

ACCIDENTAL SURROGATE FOR ALPHA

Read Novel Accidental Surrogate Chapter 356

Accidental Surrogate Chapter 356-Ella

I find Cora, a little later, in the long room that we've turned into a hospital, working hard probably to distract herself. I grimace, a little, when I see that her bedside manner has certainly suffered in the wake of her frustration she's snapping at patients, glaring at them when they take too long to answer, and stalking from bed to bed. As I come into the room the men look towards me with desperate eyes.

I hold up my free hand – Rafe bundled in my other arm – to the men, letting them know that I'll handle it, and then I walk calmly over to my sister's side.

"Hey Cora," I say casually, looking down at the clipboard in her hand on which she's writing in her messy doctor's scrawl. Cora doesn't respond, just glares at me and turns her attention back to the clipboard.

I scoff a little at her and bump my shoulder against hers, a little pissed off now. "Why don't we try that again, Cora," I say, through my teeth a little. "Hello, Cora. How are you?"

"I'm not speaking to you, Ella," Cora snaps, shaking her head and continuing to write. "Or my stupid mate, or yours. Or their dad."

"What about Rafe," I ask, adjusting the baby so that she can see him more clearly.

Cora flicks her eyes to Rafe, who looks up at her with his big sweet eyes, and she hesitates a little. "Rafe is fine," she mutters, "he did not betray me. Unlike the rest of you."

"Plus he's cute," I say, grinning down at him. But Cora scoffs and turns away, angry that I am ignoring her point: that we betrayed her by accusing Hank.

"Cora!" I sigh, calling after her and then hurrying to keep up. "Listen, I'm sorry I really am! You know I like Hank I like him a lot! I was very team Hank for a minute there, and I was the only one! But we have to be vigilant about this, and you know that Henry had some good points!"

She whirls on me then. “You think that he could seriously fool me, Ella?” she asks, folding her arms across her chest, holding the clipboard close against her. “Do you seriously think I have such a bad taste in men that I would honestly sleep with someone who was trying to kidnap my nephew?”

Out of the corner of my eye I see the wounded man in the bed closest to me flinch, his eyes going wide with awkward surprise. But I do my best to ignore him and keep this between me and my sister.

“No, Cora,” I say, reaching out and putting a hand on her arm to assure her but also to keep her from running away from me again. “Seriously I don’t think that Hank did anything! I just think that Henry has a point – that we need to double-check everything before we trust people! I mean, they wouldn’t even let me call you when we first got the anonymous note that someone was going to try to take Rafe!

They’re just being vigilant!” Cora scowls, looking away from me but clearly seeing my point. “Well, that was bullshit too,” she murmurs.

“Which I told them!” I say, taking my hand away and beginning to bounce Rafe a little bit, who is getting agitated now, probably because of my frustration. “But they checked anyway! Honestly, Cora,” I say, taking a deep breath and trying to bring all of our energy back down to a reasonable level, “what’s the harm in letting them be careful, in letting them check? Hank is going to come out of it clean. So, what does it hurt?”

“It hurts me, Ella,” Cora says quietly, looking into my face for the first time. “I already hurt Hank – and he did nothing wrong. And now he has people hurling these accusations at him, which he totally doesn’t deserve! He’s my colleague, and my friend – and a good person! And I’m vouching for him, and nobody believes me!”

I step closer to my sister now, my heart hurting to see her feeling this way, to hear her voice get all squeaky with emotion.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper to her, putting my arm around my sister and pulling her close. “I’m sorry, Cora. I won’t doubt you again. Okay? Forgive me.”

“There’s nothing to forgive,” she sighs, giving me a squeeze and then pulling away as she wipes at her eyes. “You’re just – just trying to protect your baby.” And I see her unconsciously move the clipboard lower on her body, her hand moving to her stomach.

“That’s right,” I say, turning my head to look down at the baby. “He’s been very troublesome since he’s been born. Look what you’ve done now, baby!” I joke, trying to bring a little levity to the situation. “Your simple existence has inspired a war that has resulted in accusations that have hurt your auntie’s feelings! You apologize, now!” And then I hold Rafe up towards Cora, as if he could actually utter a formal apology.

Rafe, suddenly surprised at the change in his position, lets out a little squeak of surprise, which makes Cora laugh. She shakes her head, smiling now, and reaches for the baby, taking him from my hands. “Nooo, not my nephew,” she says, cradling him against her arm and smiling down at him. “Don’t listen to her, Rafe, it’s not your fault.”

And I grin as my baby wrinkles his little face and sighs, honestly as if a grave injustice has been done to him, and we both laugh again.

“Okay,” Cora says, sighing and looking up at me. “Thanks, Ella,” she whispers. “I think...I think you snapped me out of it a bit.”

“Good,” I say, reaching to take the baby back. “Roger will be glad to hear it. And so will all of your poor patients.” “What?” she asks, and then she looks around the room to see that all of them are staring at us and have been listening to every word we said. “Oh my god,” she mutters, putting her head in her hand and laughing.

“It’s okay,” I say, grinning and putting a hand on her back. “Now that they’re fairly sure you won’t murder them for taking too long reporting their symptoms, I think we’ll make good progress!”

Cora gives me a little glare but she moves on from it, lifting the clipboard again and looking over its contents. “I have so much to do,” she murmurs, flipping through some of the papers. They need a lot of care -”

“Can I help?” I ask, eager to pitch in. Cora looks up at me and blinks. “You want to play nurse again?”

“Sure!” I say, a little excited. “Just give me a minute to give Rafe to Sinclair, all right? Then you will have my full attention.”

Cora smiles at me then and nods. “It would be a big help, Ella,” she replies. If you can spare the time.”

“For you, sister?” I say, giving her a wink as I turn away. “I’ll make the time.”

Accidental Surrogate Chapter 357-Ella

Cora wasn’t kidding when she said that there was a lot to do for the wounded men. Honestly, I underestimated her – or she’s a much faster and better worker for me, because I fall into bed at the end of each day totally wiped, asleep before Sinclair can even say goodnight to me.

The boys are busy too and I feel a little sorry for Cora and Roger, honestly. They should be living in a newly-mated newly-pregnant love bubble right now, and instead she’s spending all day healing while he’s trapped in a boardroom with his brother and his father, trying to figure out how to defeat my estranged uncle.

“How can you feel sorry for them,” Sinclair says to me when I take a break to feed Rafe. He comes to spend these little stolen moments with me, knowing that they’re some of the only moments I’ll be able to sit and concentrate on something else for a few minutes. “It’s not like you and I got to enjoy any kind of love bubble.”

“Yes we did,” I say, frowning at him. “Dominic, we had so much sex in those first few months when we discovered I was pregnant -”

“Sure,” he says, a little sarcastic as he draws his brows together. “Between me accusing you of stealing my sperm, and then the constant attacks, and then having to flee the country – yeah, totally had a peaceful little love bubble somewhere in there.”

I laugh as I consider it, shaking my head and looking down at my sweet hungry baby. “I don’t know,” I say, giving a little shrug. “It was all wonderful to me. But maybe I just forget all the horrible parts as some side effect of pregnancy – like how mothers have to forget the pain of birth, or else they’d never do it again.”

Sinclair moves closer to me, putting an arm around me to let me and Rafe lean close against his broad, muscled chest. “Or,” he murmurs, “it could be that the pleasure was just so good that it completely overshadowed the pain

“Oh yes,” I murmur back, smirking a little. “Clearly, Dominic, the sex is so good that I barely remember my nearly -fatal injuries

He laughs now, shaking his head, and we both shrug it off, knowing that it doesn't matter. That we wouldn't trade any of what we went through for something different. Because it's worth it all of it is worth it.

And I keep that idea in my heart as I spend hour after hour trailing behind Cora, tending to the poor men who were willing to sacrifice their health in the effort to save my little boy. The hours feel endless – changing bandages, administering medicine, checking in with the men to see how they're recovering –

Honestly, I'm shocked by it, a little bit – especially the idea that Cora deemed three men too far beyond her ability to care for and sent them away. Because, honestly, some of these men seem to be doing pretty poorly – it baffles me to consider that there are some who were even worse.

“Should we send some of these men to Hank, Cora?” I ask late one afternoon, wiping the sweat from my brow. “Can we – can we really handle this?”

“We should keep them here, Ella,” Cora says quietly, “unless they need critical care. Hank – and all the other hospitals – they're totally overwhelmed as it is with the aftermath of the war. These men- they're on the mend, if not slowly. And Roger and Sinclair brought in enough medicine to keep us going. I know it looks bad but,” she sighs, looking around the room at all the men we're helping. “They'll get through it.”

“Should it be taking this long?” I whisper, concerned. “Roger and Sinclair...”

She nods, biting her lip, understanding me. “I don't know. I'm used to our mates' fast healing too but Ella, they're both pretty remarkable, powerful specimens.”

“I heal fast too, though,” I murmur.

“Yah,” she says, rolling her eyes at me a little. “Probably the goddess blood in you,” “Your blood too,” I murmur, poking her in the shoulder.

She nods, letting it pass, but she does look over the men with some concern. It does seem to be taking longer than I'd expect it to as well...” she sighs, looking down at her battered clipboard as if it holds the answers. “Maybe there was something in the spell designed to inhibit the healing...”

“If only we all had a little bit of the goddess blood,” I murmur, looking around. “It seems unfair.” Cora looks up suddenly and blinks, turning to me.

“What?” I ask, turning to her as well.

“Actually,” she says, cocking her head a bit. “Well, can you, Ella?”

“Huh?” I ask again, totally confused.

“It goes back to something Hank said once,” Cora says, suddenly excited. “On the night when he came over to my -” she hesitates for a moment, place – and blushes a little, and I suddenly know precisely the night she means. I grin at her and she swats a hand at me, moving on.

“Seriously – he asked me if I thought that you might want to go into the medical field. So that you could, maybe, use our mom’s gift to heal people – ”

“Oh,” I say, my eyebrows raising in surprise. And then I look down at myself, a little ridiculously, as if I could see the gift floating around in my chest or something. Then I frown, wondering.

“Do you think you could do it?” Cora asks, excited and a little breathless. “I don’t know,” I say, snapping my head up to look at her. “I mean, I’ve only used it to heal myself. Do you think it can go...outward?”

“Well, we know it can go outward- you gave it to me, and then I used it to to do whatever I did. I don’t know. communicate to everyone.”

“Yeah,” I say, frowning a little, “but was that a healing?” Cora just shrugs, staring at me, and then we both laugh because we both feel a little stupid trying to figure this out.

“Honestly,” I murmur, “mom could have given us like, a little instructions pamphlet, couldn’t she?”

“Not her style,” Cora sighs, shaking her head. “But Ella...what do you think? Does it feel like you could?”

“I don’t know,” I wonder, my hands pressing to my chest where I can feel the constant, steady, warm glow of it – so familiar that I frequently forget it’s there. “But maybe we should try?”

“Okay!” Cora says, excited, and then she starts flipping through her paperwork, trying to think through which of the injured men might be the best candidate to get to work on. But as Cora begins to narrow down our selection, I feel my wolf nudge me a little with her nose, trying to get my attention.

What? I ask, curious, but feeling a little of her anxiety and suspicion start to bleed through into my own feelings. What’s wrong?

Not right, not right, she says, narrowing her eyes a little and turning in a tight circle around the gift, protective and wary. Why is that man asking questions about our gift? It’s our gift. It’s not his gift. He can’t have it.

I blink in surprise at the thought, but suddenly I’m wondering it myself. What was Hank doing asking Cora questions about my gift when they were on a date?

Was he just being a good medical health professional and identifying an incredible power that could be harnessed for the good of many, instead of being hogged by me?

Or was he asking for...other reasons? And is my wolf only suspicious now because Henry put the idea in our heads that we should be wary of Hank? Or is the act of asking suspicious in itself?

Cora whips her head up then, grinning at me with excitement as she points towards one of the men across the room. “This one is perfect,” she breathes, and then hurries off towards his bed, signaling me to follow.

I hurry after her, eager to help – and suddenly a wave of guilt runs through me. Didn’t I just promise Cora that I’d trust her instincts about Hank?

But still, my little wolf continues to prowl, and I honestly don’t know where this suspicion comes from. Is it just me being paranoid, and turning that paranoia on a good man?

Or is Hank asking weird questions to the woman he knew was least likely to suspect him of getting up to anything strange?

Accidental Surrogate Chapter 358-Ella

I push my suspicions aside as I come to Cora's side as she explains to Conner – the bright, red-haired young man who noticed that the men who attacked me didn't transform into their wolves – our plan.

"Sure," he says, blinking up at both of us when Cora asks if he'd be willing to let me try to heal him with the Goddess power. "Um," he says next, hesitating a little, "does it hurt?"

"Um," I reply, rubbing an anxious hand up and down my arm, "I don't think so? But then again, I've only tried it on myself?" I look over at Cora to see if she has any ideas, but she just shrugs.

"Consider it a very experimental treatment," Cora says, turning back to Conner. "But I think Ella is right – it never seemed to hurt her before, when she used it. Or that one time I used it. But if it works!" she gives him a big smile now, "I think you will be a very happy little guinea pig!"

"Guinea pig?" he asks, confused. "Will I is this going to transform me into a guinea pig!?"

"No," I say, laughing and sitting down on the edge of his bed, reaching for his arm, which he pulls away from me in sudden anxiety. "Seriously!" I say, laughing still. "That's just a common phrase – you don't know it? Maybe it's a human phrase. For like, a creature who gets experimented on first."

"Oh," Conner says, relaxing a little but still looking at us warily. But then he nods, letting us know that he's on board. "Just a lot of strange....magic, I guess, these days. Magic that I don't think we've had a lot of exposure to before."

"You're telling me," Cora murmurs, checking some final details as she runs a hand over her stomach, which is hosting what we can best describe as the first human-wolf hybrid pup ever conceived.

Conner doesn't get it, but I do, and I give her a bright grin, which she returns. "Okay!" she says. "Conner, can we try it on the burn on your arm?" she asks, pointing to the gauze on his right forearm. "I think that's a minor enough wound that it could be a good place to experiment."

"Okay," he says, moving to unwrap it. I lean eagerly forward, but regret it immediately when he pulls the gauze away, wincing as he reveals an angry, wet red wound. I sit back again, grimacing at it, reminded again of why I didn't

become a nurse. But then I steel myself and sit closer, looking up at Cora.
“How do I start?”

She just shrugs at me, as lost as I am. “I don’t know, Ella,” she says, waving a vague hand at me. “Do your... meditation thing. Access the gift. Or whatever.”

“Okay,” I agree with a little shrug. And then because it feels strange not to be doing anything to engage with the wound, I reach out and hover my hands over Conner’s arm as I close my eyes.

It’s easier to fall into the state than it has been before – maybe because I’m not wounded, or growing a child, or stressed in any real way. This time, the relaxation comes almost immediately and I find myself sinking quite deeply into that space where the light behind my eyes turns a light lavender.

“You’ve got it, Ella,” Cora whispers next to me, and I can tell that she’s excited but working hard not to distract me too much. “You’re glowing. Now, do you feel like you can direct it?”

I take another deep breath and, when I exhale, I begin to seek for pain. I feel the gift move then, as it’s done before – it sweeps through me first, seeking to heal anything, but when it doesn’t find anything it...pulses a little, curious, almost wondering why I’ve called on it.

And so I give it a little push, asking it to look...further than me. To go outside. And it feels, a very little bit, like the time that I passed it to Cora – though it’s hard to compare, because I had been so weak at that time.

But now, when I’m strong, I feel like I have so much more control – like I don’t have to shove the entire gift into someone’s hands before I collapse under the weight of it. But instead, like I can just take a piece of it, and move it forward to where –

To where I can begin to feel a very real pain in front of me, radiating up towards my hands. And so I give it a little nudge, and push the gift towards it, and I feel it flowing from my hands.

Next to me, I hear Cora gasp, and Conner inhale sharply, but I do my very best to not let myself be drawn away, to continue with my steady little push until I feel...

Until I feel the pain beneath my hands cool, and ebb, and steady. Until I can't feel it at all. And then I pull my hands back, and lay them in my lap, and take a few deep breaths as I allow the lavender light to fade behind my eyes. And then I open my eyes and look around.

And Cora and Conner are staring at me, their jaws wide open. "Did it work?" I breathe, curious. And neither say a word, so I dart my eyes downward at Conner's arm-

And my own mouth falls open.

His wound it's...

It's gone. I blink, shocked, and lean forward, grabbing his arm – which makes poor Conner jump – so that I can bring it closer to my eyes. And as I study it I realize that the wound is not gone it's just...fixed. The skin has closed over what was a few moments before a pussy, bloody burn. And it's not as if the magic has unmade the wound and returned the arm to its former state –

It really, honestly looks as if it just healed it. On Conner's arm is a new patch of flesh, still tender and pink and hairless, without any of the freckles that cover the rest of his arm.

"Oh my god," I breathe, staring at it, and then up at Cora, and then over at Conner.

And when I see the bright smile on his face, the tears in his eyes, I burst into joyful laughter myself, hardly able to believe it. And then Cora lets out a shriek of joy and throws herself on top of me in a crazy hug, knocking me back against the bed and poor Conner's legs as she, too, laughs with joy.

"It's a miracle!" she shouts, so excited she stumbles over the words. "It's incredible! Ella! Think of what you could do!"

"I know!" I yell, giddy with excitement for it and hugging my sister close to me. Then men in the room are all turned towards us now, even those at the far side of the room who probably had no idea what we were trying –

And, as they figure it out- that they could start feeling better so soon if I'm able to keep doing this smiles spread across their own faces.

“Are you okay?” I ask Conner when Cora lets me sit up straighter, our arms still wrapped excitedly around each other. “Did it hurt – does it hurt?”

“It’s fine,” he says, holding his arm up in front of his face and marveling at it. “It didn’t hurt at all – I mean, it was tingly – and a little cold – but it’s amazing – it’s totally fixed!”

“Ahh!” I yell, excited, and I squeeze Cora closer in my excitement.

“Thank you,” Conner breathes, and my heart squeezes when I see tears start to streak down his face. “Thank you so much, Luna,” he says, shaking his head. at me in wonder.

“I’m so glad,” I say, reaching out and squeezing his hand. “So glad, Conner.”

And I bite my lip and smile at him, and he smiles back, and then suddenly I’m jumping to my feet almost spilling 1 Cora to the floor –

“What!” Cora shouts, laughing. “Ella, what are you -”

“I’m going to tell Sinclair!” I shout, dashing towards the door. “I’ll be back!” I call over my shoulder to her, to all of them. “I’ll be right back!”

And I can barely contain my excitement as I sprint down the hall towards the conference room, where I know the boys are working hard, trying to come up with a plan.

Accidental Surrogate Chapter 359-Sinclair

Everyone’s head snaps up and towards the door as we hear the footsteps pounding down the hall towards the closed door of the conference room. I can feel the aggression fill the air – almost smell it, even as all around me hackles raise and teeth are bared at the sudden noise at what sounds like an assailant –

Next to me, Roger begins to raise from his seat, his eyes fixed on the door, ready to attack whatever comes through –

But instantly I grab his collar, shoving him back down into his seat. “Down!” I order, my voice ringing out with Alpha command, and heads instantly turn to me, obedient but confused-

But I just shake my head a little bit, my eyes fixed on the door. Because I know those footsteps, know their cadence. Only Ella would barrel heedlessly towards a room of wary male wolves who can't see or smell their attacker –

But I barely have time to heave half a sigh before she bursts through the door, shouting “Dominic!”

Everyone in the room jumps to the feet, but I'm already halfway across the room to her, grabbing her out of the air as she leaps up at me, catching her in my arms and turning to snarl at my men, warning them to contain themselves –

But Ella, true to form, doesn't even notice the fact that she scared the hell out of all of us that she almost got herself torn to ribbons –

Instead, she barrels heedlessly forth in her excitement. “Dominic!” she says again, laughing, grabbing my face in her hands and turning it towards her. “It's a miracle! I did it! You have to come and see! I'm going to do it again! I'm going to fix them all!”

“Ella,” I growl, patting down my own Alpha instincts and trying, simultaneously, to listen to her and look towards my men to ensure that no one is doing anything stupid in their panic –

“Come on!” she says, wiggling wildly in her struggle to get out of my arms. You have to come and see! Bring the baby! We'll show him too!”

“What?” I ask, turning my attention back to her once I've assessed that my men are not on the edge of an attack, despite her heedless burst into the room. “What are you talking about?”

“Put me down!” she orders, laughing and still struggling in my arms. I blink, trying to process what's happening, but I obey, putting her back down on her feet. She instantly dashes away to where Rafe is sleeping in his carrier on the floor, grabbing it by the handle and then running back to me, snatching up my hand and working to pull me along with her.

“Come on!” she calls again, her glee and energy infectious despite the fact that she hadn't even looked around the room to see if she's disturbed us, let alone figured out how much –

I glance at Roger and my dad to see them laughing a little and shaking their heads, and then I sigh and let Ella pull me from the room, figuring that the risk is gone and she is clearly not going to let whatever this is rest until she tells me what she's discovered-

"Ella," I say as she pulls me out of the room, leaning back a little to put my weight in my heels to slow her. "Where are we going what happened?"

"I did it!" she says, looking over her shoulder at me gleefully and pulling harder at my hand. "You have to come and see! It's amazing!"

"Ella!" I say again, harsher now, stopping completely but not letting go of her hand so that she's obliged, against her will, to turn back and frown at me. "Slow down for a second! Just explain! Please!"

And, seeing my real confusion, Ella shakes her head, laughs again, and then turns fully to me to explain. "Cora had an idea!" she says. "Actually, Hank did! But that's not important!"

I frown, suddenly, at the mention of his name. But she barrels onward and I let her. "I used my mother's gift and I healed someone, Dominic!" she says, beaming up at me. "It was so easy! I just ...accessed the gift! And nudged it towards his wound! And he's fixed! And I can do it again, and again, and I can fix all of them!"

My mouth drops open as I listen and I figure out what she's saying. "What?" I gasp, my eyes going wide. "Are you are you serious, Ella?" I ask, looking sharply down the hall towards the little makeshift medical center we set up. If she's serious – if she can use the Goddess' gift to heal the men – it could change everything –

"Yes!" she says, laughing again and coming close to me, pressing herself against me and looking up warmly into my face. "I did it!"

"Miracle," I murmur, shaking my head as I look down at her, marveling at my little mate. "You're a miracle, trouble."

"I know," she says, wrinkling her nose at me and then laughing. But suddenly she's moving again, tugging me down the hall. "Come on! I want you to see it!"

The next few minutes are as amazing as she suggested that they would be. Some of what Ella does is familiar – I've seen her access the gift before, after all, and heal herself. But seeing the glow spread from her body to another's? Seeing a terrible, disfiguring wound knit itself together before my eyes in mere moments?

I'm breathless with amazement by the time she opens her eyes again and grins at me.

"See?" she whispers up at me. "Isn't it cool?" I stare at her a little, amazed again by her powers of understatement, but all I can do is shake my head in wonder.

"The possibilities," Cora says, eagerly flipping through her papers and looking around at the men to decide who should be next. "They're

remarkable – I mean, clearly you can do this with fresh wounds, Ella, but can you do it with disease? Could you seek and destroy cancerous cells? Could you

Ella gasps with excitement and anticipation at the possibilities, jumping up to talk more with her sister, but I go pale when I consider the extent of this.

Because if Ella's access to her mother's gift makes her able to heal not only wounds, but other things as well? And people find out about it?

I grit my teeth and narrow my eyes at all of the people who I know, already, would see her as a valuable target.

While my sweet, generous mate can only see this newly-discovered power for the possibilities it offers to bring life and happiness to suffering people....

I know that the world is filled with people far worse than she. Who will see to take her, and keep her, and use her for their own ends.

And as I consider this consider how I'd rip them all to shreds – my eyes drift to my baby boy, still sleeping in his carrier despite the racket his mother is making. I can't help but smirk a little at him, realizing that he has perhaps already learned to simply cope with some of his mother's extremes rather than objecting to them.

But beyond that joy my child gives me, beyond the love I feel for him, the worry of what his life holds twists in me. Because the Goddess's blood runs through his veins as well. What if he has access to this kind of power? To even half of it?

If he does, people are going to come for him too. They've already started – but more will come. And I will protect them both until the end of me – but will it be enough?

Read Novel Accidental Surrogate Chapter 360

Accidental Surrogate Chapter 360-I heal for hours that afternoon, long into the night. I stop and take breaks of course for dinner, to feed and spend a little time with Rafe, to consult with Cora about our next steps – but then I'm back to it. Talking to the men to see what hurts worst, accessing the gift, holding out my hands to fix them.

It's incredible how much I get done, how much healing I perform as the day passes. By the time Sinclair puts his hands on my shoulders, proud but stern, I feel as if half of the room of terribly wounded men has been healed completely and the others are well on their way.

"Enough, trouble," Sinclair murmurs to me and I gasp and twist to look up at him. "What?" I ask, confused. "But there's so much more "

"Enough," he says, shaking his head at me. "It's ten o'clock – "

"What?" I gasp, truly surprised. I had no idea that the time had passed so quickly. I honestly thought it was earlier –

"Please," he says softly, low enough so that only I can hear. "Stop now, Ella. They'll all survive the night. They'll make it till morning, when you can start again."

I stop, trying to listen to him, but as I look around the room I feel so guilty. How can I let these men to go sleep in pain? How can I possibly curl up in my own bed, comfortable with my mate and my baby, knowing they won't be able to sleep because they got hurt trying to protect my son? When if I just pushed a little further I could heal them –

“That’s it,” Sinclair snaps, perhaps sensing my guilt and anxiety, and before I can protest further he scoops me up in his arms, shaking his head down at me.

“Dominic!” I protest, frowning up at him. “Put me down! I’m not even tired yet! I can-

“Ella,” he says, his voice still stern, you have done enough for one day. And you don’t know what toll this gift takes on your body or if it takes a toll on = itself. Does it need to regenerate? Do you need to sleep for three days to build back your strength?”

I hesitate now, realizing that he has a point. We have no idea how this works, if there will be a cost to me. Honestly, considering that, I’m surprised he let me work as long as I did.

“Moderation, little mate,” he murmurs to me, turning me towards the door where Cora waits with little Rafe curled up in her arms.

“We’ll start again tomorrow,” Cora says, smiling at me and handing me my baby even though I’m still held lightly in Sinclair’s arms. “You did amazing today, Ella!” And I grin at her, happy to see that her own face reflects my excitement. The things we could do with this power

But Sinclair just nods to Cora and carries me from the room, even as I call goodbyes and goodnights to the men still laying in their beds. He doesn’t put me down, in fact, until we get to our little metal bedroom door – and then I think he only does so because neither of us have a free hand to turn the doorknob.

“In,” he urges once the door is open, pressing a hand to the small of my back and ushering me inside. I do as he says, cooing down to Rafe, who burbles sleepily in my arms. As soon as I get the baby ready for bed and down in his cradle, Sinclair takes my hand and directs me again, this time towards the bathroom.

“So bossy tonight,” I laugh, letting him guide me, and he shoots me a little glaring smile over his shoulder as he brings me into the bathroom. He doesn’t turn the lights on and I’m glad he doesn’t the bathroom only has horrible florescent light bulbs. Instead, Sinclair just turns on the shower in the dark and begins to strip himself down. And then, once he’s finished, he peels off my clothes piece by piece and nudges me towards the shower.

I take his suggestion silently, stepping into the steaming water and taking a deep breath. Sinclair follows, wrapping his arms around me and letting me rest against him as I let the hot water do its work, letting it relax me, letting me realize how tired I really am.

“How do you feel?” Sinclair murmurs, his voice barely audible above the pounding of the water.

“Tired,” I sigh in reply, winding my arms around him, enjoying the press of his wet skin against mine. “You were right. I – I’m more tired than I thought I was.”

“Is it bad?” he asks, going a little tense beside me. “Do we need to -”

“No,” I interrupt, shaking my head. “It’s a good tired – like after a busy day. But you’re right – my adrenaline was running me. It’s it’s good. To take a minute.”

Sinclair murmurs his affirmation, which rumbles warm in his chest, and then moves away from me for a minute to get some supplies. And then, to my delight and surprise, my mate begins to soap my body down, his movements soft but efficient.

“It’s incredible what you can do, Ella,” Sinclair says as he works the soap over my back. “But we have to be careful with it. Both for any tolls it takes on your body and...”

I open my eyes now, turning towards him. “And?” I ask, confused. “And what?”

“Ella,” he sighs, looking down at me. “I’m worried that...well, that if people find out what you can do...”

“Oh,” I say, my eyes going wide. And I look towards the door, to where our baby is asleep in the next room. I want, quite suddenly, to have my eyes on him again. “You think that...”

“I think that if everyone knew what you could do,” Sinclair confirms gently, that people would want to direct you to use the gift how they see fit. By force, if necessary.”

My face falls, then, as I realize that he’s right. At the disappointment that I feel, that some would see this gift as a point of control instead of for the ways that it

could help. My heart sinks, suddenly – with exhaustion, with disappointment, with wanting, terribly, for things to just be better – for things to be right –

“It’s all right,” Sinclair whispers, pulling me against him again, and I close my eyes and take a deep breath, trying to believe him. “It will be all right.”

“So, we’ll keep it a secret,” I say quietly after a few moments. “Not forever, though, yes?” I ask, looking up at him. “Sinclair – I can’t I can’t keep this to – myself forever, not if it can help people. I can’t live like that.”

“I know, love,” he murmurs to me, looking down into my face in the dim light. “But until we have more control...”

I nod, agreeing. “Until we have more control.” Sinclair watches me carefully when we get up the next morning, as I change and feed Rafe and get the day started.

“I feel fine!” I say to him, smiling and laughing, knowing that he’s waiting for me to collapse or something.

“And the gift?” he asks as he stands from the bed, still wary. “Does it feel...I don’t know. Intact?”

I take a moment to pause, closing my eyes and checking in on myself. “It feels,” I say, considering, truly trying to assess. Then I open my eyes and shrug at him. “Honestly, Dominic, it feels like it always has. I don’t feel like any of it has been lost in the effort to heal the men, if that’s what you’re asking. I don’t think it works like that.”

“How do you think it works?” Sinclair asks, moving to the little table that holds our clothes and starting to get dressed for the day.

“I think the gift is an expression of the Goddess’ love,” I say, picking Rafe up from the little table we’ve designated as his changing table once he’s ready to go. “I think it’s limitless.”

“Interesting,” Sinclair murmurs, pulling a shirt over his head. He opens his mouth to say more, but suddenly there’s a knock at the door. Frowning a little, Sinclair moves over to it and pulls it open, revealing Henry there, his face serious.

“Hello, Henry,” I call, moving over and turning Rafe in my arms so that grandfather and grandson can say good morning. Henry can’t help the smile that comes to his face when he sees Rafe, but it’s short lived.

“Good morning, Ella, Dominic,” he says. “Would you be so kind as to come to the conference room? We have much to discuss.”

“Oh,” I say, looking up at Sinclair. “I was going to go to the medical room – ”

“I understand that you are doing important work there, Ella,” Henry says, leaning forward to catch my attention again. “I won’t keep you for long. But please – it is important. Roger and Cora are already there.”

“We’ll be there,” Sinclair says, nodding quickly to his dad. “Just a minute, to finish getting dressed. All right?”

Henry nods and rolls his chair away, heading back to the conference room, as I look up at Sinclair in wonder.

What on earth could be happening now?