Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 416

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#Chapter 416-Awake Ella

I'm up very early the next morning, my mind instantly on poor Sarah, poor Jessica, somewhere in the palace, probably worried

about what on earth is coming next.

I slowly pull my body from its warm place at Sinclair's side, grimacing as I try not to disturb him as much as I can – he's so cute,

my big tough Alpha, all vulnerable and sleeping and "Just go, Ella," he murmurs, his eyes still shut. I laugh a little, softly –

Because of course he felt me go every sense is attuned to me, to my safety. his

"All right, Dominic," I murmur, leaning in to press a very soft kiss to his mouth. "But you stay asleep."

"Noo problem," he whispers, and then turns over as I roll to my side of the bed and quickly stand up. I give him a little glance

over my shoulder – admiring the tanned muscles of his back for just a second – before leaning down to pick up my little baby.

Rafe is, as he usually is, awake and quiet, waiting for me to come and get him as I always do.

"Lovely little baby," I murmur to him, nudging him with my nose as I take him over to his changing table to get him started for his

day. "How did I get so lucky as to have such a good boy? Not even crying in the morning, so his mama can rest."

Rafe gives a happy little squeal that makes me laugh, but it also makes me glance over my shoulder at my mate- because I don't

want to wake him. But Sinclair stays still, his shoulders moving gently with his soft breathing.

Good – I want him to get his rest.

I change Rafe as quickly as I can and then take him into our gigantic closet to feed him while I pick out my clothes for the day.

When Rafe's finished eating I'm about to put him into his car seat so that I can take a shower, but a dark shadow falls over me.

"Give him here," Sinclair murmurs, and I turn to smile at him as I hand the baby over.

"How did you know?" I ask, curious.

"Baby told me," Sinclair says, smirking down at Rafe. "What!?"

"Down the bond," Sinclair clarifies, leaning close to give me a kiss on the cheek. "He didn't want to go in the car seat. He called for me." "Clever baby," I say, a little awed as I peer at my son, who burbles happily up at his dad. "That's amazing."

"He just wants to be held," Sinclair says, giving a little shrug. "When you go to put him down, he calls for me instead of crying,

like a human baby would. Not that amazing – just a... different way of letting his parents know what he wants and needs." Then

he heads back to the bed with the baby, probably to check his phone and relax, while I take my shower and get dressed. When I

come out, Sinclair passes Rafe back to me and then gets ready himself and I dress the baby.

The result of this early morning is that we're the first ones in the sunny breakfast room in which we'll be meeting Sarah and

Jessica. I tab my fingers on the table, staring at the door, before Sinclair places a passive hand on mine, making me stop.

"You're not going to hurry them by worrying about it," he murmurs, looking down at his phone, where he's fielding about a

thousand messages from the hundreds of ventures he's started working on since our return from the bunker. I scowl, knowing that he's right, but hating it anyway. So rather than sit still, I take Rafe from the table to a small living area on the

far side of the room and spread out a little blanket for us so that we can have a little play time before everyone else arrives.

I laugh for nearly half an hour straight as I play with my little boy, marveling at him. He's just...already gotten so big, I can't

believe it. And he's so bright, and sweet, and cheerful – god, I can barely believe that he's mine. He's fulfilled every wish I ever

had about a mom – and beyond that, has allowed me to access a level of love and joy that I honestly didn't know I was capable

of.

"Sweet baby prince," I murmur to him, leaning over to blow a raspberry on his little belly. "Do you know how cute you are!? And

how much we love you!?"

Rafe gives a little squeal of affirmation and I feel a pulse down our bond – a little happy joy from his heart to mine.

"Oh my goodness," I murmur, laying down on the floor next to him, bringing my face close to his and letting him reach out his little pudgy hands to touch my cheeks and my nose. As he does, I smile so hard it hurts. "Little baby Rafe," I murmur, kissing his

hands. "You are everything to me."

"I don't know about this," a voice above me says, and I jump a little and then laugh when I see Sinclair standing above us, his

arms crossed over his chest in mock anger. "I don't know if I like the idea of this little guy stealing my best girl's heart."

I laugh harder, sitting up.

"Seriously," Sinclair says, leaning over and pretending to talk to Rafe alone now, who just giggles up at him." You'd better knock

it off, kid – it used to be me she talked to that way -" "Don't be jealous," I sigh, taking Sinclair's hand and tugging him down so that he sits on the floor next to us. "I can love you

both."

"Yeah well," he murmurs, bringing his face close to mine and then dropping his head slightly so that he can run his lips over the

skin of my neck. "Just make sure you always keep me at the top of your list of men you love, all right?" "Oh, sure," I say, rolling my eyes. And we'll see how well you do at that once you have a daughter to steal your heart."

"I'll just pretend she's a boy."

I laugh now, both at his words and the soft tickly feeling of his lips on my skin. "Oh sure," I say, sarcastic, "you'd just love that. A

little girl trapsing around with Rafe and Cora's son, getting into all the messes that boys do? There's no part of you that would

overreact to her being in any kind of danger as she played boys' sports, participated in boys' activities, learning how to fight and

be an Alpha."

"If she's your daughter? She can handle it."

"No, Dominic," I say, soft now, pulling my head back a little to look into his face. "Your daughter would be strong enough to

handle that, to handle anything. You'd make her strong, like you do me and Rafe."

I see the way he melts a little then, the way his eyes go soft as he looks at me, truly hears my words.

"Trouble," he growls, lifting

hand to my cheek and resting his forehead against mine, " you're the heart of everything. There is no strength without you."

And then my mate presses his lips to mine, and our little baby gives a happy giggle, and I swear that my heart...will probably

explode with happiness at any moment.

But before it can, we both hear the door open.

"Is...anyone here?" It's Cora's voice.

"Here!" I call after I break our kiss and take a second to clear my choked throat. I raise a hand and waive it so that Cora can see

me.

Sinclair takes the opportunity to kiss me again, just briefly, as Cora, Roger, and Henry come over to us at the far side of the

room. And then we both smile up at our family as they come into view.

"Why am I not surprised that you're doing something bizarre?" Roger asks, frowning at us a little and putting his hands on his

hips.

"What?" I ask, confused.

"You have an entire mahogany table with velvetlined chairs," Cora explains, waiving at the room, "as well as a full breakfast

buffet set out. And yet the two of you are over here, sitting on the floor and making out?"

I laugh and roll my eyes at my sister, getting to my knees and then lifting Rafe into my arms. "You have no sense of fun, Cora," I

chide. Sinclair stands and puts out a hand to me, helping me to my feet.

"I have plenty of sense of fun -" she protests, crossing her arms. "I just like a cup of coffee first." "Well," I say, gesturing towards the full pot of coffee waiting hot on the buffet, "help yourself, sister mine!" "Um," a sound comes from the door, and we all turn towards it. Sarah and Jessica are standing there, hand-in- hand, a guard in

black standing behind them. "I'm so sorry – are we... interrupting?"

I blush a little – god, I'm supposed to be a queen, and this is the picture we're presenting? Laying on the floor and bickering over

who is more fun, the queen or the duchess? "Please," I say, hurrying across the room to stand in front of Sarah and Jessica, who I note are clean, and wearing fresh new

clothes, and looking rested and happy. Or at least, happier than they did yesterday. "Won't you come in and have some

breakfast? We're so excited to see you."

I give them my best smile as they accept my invitation into the room, but as they move to fill their plates with some breakfast

something in my stomach sinks a little. Because I've been having what is frankly a wonderful

morning...but I know that things are

about to get very, very dark.

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Chapter 417

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#Chapter 417 – Sarah's Story

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As Sarah and Jessica come to sit down at the table, I'm surprised to see Henry take the lead in speaking to them. I get a little

cup of coffee for myself, and a bowl of sliced fruit – honestly, I'm going to be too distracted to eat much and listen interestedly to

the start of the conversation.

I don't know why I'm so surprised, but Henry really does shock me with how charming he is with Sarah and Jessica, immediately

putting them at ease as he asks them very simple, easy questions about who they are and what they like. He doesn't delve into

any of the big questions that I'm sure we'll get into soon where they lived, how they lived, and why they ran but instead 1 does a

wonderful job of showing his interest in who they are as people.

As I sit down at my place next to Sinclair and begin to sip at my coffee, I'm interested to see how Henry concentrates his

attention on Jessica. She's so young and so shy at first, but his questions about what she likes –

reading, and animals - and

what she dislikes – cold weather, chores – really allow Jessica to open up. I see Sarah smiling warmly at her sister and then at

Henry as she, too, sees Jessica shed her shyness and become the lovely, happy little girl that Sarah must know at home.

"Yes!" Jessica says, enthusiastic. "I love dogs! I wish I had one! We used to have one, but..." she hesitates, and then looks up at

Sarah, biting her lip.

"Master Xander had lots of dogs," Sarah says, smiling around at us. There was a puppy that we liked best of all we...called him

our dog. Frisky, we said his name was."

"Because," Jessica says, laughing, "He was always so playful! And he liked to get into trouble."

I smile at the little girl, laughing and imagining her with the little dog. But I notice that Sarah's face turns sad, and she looks away

from Jessica, not wanting her to see. My own face falls as I realize that...this story must not have a nice ending. And that Sarah doesn't want Jessica to remember that.

Luckily, Henry jumps in. "Well," he says, raising his eyebrows at Jessica. Did you know that there is a mama cat, here in the

palace? Who had her kittens just about a month ago?"

Jessica's eyes go completely round as she gasps at the news. Henry leans forward, smiling at her."

Would you like to play with

them?"

"Oh!" Jessica says, clasping her hands together and holding them tight under her chin. "Yes, please! Oh, I would like that very

much!"

Henry looks over at my mate, who smiles and nods, letting him know it's a good idea – and then Henry rolls away to a corner of

the room, where he presses a button on an intercom and says a few words to whoever is on the other end.

As he does, I look over at Jessica who is beaming with excitement, and then down at my own baby, who sitting on my lap and

blowing bubbles, grasping at the table cloth and generally exploring his world. When I look up at Sarah, I smile to see that her

eyes are on Rafe as well.

She looks up and meets my eyes, her own face breaking out into a big smile to match mine. And I can see...a sort of pride there,

in that she was able to help this little baby, to keep him safe with me.

Gratitude races through me first, and then, after it, a deep determination to give this woman everything she needs to build a life.

She has given me everything – and I'm determined to give it back.

Before I can say anything, though, a young woman peeks through the door and we can all already hear the kittens mewing.

Jessica gasps and stands right up on her chair, trying to get a better look as Henry beckons the young woman forward and

directs her to the back of the room.

"Oh, Sarah," Jessica says, her voice full of pleading as Sarah scolds her and tugs her down off the chair. "Please, please can I

go and play with them?"

"If...that's all right?" Sarah asks, looking around at the rest of us.

I nod eagerly, wanting the little girl to enjoy herself. And so Sarah lets her sister dash off to the living area at the back of the

room, completely distracted.

"Well, that was nicely done," I murmur to Sinclair, peering at Henry who follows Jessica to the back of the room to ensure that

she's settled.

"Henry is full of tact," my mate murmurs back,

smiling proudly after his dad. "You should have seen the clever things he did to

convince Roger and me to go to bed when we were kids. We were hoodwinked left and right."

"I hope you remember these tactics," I sigh,

watching Henry come back to his place at the table. Cora stands up, fetching Sarah

a refill on her cup of tea as Sarah looks around at all of us.

"Thank you," Sarah says, especially to Henry but looking around at us all. "I -I am grateful to have her out of earshot. I know you

have questions, and I want to tell you everything but..." she glances over at her sister, who is giggling madly as she lays on the

floor, letting kittens climb all over her. "Well, I don't think Jessica needs to relive any of it, or hear details which I've tried very hard

to keep from her.'

"We understand," Cora says, setting the fresh cup of tea down next to Sarah and setting in her seat between Sarah and Roger. Sarah takes a deep breath then, pressing her lips together as she looks around at us. "Well, then," she says, giving a little shrug.

"Where can I begin?"

Sinclair and Roger take a larger role now, falling into some of their interrogation patterns that I recognize from our time at the

bunker, as elsewhere. But I am very pleased to note that both of them – despite their eagerness to get all the information they

want and need from Sarah – are careful to be warm, and kind, and conversational.

Henry intercedes at certain moments, pressing Sarah for a little more information when he needs it, but he's mostly silent.

Cora and I, though we don't ask the questions, are actually the ones to whom Sarah speaks, even though Sinclair and Roger are

the one who ask the questions. It's not that she neglects the men in the room, but...I'm not really sure why, but as she tells us

her story, I find that her eyes are on our faces, her words directed to us. Perhaps it's because Cora and I react more emotionally

to the story, gasping and leaning forward, mumbling our empathy when things get tough, but either way – As Sarah's story unfolds, it's clear that she's more comfortable telling it to us. And so Sinclair and Roger lean back in their chairs,

letting Cora and I take the lead.

And the story that Sarah tells us...it's as sad as I thought it would be.

"I was born in that house," Sarah says quietly, her eyes a bit far-off. "I don't remember being anywhere else as a child – not

really. I didn't go to school, I didn't have any friends – honestly, I'm not sure I knew that other children existed for a long, long

time. My mother was only allowed to keep me – to keep us – because she promised that we could be raised to be obedient. That

we would...replace her, when she became old and infirm."

"And your father?" Henry asks, gentle phrasing the question so that Sarah can answer it in any way that is comfortable for her.

"I never knew him," Sarah says, looking around at us, unashamed of the fact but seeming confused by it. "I don't even know if

Jessica and I have the same..." her head dips while she clears her throat a little before looking back up at us, taking a deep breath. Mother always said she would tell us when we were old enough to know. But then...she died before we were old enough,

I guess."

I look Sarah over, sympathy in my eyes. Because while she had a mother who loved her and was present in her ife, her reality

was in so many ways so much more brutal than mine. Because I had Cora at my side – and we always had hope of a different,

better life.

And Sarah, she's about mine and Cora's age now, but we both have so much that she doesn't have. My heart aches for her.

"Sarah," Cora says, turning my attention to her. "What happened to your mother?"

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Chapter 418

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#Chapter 418- Vengeance Ella

Cora asks Sarah about her mother in a frank, curious way that I think allows Sarah to straighten her spine and answer

impassively, like she's giving a report to a doctor instead of having to break a hard truth to a queen who will probably break into

tears. And I smile a little at the back of my sister's head, grateful for her for giving Sarah what she needs when I can't.

"He beat her," Sarah says, and my heart twists almost physically within me. "She...she was growing older, and she couldn't do

her chores the way she used to. And..." Sarah bites her lip and looks only at Cora now, telling her what she wouldn't be able to

say to the rest of us, not while holding her head high. "And he started to look at me, the way he looked at my mother. And she

tried to keep me away from him, to find other chores in other parts of the house. And when he figured out what she was doing

he..."

Sarah's voice cracks here and I have to look away from her so that my eyes don't fill with tears. Sinclair slips a hand onto my

knee, wanting to give me comfort but not to distract from Sarah's story.

Sarah takes a deep breath before she continues.

"He told her she was an idiot and a whore, for trying to keep his property from

him. And that he could do what we wanted with all of us take our bodies, our lives. And then," she shrugs, looking down at the

tablecloth. "He did. He took her life then, to show her...and to show me."

I make myself look back at Sarah now, who looks up at Cora, and then at me. And I hope that she sees, shining in my eyes, my

deep and renewed desire for vengeance. Because there is absolutely no way that I am going to let this man live.

"That was the moment," she says, nodding to me and then looking at Sinclair too, though a little shier now." When mother died?

I decided that...that if he could take what I loved most from me, I could take what he most wanted too. The little baby – I could...I

could take that away from him. And so I did or, I tried."

"You succeeded," Sinclair says quietly, next to me. "No," she says, shaking her head vehemently and looking down at her hands. "You'd have been safe anyway – you'd have figured it out." "The note," Roger says, leaning around Cora to look clearly at Sarah, to make sure she hears him. "It gave us an advantage

that...without it, Sarah, they very well could have taken Rafe. We owe you a great debt."

"No," she says instantly, flushing red. "I don't – I don't want anything. And I don't want you to think that I did this so that you

would give me anything."

"We don't think that, Sarah," I say softly, hugging my baby close and leaning forward to catch her eye. "But we want to help you,

like we want to help the other refugees. Though I admit," my mouth cocks into a little smile here, "I do want to help you a little bit

more than the others. Because I'm so, so grateful. I mean, what would you like – you can have

anything!" My face splits into a

wide grin here as I point at my sister's mate. "You can even take Roger! He's the least useful-

Cora gives a little squeak of protest as Sinclair bursts into laughter and Roger turns to glare at me, his mouth falling open. Sarah

starts to laugh too as she realizes my joke and shake her head, rather vehemently, no.

But seeing Sarah decline my offer, Roger turns his shock on her.

"Wait, you don't want me either!?" he gasps, and we all start to laugh harder as he sinks back into his chair, playing along now

and exaggerating his fury for the sake of the mood in the room. Because...frankly, we need a laugh.

And I want Sarah to know that we hear her

but...well, I want to give her some of the hope that Cora and I always had. That

things can get better – and they will. And maybe that starts today, with a little laughter at Roger's willing expense. I turn an

apologetic look his way but he just gives me a wink, understanding, and I turn back to Sarah.

"We'll talk about it, okay?" I say, still holding my baby tight. "But...we're going to be friends now, Sarah. Good friends friends for

life. And friends help each other get back on their feet."

Sarah's smile is slow, but when it reaches its full extent I swear my heart could burst with joy of it. Because I see it there that

hope I was looking for.

And I intend to keep every part of my word. Sarah is going to have a good life, and I'm going to help her get it.

"Ohhhh, Sarah!" Jessica moans, running over with two kittens, one in each hand, her eyes filled with worry and woe. "Please, please can we keep them?" She looks down at the little orange ball of fur and then at the grey one, her voice a little frantic. "I

love them so much – I can't you have to let me keep them!"

"Oh, Jessica," Sarah sighs, putting her arms out and wrapping them around her little sister. "We don't even have a home to take

them to yet -"

"And they're too young," Henry adds, looking at Jessica seriously, "to leave their mother. Perhaps in a few weeks, when they're

ready? You and your sister can talk about it again?" Jessica groans with grief at the idea of leaving the two little kittens, making me laugh a little.

"Well, you can stay here until we find you a home of your own," I say, crossing my fingers under the table a bit as I make this

rather reckless offer without even asking my mate.

"So you can still see them every day, Jessica. When you're not at school, of

course."

"School?" she says, looking at me with wide eyes. "I – I get to go to school?"

"Yes!" I say, surprised and looking at Sarah, who gives me a big smile and nods excitedly. "Yes, Jessica. School every day, and kittens at night. Does that sound like a good start to your new life?"

And a little tear runs down Sarah's cheek as Jessica says a vehement yes, cuddling the little cats close to her chest. I look up at

Sinclair then, hoping that he'll say.

But he's already nodding, which makes me burst into a grin. And then he leans forward, pressing a kiss to my forehead. My

sweet, good mate, he murmurs to me down our bond. You'll be a wonderful queen.

And warmth spreads through me at the idea of it – because if being queen means I get to do things like this? Then I'm definitely

on board, and excited.

But that warmth is chased a bit with anger, and sadness, and rage.

Because even if we can help Sarah and Jessica...Xander's still out there in the world, and more men like him. And we've got

work to do to take them out of it.

Work I am very, very determined to pursue.

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#Chapter 419 – The Threat of War

Ella

Cora and Roger stay in the meeting room for a little breakfast as Henry escorts Sarah and Jessica from the room, wheeling

beside them as they discuss some preliminary plans for Jessica's schooling and Sarah's own desires and ideas about her future

life. I smile as Sinclair and I walk slowly behind them, Rafe curled protected in the curve of his father's arm. I wave to my new

friends as they and Henry take a left when Sinclair and I have to go right, towards our rooms.

And then, as we make the turn and are finally on our own, I huff a little sigh. Sinclair, as always, notices.

"What's wrong, little queen?" he murmurs, moving closer to me as we walk. "I thought you'd be happy with the result of that. You

did a good thing for her and, I imagine, will keep doing so. Plus, we got some very useful information about Xander." "Was it anything we didn't already know?" I ask, looking up at him with a frown.

"A few things," he murmurs, giving a shrug. "But more importantly, she's a witness we will be able to charge Xander, formally,

with...well, I guess we'd need a lawyer to spell out specifically which crimes he committed in switching sperm at a sperm bank

and then attempting to kidnap the resulting child." Rafe gives a little burble right at that moment,

making me laugh and smile over at him – my sweet baby, almost as if he knew he

was being talked about.

"Well, that's something," I murmur, considering it. "Will we charge him, though?"

"I'm not sure," Sinclair says. "Not that I want to let him off the hook for everything he's done – we just...need to figure out the best

way to go about it, especially as he's now with the Atalaxians."

We've reached the door to our room now and Sinclair twists the knob, pushing the door open and allowing me to enter first. I

head immediately to our gigantic walk-in closet to get changed into more comfortable clothing, but my mind whirs as I go. "Go on, little mate," Sinclair murmurs as he follows me into the closet, sitting down on a chaise lounge that I had placed in here

just for this reason. I anticipate many little chats in here as either or both of us are getting ready. "Tell me what you're thinking."

"Well," I say, tugging off my dress and sighing as I put it back on its hanger. "It's...it's the Atalaxians I'm worried about," I say,

giving him a sorry little grimace.

"What do you mean?" he asks, settling back on the chaise and listening carefully. I give him a little smile and a pulse of gratitude

down the bond. It means so much to me that he takes me seriously.

"I mean," I say, grabbing for a pair of comfortable folded pants, "that I'm not sure we should be messing with them. I mean

be...messing with them. I mean –

you heard everything that Sarah said today about what life in Xander's household was like – it was an absolute nightmare for

her, and for Jessica, and her mother. Just years of abuse, justified because they were humans and women."

I sigh as I pull a t-shirt over my head and look at my mate, my eyes full of sorrow. "The idea that Xander would go to the

Atalaxians, hat in hand, and they would see him and be like 'sure!

Come on in! Your kind welcome here!"" I shake my head, pursing my lips. "It makes me really uncomfortable, Dominic. I...I don't

want anything to do with people like that."

He sighs, nodding his head and understanding, but also turning a hand upwards towards me in supplication. " Part of ruling is

dealing with people whom you intensely dislike.

Atalaxia is a powerful nation no matter how much we disagree with their policies,

we can't just...ignore them, or give them the cold shoulder."

"But shouldn't we?" I ask, understanding him but unable to resist pushing back a little bit. I come close to my mate then, reaching

out and running my fingers through his dark hair as I look down into his face, and then down at my baby. "Everything I've heard

about them, Dominic, suggests that they're participating in...atrocities, serious crimes against humanity."

"Crimes of which we have no real proof, my love – " "But how hard would that proof be to find?" I murmur. "I mean, I had one conversation with one woman in a refugee camp, and we have testimony against Xander now. If abuse is as widespread in Atalaxia as I'm being told it is, would we even really have to

scratch the surface to find proof of it?"

"And if we did," Sinclair murmurs, looking seriously up at me. "What would you have us do as a result?" "I don't know," I say, shaking my head as I look down at him, sighing with my worry and my fear. "I'm really not – not trying to talk

you into anything, Dominic, or persuade you one way or another. I just...I know that to not oppose tyranny is in some ways to

accept it, support it. And if we have the power..."

"Would you go so far as to want to go to war over it?" he asks, quiet but genuine. I go pale at the idea, because I am so... so sick

of war.

All I want is to build my life, and raise my child, and live peacefully with my mate.

But would I buy that piece at the expense of others? Would I allow innocents to suffer so that I can sleep peacefully in bed?

I bite my lip and Sinclair clicks his tongue in sympathy, raising a hand to cup my cheek, his thumb tracing my skin. "I'm sorry,

love," he sighs. "That wasn't a fair question – you have all good points, and I gave you the one ultimatum that would stop you."

"No," I say, shaking my head and covering his hand with mine. "It's...it's the reality though, isn't it? If I'm saying to stand up to the

Atalaxians... the result could be war."

"It could be war either way," he says, his voice soft and worried.

"Really?" I ask, my stomach dropping.

Slowly, he nods. "They're not happy, at all, with the fact that the secrecy pact was broken, and that my response to it isn't

immediate denigration of the human race to secondclass citizenship. They are very hostile now, at the moment. I will avoid war

at all costs but...they're strong, Ella. They could push for it, knowing they have the advantage."

I close my eyes and take a deep breath through my nose, anxiety racing through me at the idea. War. War again.

Just when I'm finally starting to find peace...

"We're not there yet," Sinclair says, dropping his hand to drift down my side and settle on my waist, pulling me closer. "Don't

worry about it now, Ella. Don't borrow trouble before it comes."

"Can't seem to help it," I murmur, opening my eyes and looking down at my mate. "Like calls to like, after all." He laughs then, the sound so deep and warm that it makes me smile. Then he tugs me closer, pulling me into his lap. "Let me

worry about that," he says softly. "You just go patch up the people who were hurt by our last war it's what I know you want to be

doing anyway."

"Hey," I say, narrowing my eyes playfully at him and kissing him lightly. "Don't you start thinking of me as some kind of magical

street sweeper – I'm not just around to clean up after all this nation's wars, you know! I am not the panacea you seek!"

"Oh I know," he murmurs, teasing me with his lips on mine as he lets his hand drift lower to settle on my bottom. "If you're busy

cleaning up after all the wars, you'll be far to busy for me to get you pregnant with all of the heirs I'm planning to produce-

I burst into laughter at this, pulling away from him and pretending to be offended even though, really, we're both well aware that

that's precisely what I want too. "Hey, Mr. King Sinclair," I growl, wrinkling my nose at him. "I'm no royal baby factory either."

He scoffs and rolls his eyes, pretending to be frustrated. "Then what are you even good for, Ella!?"

I laugh, a little wicked, and pull his face close. "You know exactly what I'm good for, Dominic." And then I kiss him soundly, and

let myself get a little lost in it.

And then we put the baby down for his nap, and I am...much later reporting for duty at the refugee camp than I thought I'd be.

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Read Accidental Surrogate for Alpha by Caroline Above Story Chapter 419

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Accidental Surrogate for Alpha Chapter 420

Chapter 420

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#Chapter 420- Come for Dinner Ella When I finally come out of my bedroom, Rafe strapped to my chest, and hurry through the hallways to the front of the palace where I asked Cora to wait for me, I find her sitting with crossed arms and a frustrated look on her face. "Oh hey, Ella," she says, smirking at me. "What took you so long." I just beam innocently at my sister, flicking my hair over my shoulder. "I don't know what you mean, Cora. I came as fast as I

could."

"Oh," she says, raising her eyebrows at me. "I'm sure you did."

And then I burst into laughter as I realize that Cora – well. Cora hasn't precisely been one to make dirty jokes in the past, has

she? "Looks like Roger's rubbing off on you," I say, putting out a hand to help her up, which she accepts.

"He's trying," she says, giving me a wink and leaning down to give Rafe a kiss on his forehead. "Are you ready? Finally?"

"Oh, come on, Cora," I say, rolling my eyes as we head for the door. "It wasn't like it was that long of a wait."

"Forty-five minutes! Honestly, Ella – it's not a quickie anymore if it takes the better part of an hour – "

"Cora!" I hiss, covering Rafe's innocent ears and looking around at all of the people milling around at the front of the palace.

"They'll hear you!"

She laughs. "Oh, come on, Ella, they all know too. Do you know how many people asked me where Sinclair has been? I've been making excuses for you for well over half an hour and everyone saw right through them -"

"Oh my god," I say as we step out the front door and find Conner waiting for us. "We will cease speaking of this! Immediately!"

"Good plan," she says, laughing along with me as we make our way down to the cars waiting for us. We hit the road quickly after

I strap Rafe into his safety seat, heading directly for the Human Camp. When we arrive, I see that Sinclair has again sent a

relative army of guards, and that Isabel and Hank are waiting for us outside of the gates.

Fortunately, today they seem to be peacefully chatting, rather than standing coldly. I smile at them as I get out of the car, grateful

that Isabel is as good as her word in trying to be better at accepting humans as part of the team.

"What kept you?" Hank says, coming closer to us and smiling his greeting but – characteristically – keeping his hands in his

pockets and refraining from giving us a hug. I resist the urge myself, knowing it would just make him uncomfortable.

Cora smirks and opens her mouth to tell him precisely what kept us, but I step forward and beat her to it. "We were getting Sarah settled this morning," I say, smiling at both Hank and Isabel, who were updated last night on everything we know about Sarah

and Jessica. "She was kind enough to tell us her story."

"Oh good," Isabel says, nodding to us. "I hope that it gave you both some clarity and that you'll be able to help her in the way that

she's helped you." She leans down to coo to Rafe now, greeting him. The baby gratifies her by kicking happily and waving his

little hands, making us both laugh.

Then, as a group of eight – nine, if you count Rafe – we head into the camp to get to work. We head again to the children's

hospitalization tent, as both Isabel and Hank identified important cases which need my immediate attention. There, we fall into

our routines, all of us wanting to help as many people as fast as we can, especially considering our delay in getting here this

afternoon. I grimace when I think of my stolen hour, regretting it. Tomorrow I'll try to get here earlier so I can really help as much

as I can.

When I stand up from my third patient of the afternoon, I'm surprised when Hank brings up Sarah again.

"So, she's all right?" he asks, flipping through the next patient's chart.

"Who?" I ask, confused.

"Sarah," he murmurs. "And Jessica," he adds, a little bit of an afterthought. I smile a little, watching him as he pointedly doesn't

look at me, flipping through pages which I know he's already read.

"She's fine, Hank," I say, purposefully keeping my voice breezy. " She's going to stay at the palace for awhile – for as long as she

wants, really, until she decides where she wants to live. Jessica seems really happy – she met some kittens, and is going to start going to school."

"Good," Hank says, letting the clipboard fall to his side and looking deliberately away from me, in the direction of our next patient.

I can't help that my smile grows a little bit as I wonder just how much Hank has been thinking about the pretty, wounded darkhaired woman whose sister we saved yesterday.

But as I study him, I consider that it could honestly go either way. He's very cryptic, isn't he? Is he asking out of professional

curiosity for a doctor regarding a patient? Or...

"Next case is over here," he says, stalking off. I look up at Conner, who grins down at me as we follow. I laugh a little, thinking

that if Conner is picking up on it too...

Well.

Perhaps there's a little meddling to be done.

"You know, Hank," I say as we arrive at the next hospital bed, taking the charts from his hand and flipping through them even

though I have no idea what they say. "You should come over for dinner sometime. At the palace. Catch up with us, like old

friends."

"Catch up?" he says, his voice dry. "Old friends?" "Sure," I say, looking up at him with too-wide eyes.

"Ella," he sighs, laughing a little as he shakes his head at me. "The idea of old times' with me and your family means I'm either

going to be watching you die slowly in bed or getting punched in the face for crimes I didn't commit.

So...maybe let's cut that as an excuse."

I laugh here, genuinely surprised by his sense of humor. I mean, he's dead on and definitely seeing through my ploy.

"Well then come for new times, Hank," I say, grinning at him. "It will be fun. I mean...Sarah could be there." "Give me this," he mumbles, snatching at the chart in my hands, looking for a distraction from this conversation so I don't notice

the little flush in his cheeks.

"Hey, I was reading that!" I protest, laughing and holding the chart out of his reach.

"You don't even understand what it says," he chides, glaring at me a little but unable to help the little smile that pulls at the corner

of his lips.

"Well, a girl can learn, can't she?" I say, lofty. But I hand the chart to him with a wink. "Think on it," I say. And then I look up at

Conner. "You can come too! It will be a party!" "Oh," he says, genuinely surprised at the invitation as he takes the baby from me. "Um, I'm not sure that's appropriate, Luna...I

mean. I can't... hang out with the King."

"Why not?" I ask, confused.

"Because he's the king, Ella," Hank replies, rolling his eyes at me again good-naturedly. "You're just too used to him to see how

intimidating he is to literally everyone else."

"Ohhh," I say, waving a hand behind me as I dismiss what they're saying. " Dominic is nice!"

"Nice," I hear Conner murmur to Hank behind me. "She just described the most powerful Alpha in the kingdom – maybe the world as nice." "Yeah, she's...Ella." Hank sighs. But I ignore them, smiling down at the little brownhaired girl looking sadly up at me. "Hi, sweetheart," I say to her, reaching out and offering my hand. "My name is Ella. What's yours?"

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