

# Accidental Surrogate

Chapter 296



When we climb out of the ambulance, it seems like a whole team of doctors are waiting for us. I smile at them, a little anxious, as they come forward to escort us into the hospital and run us through our battery of checks. At my side I feel Sinclair shift into his Alpha protection mode, looking at everyone warily, glaring at anyone who comes even close to me and the baby.

I smirk when I notice it, glancing up at his stern and dangerous expression, but I don't dissuade him. Honestly, I kind of like it.

We are escorted quickly into a private room where Hank quickly consults with a panel of experts, clearly ordering a ton of tests. As he works, a smile breaks onto my face as I see Cora turn the corner.

"Cora!" I call, waving to her, Rafe fussing in my arms. Sinclair even glares at Cora as she approaches, though she gives him a curious little look that makes him check his expression.

"Sorry," he murmurs. "I'm feeling...protective."

"Understandable," she says, smiling and reaching for the baby. "Where is my little boy!"

"Heeere," I sing, carefully handling over the little bundle to his auntie. We dressed him, before we left, in the little cream sleep sack that we had packed in the hospital bag.

"Cutieeee," Cora coos, holding the baby close and peering down at his little face. She beams at him for a moment before looking up at me. "First night go okay?"

I tell her the details of our first night while Sinclair stands firmly at my side, letting me communicate everything. As I speak, Hank and his team begin to break up, preparing the various checks and treatments that I'll be receiving today. Then, he comes over to us.

"Okay, Ella," he says, giving me a smile. "The plan is that me and my team are going to ensure that you're perfectly healthy. And Cora and hers are going to make sure that Rafe is in top shape. It's going to take awhile but," he glances up at Sinclair quickly and shrugs, "I thought it best to check everything, rather than skimp."

"Damn right, you'll check everything," Sinclair growls, crossing his arms over his chest.

I look up at him and put a hand on his arm. "You need to cool it, Dom," I murmur, giving him a little smile. He sighs and nods, making me laugh. I can tell that he's on edge, fighting his new dad instinct to do everything he can – absolutely everything to protect his vulnerable mate and newborn child.

"It's all right," Hank says, smiling between us. "You're in good hands." Then, he nods at Cora, pausing a moment to place a warm hand on her back between her shoulder blades. I blink, a little surprised, when she simply nods and flinches away from his touch a little bit..

What's this? I think to myself, a little happiness building in my stomach. But then I chide myself for being happy that there might be discord in my sister's new relationship. You're team Cora, I remind myself. Team Cora, whatever that means for her. That's what side you're on.

But inside of me, my little wolf turns in a smug little circle, nudging me to let me know that she, at least, knows that I'm lying to myself. But I give her a little nudge in return and she curls up, content to see where this goes.

A few hours later, I'm dozing quietly in a hospital bed, waiting for test results.

Rafe is away in the newborn room next door with other babies who were born at the hospital yesterday and today, apparently to be monitored and to give me some time to rest, but I find that I'm restless without him near me. Still, my exhausted body takes advantage of the quiet and I do find myself dozing in and out of sleep.

Sinclair, apparently, has no such qualms about the baby being out of the room, and snores lightly next to me.

I'm instantly awake, though, when the door opens and Dr. Hank comes back into the room. "Sorry," he says, giving me a little grimace. "I didn't mean to wake you when you probably need the sleep.

"No," I sigh, tucking my hair behind my ears as I hear Sinclair stop snoring next to me and sit up in his chair. "It's all right – I didn't sleep well without the baby nearby anyway." I shrug. "Mom stuff."

"Wolf stuff, too," Hank murmurs, coming close to the bed. "It's very interesting – studies have shown that wolf mothers do indeed sleep better if they have physical contact with their child." He glances between my mate and me. "You two may want to consider systems of co-sleeping in a family bed."

I beam at the idea, turning to Sinclair to see what he thinks, but he just blinks blearily at me." Ella," he says, "you spent hundreds of dollars on bassinets – now you want to put the baby in the bed with us?"

"In the nest!" I exclaim, excited, clutching my hands under my chin with glee. Sinclair murmurs something about us being wolves, not birds, but I ignore him, turning my attention back to Hank. So, am I okay? Can I go home?"

He lifts a clipboard from the bottom of my bed, reading through some of the doctor reports there, and then nods happily to me. "I'm happy to report that you're doing beautifully, Ella. Strikingly healthy – perhaps more than can be expected, after a traumatic birth experience. But perhaps that can be attributed to...your gift? Or however that works."

I nod, understanding and accepting the mystery for what it is.

"If only all mothers had access to such a gift," Hank says, smiling at me warmly. "That would be quite a boon, wouldn't it?"

I nod, agreeing heartily, but then I freeze, suddenly struck with an idea...

But I'm interrupted by the door opening again, a nurse coming into the room with the baby.

I give a little cry of happiness when I see my child and open my arms towards the nurse, eager to hold him again.

"He's hungry," she says, smiling at me. I thank her and bring my child close to my chest, preparing to feed him again. Hank, a little awkward, clears his throat and turns away from me to give me privacy.

"So, if Cora gives you the okay to take him," Hank continues, looking up at the ceiling, "then you're free to go. And I'll see you in a couple of weeks!" With that, he turns towards the door, ready again

to leave without acknowledging that he's been with us again through one of the scariest and most traumatic moments of my life, that he's become an important person to me, and that he's dating my sister.

"Hank," I call to him before he can leave. He turns back to me, curious. I take a moment to look him clearly in the eyes, hoping he can see the depth of my warm feelings to him. "Thank you, Hank," I say, sincere.

He surprises me, then, by placing a hand to his heart and giving me a tiny little bow, the sort of genuflection that one would give to...well, to a queen. "It was my pleasure," he murmurs, true warmth in his voice. Sinclair and I both smile at him in return and he turns to leave again.

But, once more, I call him back.

"Hank?"

He pauses again at the door, turning towards me.

"What, precisely," I ask carefully, "are your intentions with my sister?"