

# Accidental Surrogate

Chapter 288: Hesitation



Sinclair

I sigh, sitting down on the bed next to my mate, giving her a significant look as I humor her. She grabs her phone, eagerly pulling up the clock timer and never taking her other hand off her stomach.

“Okay,” she murmurs, looking down at herself. “Well, this contraction has been over for a little bit,” she looks up at me. “Should we just wait for the next one to start the timer and time between that one and the next?”

I breathe out in a huff, closing my eyes and working very hard to control my anxiety and be patient. “Just start the clock and add two minutes to the time, Ella,” I beg. “Please.”

“Okay,” she says. Then I feel her hand on my cheek and I open my eyes to look down into her sweet, excited face. “It’s going to be okay, Dominic. You heard Hank. I’m strong – there’s no reason to rush off to the hospital yet.”

“There’s no reason not to,” I retort, giving her an even stare. But my little mate just wiggles herself closer to me, pressing herself warm against my side. I lower my head to her hair, my heart still beating fast with anxiety and anticipation, and take a deep breath of her warm scent. She’s right, at least a little – there’s no harm in waiting just a few minutes. As I work on my patience, I hear Ella clicking away on her phone.

“Okay,” she chirps. “I texted Cora she’s up, she says she’ll meet us there when we’re ready. But she says to text her the time between contractions when we’ve got it. She also says it could be false labor,” Ella notes, looking up at me with an interested expression. “Since it’s so early. So, we might be panicking for nothing.”

I murmur something back – I honestly don’t know what and wrap my arm around her, concentrating on being steady next to her, where she needs me. Ella is excited, but deep down I know that she’s anxious as well – how could she not be? Throughout this nightmare of a pregnancy, something’s gone wrong at every turn. I know that, like me, she’s on pins and needles, just waiting for the other shoe to drop.

The next few minutes are torture for me. Every instinct in me tells me to get up and move, to prepare, to do something. I could go start the car, have it ready and pointed out to the street so that we can go the moment she’s ready. I could double-check this hospital bag, although Ella’s packed and re-packed it twelve times. I could go rip that ridiculous stairlift right out of the wall, now that we don’t need it anymore,...

That, at least, would give me some satisfaction and burn off some of this anxious energy....

But, despite that impulse, I stay right here by my mate’s side, where she needs me. There’s no place else I’d dare to be.

“Ohhh,” Ella says suddenly, her hand sliding low on her belly as she closes her eyes tightly. “Okay,” she breathes. “I think this is...another one.”

I grab her phone off the bed next to her. Eight minutes. “Ella,” I snip, “your contractions are only ten minutes apart. Please.”

“Ten minutes,” she says, frowning at the phone. “How is that possible, they just started –”

“Ella,” my voice is low with warning and anxiety now. “Please we’re going

“Fine,” she says, raising her eyebrows at me and putting her feet on the floor. “I think it’s too early but oohhhh,” she winces, shuddering with pain and pressing her eyes closed.

“What is it,” I breathe, leaning close and taking her hand. “What’s wrong?”

“It’s just...sharp...” she says, her teeth gritted. “Ow, I didn’t think it would hurt this bad so early...”

“Enough,” I growl, scooping her up in my arms, my heart pounding. I head for the door but she stops me, slapping my shoulder.

“The bag!” she cries, and I spin, squatting down to grab it and then leaping from the room in one swift action. I pound down the hall, eagerly headed for the stairs. As I begin down them, though, Ella gives a sharp gasp and convulses in my arms, freeze, holding her close, my eyes tracing the pained lines of her face.

“Ella,” I gasp, terrified. But there’s nothing I can do I just hold her until she stops, until she opens her eyes and looks shocked into my face and then down at her belly, her face going white.

“Down,” she demands. “Put me down. Something...something happened.”

Ella

I’m still wrapped in his arms as Sinclair jolts back into action, hurrying to the bottom of the stairs where he can put me down. I feel a sudden wetness between my legs, a sticky warmth that...)

G\*d damn it, all I can think of is the blood that I saw all over me on the temple steps when I’d nearly lost the baby, when I was so weak and exhausted

What if –

Did something go horribly wrong –

Sinclair reaches the bottom of the stairs as I cling to his shoulders, panic racing through me. He places me down steadily on my feet and I look down at myself, trying as best I can in the darkness to assess what I see –

“Light!” I call, wiping my hand down my legs, trying to assess –

Sinclair is instantly in action, flicking on the hall switch. Frantic, I look down at my hand but see ...clear.

There’s liquid on my hand, but it’s clear. I give a frantic little laugh as I stare at my hand and then down at my soaked pajama shorts.

“Ella,” Sinclair gasps, taking me by my shoulders and making me look up at him, “Ella, please what’s wrong – what’s happening –”

“My water broke,” I explain, still laughing, a little hysterical with relief. “I’m all wet – because my water broke

“Oh my g\*d,” he murmurs, slumping back against the wall and putting a hand to his head. “Ella – I thought –”

“It’s going to be all right,” I say, coming forward and wrapping my arms around his waist. Sinclair, we’re going to make it. I think – I think we’re both just really freaked out, and traumatized, by everything that we’ve been through.”

He opens his eyes and looks at me then, shaking his head a little.

“But from here on out?” I insist, looking at him with full confidence. “Everything is going to work out. Easy as pie. And soon we’ll have our baby.”

He smiles at that, pausing his frantic energy for a second to brush my cheek with his finger and lean down and kiss me. But it doesn’t last long. “You’re right, trouble,” he murmurs, pulling away.” But if it’s all right with you, I’ll calm the hell down when we’ve got you safe and sound in a hospital bed.”

“All right,” I say, nodding. “But, um,” I pause, and bite my lip, a little embarrassed. “Can you run upstairs first, and get me a change of pants? I can’t...I can’t leave the house like this. I look like I peed myself.”

Sinclair sighs, rolling his eyes, but he sprints up the stairs as fast as he can to get me a change of clothes.

Five minutes later, we’re in the car and on our way, me breathing deeply as I feel another contraction start to come on. I ride through the pain of it, Sinclair giving me worried glances as I do, but the pain passes. We are quiet, Sinclair concentrating on the road, and me on relaxing between contractions, which...damn it, are they speeding up?

The streets are mostly clear as we drive through the city – everyone’s asleep now, anyway, and I close my eyes and try to relax, breathing deeply in anticipation of the pain that starts to flare in my back, the contraction that I know is about to rock through me.

Just as I feel the deep pulse of the pain begin, though, my eyes fly open as I hear Sinclair curse.

“What “I start, but the car twists suddenly to the side, skidding to a stop. And then, I scream.