

Accidental Surrogate

Chapter 295



I groan when I wake up, but I don't open my eyes. Not yet. I feel like I just closed them ten minutes ago anyway – my poor eyeballs need more rest.

Instead, I take a moment to feel my body from the inside out, to check in with myself and see what hurts, what feels good. I'm surprised to find that I can feel remnants of my mother's gift running through me – what feels like little sparkling tendrils of sunlight, working through my limbs, perhaps healing me. I smile to think of it, smile to think of my mother giving me something that lasts after so many years of her absence.

She is a mother goddess, after all the mother to us all, not just me. But still, as my actual mother, it feels nice to finally have...a piece of her.

I hear my little baby give a little cry and my eyes fly open, searching for him. I sit up in bed, a hand going to my head, and look blearily around..My eyes are drawn instantly – unsurprisingly – to the huge werewolf standing across the room, bouncing a little bundle of blankets in his arm. I smile at my mate's turned back and quickly climb out of bed, moving towards him.

Sinclair hears me coming and quietly turns, our little boy still fussing a little in his arms.

"Has he been like this long?" I ask, yawning, reaching for my child. Sinclair transfers him into my arms and I feel a quick rushing thrill at the feel of my baby returned to me.

"No," Sinclair replies with a smile. "He's been sleeping well – he just started crying now. Do you think he's hungry?"

I shrug and look up at him. "Probably. I know I am."

Together we carry Rafe back to the bed and I climb in, rearranging my top so that Rafe can try to eat. Sinclair quietly watches as I work and I let out a little sigh of relief when Rafe quickly latches and begins to suck. I watch him for a moment, instinctually doing a little check on our bond and receiving a little push of happiness and satisfaction back from him.

Suddenly, I begin to wonder something.

"Do you still have a bond with him?" I ask Sinclair, my eyes going wide.

He nods easily, his eyes still on the child.

"Do you still have one with your father?" I press further, curious. This brings his eyes up to me, frowning.

"Thave...a bond with my father, certainly," Sinclair responds. "But no – as you grow, the bond between parents and their children fades a bit. Once a child is able to speak and communicate their needs on their own, it's not necessary anymore."

My heart breaks a little bit at this news and Sinclair clicks his tongue and reaches out a hand to cup my cheek when he sees tears fill my eyes.

"I don't want to lose my bond with my child," I say, my voice trembling. "I can't bear the thought of that

"You won't" my mate assures me, shaking his head. "It just...changes. You and Rafe will always be tied, just in different ways. Besides, when he grows up and meets his own mate, do you really want to be feeling what he's feeling?" Sinclair raises his eyebrow at me and gives me a smirk.

I narrow my eyes at Sinclair and then down at my little baby. "No mates for you, Rafe," I scold. You're mama's boy, forever. I'm keeping you.'

Sinclair laughs. "You'll feel differently when he's a big hulking teenage wolf stinking up your house."

"No," I murmur, leaning down to kiss my baby's head. "I'm going to raise him to be a nice clean nerd, so no one likes him, and I get to keep him. No one will be good enough for him anyway." "All right," Sinclair murmurs, shifting his position on the bed and coming to lay next to me, closing his eyes. "Whatever you say, trouble." I smile at him, watching him drift off to sleep as the sunlight starts to brighten at the edges of the curtains. I suspect that he stayed up all night, rocking the baby in his arms, in order to let me sleep. So it's the least I can do now to let him have his own rest.

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Rafe falls asleep again soon after he finishes, and my baby pressed warm against my chest – I begin to drift off into a little half-daze as well. About an hour later, though, a little knock comes at the door, waking me. I hesitate and stand, not knowing what to expect, but as I move towards the door I see it creak open a little crack, someone peeking in.

"Oh, Dr. Hank!" I whisper, cheerful, stopping in the middle of the room and waving him forward. Come in!"

He does, giving me a warm smile, and glancing at Sinclair asleep in the bed. "How are you, Ella?" he asks, curious. He comes and looks down at the baby, reaching out a finger to stroke his cheek.

"We're doing well, I think." I reply, heaving a big yawn. "He's been surprisingly peaceful. Is that... normal?"

"It's not abnormal," Hank says with a little shrug. "Perhaps just lucky. The ambulance is outside waiting – are you ready to go to the hospital for your checkup?"

I nod, eager, suddenly feeling more awake. After a quick discussion, I agree to meet Hank at the palace entrance in a few minutes, after I wake Sinclair. He nods and goes out to let the guards and paramedics know the plan. Then, I move over to the wolf sleeping in the King's bed.

"Dominic," I whisper, running a hand lightly through his hair. "Wake up. Time to go."

"No," he murmurs, rolling over with a groan. "I'm going to be the king anyway. This is my bed. I'll just...stay here, until the coronation."

Plough, and then look around, a little surprised that I hadn't thought of that myself. I knew, of course, that these were the royal chambers, but all I really thought about was that they were the dead Prince's bedrooms...not that they could one day be my own. As I look around, I find that I have mixed feelings about the prospect. While I like the idea of always having access to the room where my son was born...

The idea of living here, in this place? Where there was so much violence?

Of being the queen of a world torn apart?

Of raising my son, and hopefully my future children, in that world?

I bite my lip, suddenly anxious about it.

"Hey," Sinclair says, and I feel him reach up to softly brush my arm. "All right?"

"Yes," I say, smiling down at him, Rafe's warm little body pressed against me. "Just...mom worries. I think I'll be having a lot of those, for the rest of my life."

"Not if I have anything to say about it," Sinclair murmurs, standing up from the bed and coming close to me, wrapping an arm around my shoulder and pulling me close against his chest. "We're going to get it all sorted, Ella," he whispers, kissing the top of my head.

I close my eyes, giving a little sigh, believing him but...knowing that that promise is going to be a hard fill.