

# Accidental Surrogate for Alpha by Caroline Above Chapter 303

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## #Chapter 303 – Dedicated to the Goddess

Ella

As a group, we head together into the darkness of the forest.

“Did we have to go somewhere so creepy for this?” I ask Sinclair, looking warily around the woods. Usually my wolf thrills to be under the canopy of the trees, but today, I can feel her wary inside

1. me.

“It’s a sacred space,” Sinclair explains, smiling down at me, placing one hand on my back to ensure that I don’t trip over any errant roots. “Are you feeling it too? The magic in the air?”

“How could I miss it,” I murmur, looking around. “This place is... thick with it.”

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It’s true – I can’t see anything in the air around us, but I’m certainly aware that this place is sacred. Either because it was always a special place, or made special due to the repeated process of bringing children here with the intent of dedication, this patch of forest is unique. Even the trees around us are just a little different – their trunks darker, thicker. The way that the branches twine up towards the sky is more elegantly twisted than I’ve seen elsewhere.

Overall it’s not a bad feeling just...different.

I glance over my shoulder at Cora, who I can see is uncomfortable. She’s the only human in the party today and, even though she doesn’t have a wolf who

can sense the magic like mine

can, I can tell that she, too, senses the difference of this place. I give her a warm smile which she returns, coming closer to my side.

“This place is weird,” she says softly, rubbing her hands up and down her arms as if she’s cold. “Scared,” I correct. “But yeah, sacred and weird.”

We take a little path deeper into the woods, worn flat enough by the passing of thousands of feet over the years that Henry’s chair has no trouble passing down it. When we lose sight of the vans behind us, so deep in the forest that the trees obscure our sight of the road, I see a figure ahead, dressed in silver robes.

“Welcome,” she calls to us, and I recognize the voice of the priestess who we met in the temple. We murmur our greetings when we come close and she bends down to smile at Rafe, who is still asleep in my arms.

“Are you ready?” The priestess asks me, and I feel a little twist in my stomach. Actually, I’m not ready – not at all. I haven’t been parted from Rafe since that day in the hospital where he slept in the nursery for a few hours. Since then, I haven’t been further than one room away from him, and even that I kept as short as possible. And now I was going to hand him over to his godparents to take him into the woods alone at night?

All of my motherly instincts scream at me to take my baby home and curl up warm and safe in bed, but the priestess gives me a warm smile, perhaps reading my mind. My wolf gives me a little nudge with her nose too, letting me know that it’s all right.

“As ready as I’ll ever be,” I sigh, still anxious. I feel Sinclair’s hand press more firmly against my spine, supporting me.

“The child?” she asks, putting out her hands in a request for me to hand him over to her. Sighing, I do, and then I wrap my arms around Sinclair’s waist, resting my head against his chest. I know that

Cora and Roger will take good care of Rafe but...until I have my baby back, I'm going to need to keep Sinclair close.

The priestess coos to the baby, who starts to fuss in her arms, and then nods to Cora and Roger, who each take a step forward. She holds the baby carefully against her as she begins the

ceremony in front of our gathered group of family and friends.

"Who presents this child for dedication?" she calls out, her voice steady and resonant.

"We do," Sinclair responds, his voice resonant and strong. "His mother and I."

The priestess nods deeply to us, part of the ritual, recognizing our intent. Then, she continues. "And who will carry this boy to meet the Goddess?"

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"We will," Roger responds, taking a few steps to stand next to Cora and surprising me by taking her hand. I look up at Sinclair, wondering if that's part of the ceremony or just Roger being Roger, but my mate's face gives nothing away. I turn to Cora, then, who looks just as surprised as me. The priestess nods to Roger and Cora in turn and then crosses to them, placing my baby in my sister's arms. "Take him," she says, waving a hand behind her into the forest. "Forward, to the pool. Let him bask in the light of the full moon so that he may know his Goddess. In return, she may give you insight into his future life. Take it for the gift that it is."

"We will," Roger replies, steady. Cora nods as well, less sure about what to say but certainly determined to do right by her nephew.

The priestess nods again and steps aside so that Cora and Roger can pass.

Then, together, my sister and Sinclair's brother carry Rafe into the forest. I watch them until they are swallowed by darkness, my heart in my throat. And then, when I can't see them anymore, I hold my breath and wait.

Cora

“You’d think,” I mutter, frustrated as I trip again over another root, “that they’d spend a little more time clearing the path to this pool, if people come out here every month to dedicate their children.”

“Here, give Rafe to me,” Roger replies, wanting to be helpful but irritated, a little, by my slow pace. If you fall you’ll crush him –”

“No!” I retort, glaring at him a little in the dark. “The priestess gave the baby to me, she wants me to carry him.”

“I’m sure that’s not what she meant, Cora,” Roger replies, his voice a little crabby. “And she’s not going to be happy if you give her back a flat pancake baby because you tripped

”

“Oh shut up,” I say under my breath, hastening my pace in my eagerness to get this over with. There’s no one I’d like to be alone in the woods with right now less than Roger Sinclair. But, I almost immediately trip over another root, stumbling in the darkness. Roger catches me in time, before I can indeed fall flat and crush the baby, grabbing me by the shoulders and steadying me.

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“All right?” he asks.

“Fine,” I bite out, embarrassed and determined to get this done. I shoot him another little glare, but he just laughs at me and takes his hands away, putting them up like a criminal caught at gunpoint.

“Sorry,” he says. “Next time I’ll let you fall.”

“Just... take the baby, okay?” I sigh, handing Rafe to Roger, who holds him awkwardly. It’s my time to laugh a little now, derisive to see him holding the child like a football.

He shoots me a little glare of his own in response. “I don’t...hold a lot of kids...” he murmurs, adjusting the fussing Rafe to try to make him more comfortable.

“Clearly,” I reply, crossing my arms and smirking at him.

“Let’s just go,” Roger sighs, starting off again into the woods.

I’m grateful, a few moments later, when I start to see the edges of a silver pool off in the distance.” Great,” I say, half to myself. “There’s the pool – now let’s go dedicate this kid and get this over with.”

“Agreed,” Roger replies, nodding and heading off ahead of me at a brisk pace.

“Hey!” I call after him, frustrated as he outstrips me. “Wait up!”