

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 436

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#Chapter 436- Dinner Party

Ila

I enter the elaborate dining room at Sinclair's side with Rafe tucked sleeping in my arms. There are no doubts or hesitations on

my face and I lift my chin high as I smile slightly, letting people see me as my mate's unbothered Queen, as someone entirely unruffled by the events of this morning.

Sinclair, walking at my side, presents a similar image: the unflappable Alpha King, his body fully capable of every violent rumor of which our guests have heard, but toned and refined by the mind of a King, a true power player.

The effect we have as a pair ripples through the room with people turning to us, many eyes going wide. Because we really do present the image of two people who should not be trifled with.

I have to admit, a little thrill goes through me at the idea of this. Because, honestly, I usually think of myself as sweet and

determined, but certainly not powerful and imposing. But tonight, at Sinclair's side? It comes to me easier than I thought it would.

Cora and Roger come into the room behind us, our personal guards following after them. Many eyes turn to my human sister, considering her alongside and her fated Alpha mate. I know Roger and Cora are baffling to many people within the wolf community who can't understand how or why Roger would have a human woman fated to be at his side. But one look at my stunning sister in her lavender gown? Well. Let's just say that even without the information that she's a demigoddess who can control the weather, I think it's making a lot more sense to a lot of our gathered guests.

Still, as Sinclair and I approach our chairs at the head of the table, I'm aware of some frowns and whispers around the room.

Even though the four of us present a strong and untied front, there are as there always are dissenters amongst our supporters.

My eyes move immediately to the group of five ambassadors from Atalaxia, dressed in black and gathered at the far end of the table.

Sinclair sent word, of course, that my uncle was absolutely not invited to attend this smaller, more personal dinner, and I am pleased to see that he's not there. But I narrow my eyes in their direction anyway, wondering what the hell else they've got up their sleeve.

"Dominic, Ella," I hear Henry's voice say, and I turn to see him wheeling towards us. My face breaks into a grin and I lean forward, giving him a kiss on the cheek and tilting the baby so that Henry can say hello as Sinclair greets his father as well.

"I've heard you've had a tough morning," Henry says quietly as people around the room begin to take their seats. "I'm sorry I wasn't there –"

"Please," Sinclair says, dismissing his apology with a wave. "We handled it well. There's nothing you could have done."

"Still," Henry sighs, rolling up to his place at the table on Sinclair's left. "I'd have liked to have seen the man for myself, been able to assess him. But I'm sure I'll have more opportunity for that as the weekend passes."

"Yes," I sigh, taking my own seat as Sinclair pulls it out for me. "I'm sure you will."

I hold my sleeping baby close to me as Cora and Roger take their own seats to my right, and then I look up at Sinclair, who is still standing. A warm smile lights my mate's face as he lifts a glass of wine towards the waiting group of people and begins to welcome everyone formally to the palace, letting them know that he hopes the weekend will be full of many pleasurable and fruitful conversations about the future of our collected nations.

I smile up at my mate as I listen to him speak, proud of this man who can so seamlessly move between worlds. I've seen him in so many different lights now father, mate, soldier, politician, and beyond – and I'm so impressed that he is able to perform each role so admirably. Honestly, my heart tumbles a little over itself as I watch him. I couldn't have designed a more perfect mate if I tried.

I blush to myself a bit, looking down at my baby, thinking myself the luckiest girl in the world. And then I glance around the table, pleased when I see everyone's eyes focused on my mate, a variety of expressions crossing their faces most of them warm.

But when my eyes fall on the Atalaxian prince?

I'm shocked to see him looking directly at me.
Staring, even.

I blink and sit up straight a little bit, surprised. And my shock only increases when he fails to look away, instead holding my gaze, his face expressionless as he studies me, apparently ignoring the speech and instead trying to figure me out.

I find myself growing more and more uncomfortable under his gaze. What... why on earth would he be so interested in me?

I stare back at him, my own eyes fixed, trying to figure out the mystery

But then I jump a little when the room breaks into applause. I bite my lip then, a little ashamed at having missed the tail end of my mate's speech. But – well, considering that we went over it together last night, refining all the details, I suppose I already know what he said.

When Sinclair looks down at me and tils his glass towards me, I beam up at him, giving my full support. His own smile deepens before he turns back to our crowd of guests, calling for a toast to international friendship and a bright future. Our guests call the words back to him, heartily joining in with the spirit.

I raise my own glass along with everyone else, genuinely hoping that this can be true. But as my eyes again return to the Atalaxian delegation?

I see that while they raise their glasses in a slight show of support, their eyes are cold. And I have a distinct feeling that they're going to make our jobs very difficult.

The rest of the meal goes well, with general chatter and delicious food. I pass Rafe to Conner so that I can manage a knife and fork and I do my best to participate, chatting with the guests closest to use, but as I glance at Cora and find her eyes already on me, I know we're untied in our thought: that the real challenge is going to come after dinner, at the after party.

When we finish our desert and the dinner breaks up, I get to my feet feeling newly steeled for the evening ahead.

"You all right?" Sinclair asks as he stands next to me. I can tell immediately that it's less a question of whether I'm handling this well, but instead if I feel prepared for what's coming next.

"I'm perfect," I assure him, giving him a bright smile as Conner brings me Rafe, who is awake now and looking around the room

curiously.

“All right, trouble,” Sinclair murmurs, leaning down to kiss me on the forehead. “Let’s go get this done.”

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#Chapter 437- Meeting the Prince Ella

Sinclair moves away at Roger's side as Cora comes to mine. We both fuss over the baby for a moment, checking to ensure that

he doesn't need anything, but when we're sure that he's ready to go I turn him in my arms so that he can look out at all of the

people who have come to visit us on this big weekend.

Cora, Rafe and I head into the room together with Conner close behind us, as planned. We decided to split up on this one

always staying in sight of our mates, but giving people the opportunity to come and speak with us privately if they're so inclined.

The strategy works. A great variety of people come and introduce themselves to Cora and I, and I'm pleased to see that the majority of these people are women. I smile a little smugly inside, glad that I was right that the women who attend our coronation as part of these delegations who might feel awkward or shy approaching the gigantic, intimidating Sinclair brothers feel differently about approaching two women, one pregnant and the other holding a baby. The result, to my pleasure, is a great deal of happy chat. I meet a variety of fascinating women who are all eager to tell me about their lives, their plans for their nations' futures, the collaborations that they're excited to pursue with us. At each turn Cora and I are genuinely enthusiastic, wanting to work with these people to make our world a better place. "Wow," I say to Cora after we part ways with a dowager Queen and her granddaughter, who is the next in line to her own throne. "It's...incredible. I had no idea that most of these nations and people even existed." "I know," she murmurs, running a hand over her hair and looking around. "I feel like we need to go back to school, Ella – we're

not nearly prepared enough for our positions in this nation. We need some serious history lessons.”

“Well, you go to school,” I murmur, sighing. “And just give me the wikipedia version of whatever you learn, okay? Because I am done with schooling.”

“You were good at school!” Cora protests, a little appalled.

“I was good,” I say, looking at her with raised eyebrows, “but I wasn’t addicted to it, like you were. Honestly, Cora, you’d still be in school if there were more degrees to get.”

“Well,” she sighs, putting her hands on her hips for a second and tilting her head to the side for a second.

“That’s probably true...”

I laugh, smiling at my clever sister, and then Rafe gives a sad little cry. Curious, I look down at him and instantly smell something very unpleasant.

“Oh, geeze,” I murmur, realizing that he needs to be changed. I look anxiously over my shoulder, wondering where the closest

bathroom is that has a changing area

Honestly, it’s my house now – I should know this stuff –

“Here,” Cora says, reaching for Rafe. ” Let me.”

“Cora, I can’t -”

“Let me,” she insists, taking Rafe from my arms.
“You’re needed here more than I am – go talk with Roger and Sinclair, and Conner and I will take the baby to be changed. All right? It’s going to take a long time and the Queen should be present to...do Queen stuff.”

“All right,” I sigh, though I hate handing my baby off to her for the second time today. Rafe doesn’t seem displeased, though, smiling happily up at his aunting and reaching out his hands for her, trying to grab her cheeks. Cora laughs and sends me a quick wink before turning to Conner and letting him know the plan.

I turn then, looking for my mate, and seeing him across the room speaking with a bunch of Alphas with Henry and Roger by his side – I set off towards him.

I take the long way around, hoping to disappear a bit into the shadows at the sides of the room and avoid anyone in the center of the room pulling me for a chat.

And I almost, almost make it – honestly, I’m about three-fourths of the way there – when someone steps into my path, clearly wishing a word.

I sigh a bit inwardly but take a deep breath, putting on my Queen expression – calm, smiling, interested as I look up to see who desires a moment of my time.

But my smile falters a bit when I realize that it's...him.

“My Queen,” the Prince of Atalaxia says, giving me a sharp, formal bow. ” It is a pleasure to meet you.”

I go a little still, my smile increasing a little at the irony of this because...

He stands straight and looks at me then, staring at me for a moment, clearly waiting for a response. But I just stand in silence,

not knowing what to say. Then, I'm a little shocked to see a smile pull at the corners of his lips.

“Can I take your silence to mean...” he says quietly, “that it is not precisely a pleasure for you?”

And damn me but...

Something about the way he says it his self-deprecation, the warmth in his voice...

I feel my smile growing.

“I have to say,” I reply, a little laugh on my voice now. “That whether or not it is a pleasure to speak with you, highness, is...

complicated to say the least.”

He bows his head a little, nodding, and I hear him huff a sad little laugh under his breath. “Honestly, I warned them against

bringing that man, surprising you all like that -”
“Then why did you do it?” I ask, taking a step forward, wanting to look up into his face –
He raises his eyes to mine again and I’m shocked again by their color and clarity – by the light blue-violet color of them, such a surprise under such a dark head of silky black hair.
“I don’t know,” he replies, shaking his head and slipping his hands into his pockets as he takes a deep breath. ” They spent hours deciding on it on precisely what to do, what to say. I promise – it was a very deliberate choice.”
“And were you not privy to those meetings?” I ask, raising an eyebrow at him, wanting to push him for more information.
“I am my father’s sixth son, Highness,” the prince sighs, shaking his head, again smiling that sad little smile at me. “I am a figurehead at best on this mission, and privy to nothing important. You’ll have to forgive me for that. I wish I could tell you more.”
I stare at him now, my eyes narrowing a little bit because...honestly, I can’t put my finger on it -but something about the way he says that makes me believe him. I believe that if he could tell me more, he honestly would.

He smiles at me again, and I realize that I've been silent for about thirty seconds now. I blink and stand up straighter, a little embarrassed, but he just grins at me an expression that causes a single dimple to curl onto one cheek. Then, he holds out a hand.

"I'm Calvin," he says. "And honestly, your highness, it is...more than a pleasure to meet you. I hope you believe me on that."

Slowly, I reach out, my eyes still on his face, and I reach out my hand to slip it into his, accepting this small gesture of friendship.

I open my mouth to introduce myself but –
Before I can

A pulse runs through me when my palm meets his, like the sound of a deep bass note resonating through my chest

It thrums through me, chased by something sharper – lighter – a second pulse, like lightening jumping through me, a spark that runs through my veins

I jump, working to pull my hand away, but before I can his fingers close around my hand, holding it tight.

Any expression – polite, or kind, or happy – falls from his face as he stares at me in shock.

We stand there, palm to palm, for a long, long moment. A moment too long, frankly, until I hear someone clear their throat next to me.

And then I look up into my mate's green eyes, his stern face, with my palm pressed tight in another man's hand. Our enemy's hand.

"Ella," Sinclair says, his eyes flicking to the Prince next to me, "are you...all right?"

"Yes!" I say, suddenly gasping in a deep breath and pulling my hand from Calvin's – honestly, I hadn't realized that I'd stopped breathing –

"Yes, Dominic," I say again, regaining my equanimity and smiling up at him, taking a step closer to his side. "I was just...greeting our guest," I say, gesturing towards the prince. Sinclair turns his expression to the Prince, his eyes dark.

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#Chapter 438- Be Careful, Little Mate

Ella

“I don’t think we’ve met,” Sinclair says, looking Calvin up and down, his voice low and dangerous.

“Not personally, no,” Calvin says, and I watch him, a little surprised to see that he has regained his composure faster than me.

He again executes his sharp little bow, showing obeisance to Sinclair, the kind of gesture one Royal gives to another. “I am

Prince Calvin, of Atalaxia. And, despite the uncouth gesture that my party made this morning, I hope you will believe me when I

say that I am very pleased to be here and eager to build a good relationship between our nations.”

Sinclair raises his eyebrows in surprise, looking for a long moment at the Prince and then down at me, ”

Well,” Sinclair says, his words careful and

measured. “It is good to hear you say that. After the events of the morning we were

convinced that peace was not a priority for you.”

Clavin sighs and glances over his shoulder, to where the rest of his delegation are speaking quietly with a group of people I don’t

know. ” Honestly highness,” he says, his voice low as if he’s seeking not to be overheard, “for many of them? It is not. But I hope that over the next few days I can convince you that you have at least one ally over this border.”

Slowly, Sinclair nods, pulling me closer to his side. “I look forward to being convinced,” my mate says evenly, still studying this strange Prince.

Clavin bows again to both of us, realizing that this interview is over. “A pleasure, your highnesses,” he murmurs, beginning to turn away.

“Ella,” I call – and I surprise myself to hear my name fall from my mouth.

Calvin turns back to us, slow, likewise surprised.

“Please,” I continue, “call me Ella.”

The Prince hesitates for a moment, flicking his eyes to Sinclair, but then he bows to me more deeply than he’s done before. “It will be a pleasure, Ella.”

And then he turns away.

I press myself closer to Sinclair’s side now, a little unnerved.

“What the hell was that,” Sinclair asks, his voice baffled but not at all angry at least not with me. I look up at him, slowly shaking my head. “I honestly don’t know,” I whisper.

But what I cannot deny?

Is that it was...something. Something real, something significant.

And as Sinclair and I find our way to Roger's side – Cora and Rafe, I smile to see, are already making their way back into the

room through the main door – I find my eyes following this strange prince.

Wondering who the hell he is, and what he could possibly want from me.

Sinclair and I go to bed late that night, after hours of chat with delegates from other countries. Honestly, even though all we did

was stand around chatting, it feels like I've run a marathon.

I settle my sweet baby in his little crib, giving him a kiss on the head before flopping fully-dressed onto my own bed.

My mate laughs at me. "Ella," he says, shaking his head, "up. Come on. You can't fall asleep like this."

"I can do what I want," I mutter, turning stubbornly away from him." I'm the Queen."

Sinclair laughs harder now, coming close and slipping my shoes off my feet, which makes me moan a little with pleasure to feel

them released. Sinclair, intuiting how good it feels, sits on the edge of the bed and takes one of my feet in his hands, beginning

to massage it.

I moan again, louder this time.

“I like it when you make that noise,” he murmurs, his voice low, hungry. I open an eye and glance at him because honestly, even though I’m exhausted, when my mate talks like that? Heat already begins to pool in my core.

“I like it when you make me make that noise,” I murmur back.

Growling with pleasure, my mate drops my foot and crawls over me until his body stretches above mine, holding his weight on his elbows to avoid crushing me completely. I take a deep, contented breath and turn onto my back, lifting my hands to pull his tuxedo shirt out of his pants and then slip my palms onto the hot, warm skin beneath.

Sinclair’s growl deepens and he lowers himself, taking a deep breath of my scent before pressing determined kisses to my neck, my shoulders, my chest – every one of them sending a new shiver through my body.

“You were wonderful tonight,” he murmurs, letting himself fall to the side and pulling me with him so that I’m pressed warm against him, stomach to stomach. “The perfect Queen.”

“I was not,” I laugh, pressing my hips close to his, wanting to feel him tight against me. “I didn’t even know half of the nations that those delegates were from – I’m a sham Queen, very ignorant -”

“No,” he murmurs, lifting his head to look at me, ensuring that I see and hear him. “You were perfectly yourself, Ella very charming. No one holds your lack of knowledge against you – they’re aware of your story. They love that you’re a real person who cares about her people – not some born-and-bred lady who knows how to affect the airs of a Queen and play the game.”

“Yes,” I say, my hands faltering a little on their path lower. “But doesn’t that make me...a bit of a crappy Queen.”

“No,” he hums, closing his eyes and exhaling deeply when my hands continue their path, slowly unbuckling his belt. “It makes you perfect.”

“All right,” I laugh softly. “If you say so, Dominic. You know best.”

“Damn right,” he growls, and I laugh a little more. I get his belt undone and begin to start on the button of his pants but suddenly his hand is there, stopping me.

“What was that,” he says, and I look up to see eyes on me now. “Earlier – with the Atalaxian Prince?” I bite my lip, pulling my hands away. “Are you mad?”

“Why would I be mad?” he asks, frowning, a little concerned.

“Because I was talking to him,” I say quietly, “by myself. When we sort of agreed that...we’d give them the cold shoulder, and all talk to them together.”

“He cornered you, though, didn’t he? Didn’t give you a chance?”

“But that’s also my fault,” I sigh, shaking my head. “I should have just gone with Cora to change Rafe I was stupid, to try to cross the room alone.”

“Ella,” Dominic murmurs, taking my chin in his hand and shaking his head at me. “It’s never so serious that you can’t cross a room alone. Honestly, if it was that dangerous I wouldn’t have put you in that situation.”

“But...I was nice to him, when I should have been cold” I say, grimacing a little. “He was hard to be cold to though, he was...nice, and charming, and he...charmed me a bit.”

“Did he?” Sinclair said, curious.

“Yes,” I say honestly, looking up at him. “I was prepared to cut him, to push past and move immediately to your side but – honestly, Dominic, he was really nice to me, and easy to talk to. I felt instantly disarmed.”

Sinclair hums a little, intrigued and a little worried. I stay quiet for a moment, letting him sort through his thoughts, watching his eyes go a little vague as I see him turn things over. When he focuses again on me, I know he’s made a decision.

“He surprised me as well,” Sinclair says, his voice even and considerate. “I didn’t expect one of them to single themselves out, to...suggest that there were divisions in their faction. If it’s a ploy by them, it is...a strange one. Though not unconvincing? I don’t know. I need to talk to my dad about it – see what he thinks.”

“I think that’s a good idea,” I murmur, bringing my hands back to their place on Sinclair’s warm body now, wiggling myself closer.

“But Ella,” Sinclair says, his voice still serious, letting me know he’s not finished. I look up into his eyes again. ” Be careful with him, all right? He’s been ...curious about you. I haven’t missed the way he focuses on you. It may also be a tactic a part of their

plan. Just... be on your guard and trust your instincts when it comes to this Prince, yes?"

"All right, Dominic," I murmur, nodding to him. "I promise I will."

"Good girl," he growls, wrapping a hand around my back and pulling me tight against him again before using that same hand to begin to work at the zipper that trails down my spine.

"So," I say pouting a little as I slip my hand down his stomach, into the top of his pants, reaching for him.

"I'm not in any trouble?"

Sinclair's growl deepens as I take the wide, hard mass of him into my hand and begin to slowly stroke.

"Why, little mate," he rumbles, his voice catching a little, "Did you want to be?"

His hand slips into the open back of my dress now, taking a full handful of my ass into his palm, making my breath come hot and short.

"Well," I whisper, smiling a little bit as I tilt my face up to his, bringing my mouth close so that I say my next words directly onto

his lips. "Maybe just a little bit..."

My mate snarls, a vicious noise that makes me smile, before lifting his hand into the air and delivering a sharp smack right in the place it just left, right on my ass.

The sharp feel of it reverberates through me and I moan louder now but before I can make much noise at all my mate silences me with his mouth over mine.

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#Chapter 439 – Coronation Ella

Sinclair and I wake up only a few short hours later, our clothing spread out all over the bed and floor all around us, because today is the big day.

I groan a little when I feel Sinclair stir.

“No,” I murmur, wrapping my arm around him and pulling him back down. Or, I should say that he lets me pull him back down.

Because there’s no way I’m strong enough to physically make my big scary Alpha do anything he doesn’t want to do.

But he is sweet, and obliges me.

“I know,” he murmurs, cupping my face in his gigantic hand. “I’m sorry, trouble. But we’ve got to get up and look pretty for our big day.”

“Let’s just go ugly,” I sigh. “Really... lower expectations for the rest of your reign. You can rule in sweatpants and t- shirts. They’ll call you the Comfortable King.”

He laughs, and I can feel him shake his head.

“Come on, Ella,” he cajoles. ” Don’t you want to look pretty to match the crown?”

I crack an eye open, tempted. Because honestly, I forgot about the crown. I’ve been very much looking forward to the crown.

He laughs again, looking down at me. There she is,” he says, smiling at me. ” My little magpie. Come on, gorgeous.”

“Fine,” I sigh, sitting up straight with a pout. “But I am having two cups of coffee today, which means that that one-” I say, pointing

to the baby, “is going to be all jittery all day.”

“A compromise I think we can accept for one day,” Sinclair says, pulling me close. I turn my face up to him, sensing that he wants

it, and Sinclair kisses me long and lingering. As he does he passes feelings to me down the bond pride, and happiness, and a great deal of contentment.

And I pass him back my own feelings much the same, as well as a great deal of hope and pleasure to see him lead this nation for which he's fought for so long. When Sinclair breaks our kiss, he beams down at me.

"Thank you," he murmurs, shaking his head at me in wonder. And I smile back. "You're going to be a wonderful King, Dominic."

He wraps his arms tight around me, taking a deep breath, simply accepting my faith in him. And I let him hold me tight and warm, pleased to the end of me to see this day finally begin.

We only let go of each other when Rafe gives a little squeak, wondering why we've let him lay alone in his little crib for so long even though we clearly know he's awake.

Sinclair and I both laugh.

"He wants in on the love," I say happily, crawling away from my mate and getting out of bed to gather my little baby in my arms.

"It's a big day for him too," Sinclair says, likewise getting out of bed and coming over to the two of us, kissing Rafe on the head.

"He'll be a Prince, after all, once the day is done."

"Hear that!?" I say to the baby, laughing a little.

"Little Prince Rafe! Cutest little heir to the throne that there ever was!"

“True, ” Sinclair murmurs, dropping a kiss to my head too and then moving towards the bathroom as I take Rafe to his changing table to get him ready for our big day.

The day, as predicted, is...incredibly long.

I starts with a great deal of formality as Sinclair leads me into a room that is a strange mix of auditorium and conference

chamber, with the kind of stadium seating all around that looks more like...I don't know, a college lecture hall?

But instead of there being a stage at the front of the room, the seating is on three sides of it, with an elaborate table on the fourth

side of the room and a narrow empty space at the center. Sinclair seats himself at the center of elaborate table, with me to his

right and his father to his left. I look behind me and grin when I see Cora and Roger come into the room, dressed in the

traditional formal clothing of nobility of Moon Valley.

Sinclair and I are likewise formally dressed, with me in a burgundy velvet gown with a matching cape and Sinclair in a sleek

black jacket and pants with a blue sash over the front as well as a great number of medals. I don't know what any of the medals

mean, but he does look dashing.

Which, honestly, is all that matters to me.

I grin down at little Rafe, who is dressed like his father no medals, though – and he grins up at me, giving a little squeal. I smile at him, laughing. “Are you excited for the big day?” I whisper, giving him a little pulse of curiosity down our bond.

He sends me a happy pulse back, letting me know how he feels. A little thrill goes through me, as it always does, to be able to communicate so effectively with my son even though he is so young. And he laughs as he looks up at me, almost as if he’s happy about it too.

I give him a big hug, pressing a couple of kisses to his soft hair, before I feel Sinclair’s warm hand on my back.

“Ready?” he asks, and I beam up at him, giving a single nod.

What happens next takes...hours, and a great deal of patience. But as each of the governors of the distinct provinces of our nation comes forward and affirms Sinclair as their choice for King, I remind myself that this is actually the important thing. The elaborate coronation will come next, but this? Where first the governors and then the individual packs consent to be ruled?

I glance at the smaller cohort of five Atalaxians just visible at the back of the room, knowing that this is not their process: that they rule their people by force and sheer will. And even as I'm bored to the ends of me over the extent of this hours-long process and have to work every minute keeping the boredom off my face so as not to insult our citizens, I recognize the importance of this, of the people having a say in their ruler, even a King.

Their recognition that this man is the best one to lead us.

So as each governor and pack leader pledges their fealty and support, Sinclair gives a deep nod of recognition, and I follow suit, trying to look them all in the eye to let them know that they're seen, that they're heard, and that we will truly do our best.

Still, as the final delegates come forward, I can't help shifting in my chair just a little bit because...it has been a long time. I look jealously down at the little bassinet by my side where Rafe naps, giving a little sigh through my nose.

Must be nice, to be a little baby prince, sleeping through the biggest day of his life.

But then, finally, it is done, and Sinclair takes my hand and helps me to my feet. And as the people cheer he raises our joined hands in a sign of victory.

Our people have elected, unanimously, to support Sinclair's claim for the throne. There were some who took the opportunity to make their doubts known – which is their right – but overall the support was enthusiastic. And I smile out at our people, incredibly pleased that they see what I see in my mate: a warm, dedicated, powerful man who will be good for this nation for all of us.

Rafe sends me an eager little pulse down the bond, letting me know he's awake and a little afraid of all the noise. I drop my mate's hand to pick up the baby, and the crowd cheers anew when they see Rafe in my arms, blinking around at all of them confused.

Sinclair wraps an arm around my shoulders, smiling at both of us. "Ready for what's next?" he asks, eager.

"Yup," I say, grinning up at him. "Time for the crowns!"

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Read Accidental Surrogate for Alpha by Caroline Above Story Chapter 439

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Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 440

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Chapter 440 – The Crowd’s Approval

Ella

We move immediately to the grand hall of the palace, where we met our delegates a few nights ago. Sinclair and I wait quietly in a little room off the side of the entrance for everyone from the first room to move to their chairs in the second, where there are already thousands of people waiting. While there was only room in the first chamber for a small selection of our population, the grand hall is much larger.

And it’s packed.

I squeal a little bit with excitement as I peek through a little velvet curtain that covers a window on the door, excited to see so many people gathered to celebrate with us. I lift Rafe so he can see too, but then I feel a hand on my shoulder and turn to see my sister’s beaming face.

“Ella!” she laughs as I squeal and wrap my free arm around her. She wraps her arms tight around me, rocking me back and forth.

“I’m so happy for you both,” she murmurs into my shoulder, laughing a little. ” Unanimous! It’s unprecedented!”

“Happy for all of us!” I laugh, pulling back to grin at her a little. Rafe reaches for her, happy, and Cora gives him a kiss and a

cuddle, but doesn’t take him from me. Not yet.

I glance behind Cora to see Roger happy at Sinclair’s side, their father with them. They’re speaking with a couple of the Royal aids, who are showing them something on an ipad.

“What is that?” I ask.

“Probably footage from outside,” Cora says, still smiling. “It’s crazy out there, Ella. The streets are filled.”

“Oh,” I say, my expression suddenly falling with worry as I glance towards the door. “Is that...safe?”

“No, the crowds are all really happy,” Cora says, her eyebrows going up. There aren’t a ton of humans, but those who are there

are celebrating.” She takes a moment to smile at me softly. ” They’ve done a lot of analysis and polling, Ella, and they say that

the humans were largely convinced to support Sinclair’s reign because of you.”

“What?” I ask, confused. I mean – I haven’t even been in the public eye for long –

“Yeah,” she says, nodding eagerly. ” They know that you cleared out the refugee camps and got all of those people help – and

they love your story orphan girl, who found her mate by chance, and didn’t even know she was a wolf?

And they don’t know the

details of your divinity or your magic-but there are lots of rumors of your healing going around, and everyone is very excited

about what you can do, and the fact that you’re using your gift on the most needy populations.

You’re kind of like...beloved, Ella!”

I blush at this and swat her away. ” That’s ridiculous, Cora,” I murmur. ” I’m sure you’re exaggerating – it’s all for Sinclair – ”

“No,” she says, serious now. “It’s real, Ella. Wolves and humans alike – they love you.”

I look at the floor a little, blushing harder – and I find that even as I desperately hope that it’s true, I can’t really believe it.

Because I mean I want the people to know that I love them and I’m going to help them. But beloved? That just seems-

“Ready?” Sinclair says, coming over and looking between Cora and I. Roger grins at me from beyond my mate.

“Oh, she’s ready,” Roger laughs, ” She’s been waiting to get her hands on that crown for weeks now.”

“Don’t be jealous, Roger,” I say, raising my chin at him and pretending to be haughty. “Just because you don’t get a crown.”

“It’s true,” he sighs, pretending grief. “I just get a stupid necklace.”

“It’s a livery collar,” Cora sighs, rolling her eyes and moving to his side, looping her arm in his. “If you call it a necklace again I’m going to smack you.”

“If we kill them now,” Roger says in a false stage whisper, loud enough for us to hear, “we can take it all, Cora!”

Cora and I burst out laughing at this clear joke, but Sinclair just glares at his brother and shoves him on his shoulder. “Don’t even think about it, Rog,” he growls. “You don’t want the work.”

“Truth, brother,” Roger says, clapping Sinclair cheerfully on the shoulder. “Your life is safe with me.”

“Boys?” Henry says, rolling over and looking sternly up at his sons. “If you’re done kidding around? We have a coronation to begin.”

Both Sinclair and Roger have the decency to look mildly ashamed of themselves, making Cora and I laugh again.

Sinclair looks down at me, and I nod, letting him know that I'm ready. We rehearsed this all, after all. Sinclair will go first, and then me second, and then Cora will take Rafe and she, Roger, and Henry will go down the long aisle to the front of the room, where the thrones sit. It's all been timed very precisely, and we've got one chance to get it right. It's televised, after all, and Henry emphasized how important it was for us to let the world see us as dignified, serious people who take our responsibilities with the gravity that they deserve. And I agree with him – as much as our family likes to joke around and tease, I know that in our hearts we're all determined to show the people of our nation the respect they deserve.

So, collectively, we all pull ourselves together. Sinclair drops a lingering kiss to my lips and then moves to the door, where his aids are waiting to give him any final briefs. I exhale a deep breath and stand behind him, passing Rafe to Cora after giving him a kiss on the cheek. The baby grumbles a

little but goes to her and I spread my hands down over my velvet dress, hoping to hell that I'm not all wrinkled and don't have any baby spit-up over my shoulder or anything.

Cora and Roger settle in line behind me with Henry and my pulse begins to speed up as the door before us opens and I hear the crowd roar their approval. Sinclair sends one last smile over his shoulder to me and then moves forward, moving slowly and deliberately into the room to walk down the long aisle to the throne he has claimed with the support of his people.

The aids smile at me, waving me gently forward. I move just to the edge of the door, not letting the people see me yet – as was planned – and, when the count reaches the two-minute mark – meaning that Sinclair has reached the throne – the aids wave at me, signaling me to begin.

Taking a deep breath, I step towards the door, and then through it, and a huge roar bursts out in the room. A blush raises on my cheek as a smile bursts onto my face.

I bite my lip a little – because I know that I'm supposed to be dignified and serious right now, but the way that they're cheering for me –

I can't help it. I raise a hand to my heart, and bow my head a little, completely overwhelmed and humbled by their approval.

Contrary to my intent, the cheering only increases. I laugh a little, shaking my head and then begin to walk forward.

But even as the crowd claps and cheers, I hear a noise behind me that makes me turn, just a little bit. My little baby – Rafe – crying for me.

And my heart breaks as I feel him sending pulses down the bond, looking for me a little afraid of all the noise and being left

alone, even though he loves his auntie Cora.

Still, he's looking for me –

And despite the fact that I know I should move forward, that all of this is timed-

I turn back, seeking my son.

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