “No,” I say, nodding towards my food reserves on the bedside table. “I’m set for a while. Besides, I just want you.” I scootch myself down so that I’m flat on the bed, moving down so that Sinclair’s face is even with mine, instead of my belly. “I missed you all day,” I pout

“Did you,” he murmurs, wrapping one of his huge hands around the small of my back to pull me close against him. He angles his head down, nuzzling my mating mark and giving it a gentle lick. I feel a little thrill climb up my spine.

“Yes,” I murmur, running my hands through his dark hair again. “Even though I know you were off being important and powerful,” I sigh dramatically, “It was a great sacrifice for me.”

He laughs and brings his face up closer to mine. “Well, I’m so sorry to have put my angel mate through such an ordeal,” he teases, brushing his lips with mine. “I’ll have to think up some way to make it up to you.”

I freeze at this, at the look and intention I see in his eyes. “Dominic,” I warn, pushing him away a little. “You know we can’t –”

He laughs, pulling me closer. “I know, little mate,” he murmurs, “but just because I’m hungry for you doesn’t mean I can’t control myself. And it doesn’t mean we can’t be close.”

“Oh,” I say, relaxing again in his arms. I feel a little guilty for doubting him – I know, of course, that my safety comes first in his mind, above all other things. “Close?” I ask, curious what he

means.

“Yes,” he whispers, leaning away from me for a moment and tugging on the hem of my pajama shirt. “Sit up, Ella,” he orders. “Take this off.”

“Dominic!” I laugh, doing as he says and helping him to pull my shirt up over my head so that I’m sitting only in my pajama pants and a bra. I wonder what the hell he has in mind. “What are you doing? Just because you’re confident in your ability to restrain yourself doesn’t mean I am.”

He pulls his own shirt off, grinning at me. “Don’t worry, trouble,” he says, shaking his head. “I’ll keep you in line. Besides, this is all innocence.”–

“Huh?” I wrinkle my nose in confusion. “Dominic, what on earth is going on?”

He’s standing now, unbuckling his pants and pushing them to the floor, but leaving his boxer- briefs on as he sits back on the bed and gathers me back in his arms. “I’m going to scent mark you,” he mutters against my neck, pulling me close again.

“What!?” I gasp, pushing him away a little. “We haven’t done that for months – and I’m your mate now, don’t I already smell like you?”

“No,” he hums with pleasure, pulling me back against him eagerly, like I’m something he can’t stand to be separated from for more than a moment. “You smell like corn chips.”

“What!” I shriek, horrified and laughing at the same time. “I smell like corn chips?”

“Why are you surprised,” he chuckles, glancing at the two empty bags on the nightstand. “You’ve been hoovering them all day –”

“Oh my god,” I moan, covering my face in embarrassment and going limp on his arms. He laughs, letting me fall flat on the mattress. “You can smell that?”

“You’re pregnant, Ella,” he mutters, a little laughter still in his voice as he moves lower on the mattress himself, tugging my pajama pants off and leaving me only in my plain bra and cotton panties. I certainly hadn’t worn anything s*xxy or alluring – I hadn’t known this was on the table. Beautiful,” he mutters, and then slowly moves to cover my body again with his own.

I grasp his face as he brings it close to mine. “Wait,” I protest, glancing towards our bathroom. “let me go brush my teeth – corn chips – oh my god –”

“No,” he laughs, pushing me back on the bed. “It’s not your breath – it’s in your skin –”

“Ewww,” I groan, covering my eyes with my hand in mortification. “That’s it. I’m not eating anything but pineapple for the rest of this pregnancy. I had no idea –”

22

“It’s fine, Ella,” he hums as he places a simple kiss on my throat. “You should eat whatever you want – you have to follow your instincts. Your body just telling you what it needs.” He brings his face to mine, nudging my nose with his, coaxing a little smile from my mouth. “And when it makes you smell like a truck stop… I’ll just. Set you right.”

I can’t help the laughter that bursts from me at this. His own warm laughter reverberates through his body as he begins the old ceremony. He moves slowly over me, caressing me softly, murmuring his praise and his love for me as he imparts his scent on every inch of my body. I feel myself relax immediately under his hands, closing my eyes and feeling him move over me, his chiseled muscles brushing against my skin. I feel a smile curling on my lips as he goes, planting small kisses on my skin alongside his scent whenever the mood strikes him.

That’s new

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the kisses are new – but so much of it…so much of the experience of him marking me is warm, and familiar, and brings me back to a time when I was so confused, and so frightened about my future and my place with him. A time when my body knew that it belonged to him, and his to me, where it sang that knowledge every time he touched me. But I had been so… naïve, and so afraid of what I didn’t know.

And now? Tears fill my eyes as I realize how truly different it is. The marking itself is the same, the way he moves over me soft and warm and familiar. But the way I feel? So held, so treasured, so sure that this – this is right.

“Hey there,” Sinclair murmurs, bringing his face close to mine and kissing a tear off my cheek. Everything all right?” He wraps his arms around me, apparently finished, resting his forehead against mine.

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“Yes,” I sniff, giving him a smile and nodding to let him know it really is okay. “It was just…really

nice.”

“I thought you’d like it,” he whispers, stroking my hair and giving me a smile. I yawn then. I’m not sure I knew how tired I was. “You go to sleep now, little mate. Dream about me.”

“No,” I mutter, shaking my head a little. “I’m only going to dream about corn chips. My one true love.”

I hear him chuckle as I start to drift off to sleep. “I’m behind the nest and the corn chips now?” he asks softly. “This competition is rough…”

But his voice fades away, and soon I’m in the forest, dreaming.

And I know precisely what I want. So, I call for him and patiently wait.