

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha by Caroline Above Chapter 317

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#Chapter 317 – Difficult Memories

Cora

“Um, should we go get Ella?” I ask, hesitant. Because while I do just want to spill everything right

here, right now, while I feel so safe with Roger, I do know that Ella will want to hear this. And

quite frankly, I don’t want to tell it twice.

Roger stays still for a moment but then he starts to move. “Sure, Cora,” he says, taking his arm from around my shoulders and climbing off the bed. “I’ll go get them now –”:

I see him walking towards the door and instantly miss his warmth beside me. Suddenly, I **very** much don’t want to be alone in this room. “I’ll come with you,” I say in a hurry, scootching off the bed and moving to his side.

“All right,” he says, smiling down at me as he opens the door. Then, we both move through it together, me just a step behind so that Roger can lead the way. I glance at the grandfather clock down the wall – still a little askew, I realize, from one of Ella’s wheelchair adventures – and see

that it’s early – probably too early to wake them, when they’ve gotten so little sleep.

“Should we,” I say, hesitating as we arrive at their bedroom door, but Roger just shakes his head at me. “They’ll want to know,” he **says**, twisting the knob and pushing the door open just a crack so

we can peek inside.

We're met with an instant snarl as Sinclair sits up in bed, hearing the door open and reacting instantly against a potential threat. I gasp, falling back a step, but Roger's hand is instantly on my back, holding me steady.

"It's all right, Dominic," Roger calls out, pushing the door open fully so Sinclair and Ella can see us. I see, then, that the pair of them were already mostly awake – Ella nursing Rafe quietly in bed

while Sinclair dozed next to her. The instinctual fear that kindled in me at the sound of Sinclair's

snarl begins to fade as I see the actual sweet reality of the scene before me.

"Cora!" Ella, cries, working to stand up, but I move into the bedroom before she can.

"**No**," I say, crossing the room to her bedside. "Stay down – you're busy, obviously

"**Are you** all right?" she asks, worried, reaching out a hand to take mine.

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"**Um**," I say, looking between her and Sinclair, blushing a little to see that Sinclair is mostly naked. Roger, at my side again, doesn't blush at all even though he can see **most of** Ella's breast as she

mothers all the time – but the casual way that wolves accept the naked body...I'm not sure I'll ever

get used to it.

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I'm reminded, quite suddenly, **of** Hank's awkwardness when confronted with Ella and Sinclair's

frank comfort with their bodies and their sexuality – he’s a surgeon, after all, not an OBGYN – and

suddenly I think –

Oh my god, Hank.

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I haven’t – I haven’t contacted him all since I’ve been here at Ella’s house, he’s probably going

crazy with worry – honestly, I haven’t even thought of him, and suddenly I feel so incredibly

guilty considering that last night we...

Blushing, I feel in my pockets for my phone, but it’s not there

“Everything... all right?” Roger asks, looking down at me with concern and maybe a little bit of suspicion.

“Fine,” I return, giving him a false little smile and folding my hands neatly in front of me. I’ll contact Hank later. Now, we’ve got more important things to do. “Ella,” I say, looking at her seriously again. “I...I remember things. Important things. I think you should hear it.”

“All right,” Ella says, her eyes wide and genuine, curious but not pressuring me.

“Whenever you’re

ready.”

Ella

Cora sits down on my bed, exhaling a deep, shaky breath. I look up at Roger curiously for a second, but his eyes are trained on my sister, watching, listening. I adjust my hold on Rafe, who is still happily eating, and lean back against Sinclair, who wraps his arms around me for physical and emotional support.

“I can’t believe I forgot it,” Cora says, looking down at her hands and shaking her head. “It’s like a nightmare **you** forget about it in the morning when you wake up, but then something reminds **you** of it, and it all comes crashing back.”

“What is it, Cora?” I whisper, wanting to let her go at her own pace but also dying to know.

“**The** man,” she says, looking up and meeting my gaze. “Don’t **you** remember him, Ella?”

“I—I **didn’t** see him, Cora,” I say, shaking my head.

“I didn’t see what **you** saw in the hypnosis.

Maybe if I did – I’d have the same memories – but, no...”

“He’s – he’s been following us our whole lives,” Cora whispers, looking down at her hands. I can

see tears starting in her eyes again and my heart wrenches to see her so upset. “He never

approached us – never spoke to us. But I would see him, like a specter from a dream – suddenly,

he’d be there. Standing across the school yard, watching us. At the end of the hall in the dark,

watching us. And then, once, at the foot of my bed in the orphanage – I saw him, standing there,

watching me sleep

Cora's voice catches now and she presses a hand to her neck, closing her eyes tight against the

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memory. "And every time I saw him – I'd forget him, until I saw him again – and then I'd remember –"

"Oh, Cora," I coo, leaning forward towards her. "That's so horrible

"And he's the one," she says, raising her eyes and shaking her head at me. "He's the one who made

me switch the sperm samples – I'm so sorry, Ella – it's all my fault it really was me who did it – "

"No, Cora," I say, fierce, taking her hand and squeezing it hard. "You did everything right – that

priest, he did something to you, hypnotized you, made you forget.

"Don't forget, Cora," Sinclair adds, his deep voice sympathetic. "We're not new to this – the priests

who followed Ella her whole life, they wiped memories from her mind as well."

"But they're not the same priests," Cora breathes, looking between Sinclair and me and wiping a tear from her eye. "I can tell – I know it in my bones. There's a tie there, some ...similarity. But they're not the same order. This man he – he serves someone else. Not the Goddess"

I look between

Roger and Sinclair, who know more about shifter religion than I do. “Are you aware of some...subset? Or a cult of priests? Who wear black robes?”

“No,” Roger replies, breathing out a long breath as he runs a hand through his hair. “I tried to do some research last night before I fell asleep, but I came up empty. That doesn’t mean it’s a dead end, though there are lots of people who have better access to occult archives than I do.”

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“But don’t **you** see?” Cora asks, looking between the three of us. “It’s it’s me. I’m the tie. I’m the thing that brings it all together.”

I turn my head and stare at **my** **sister**, not understanding. “Ella,” she says, leaning forward. “That priest – he let me see him, let us see him, when we were girls. He wiped the memories from our

If **he’d** wanted to do it invisibly, he could have. Ella, he wanted us to know him, **to** recognize him.”

She swallows, taking her hand from mine and gripping her own hands together in her lap. “He

wanted to be seen.”

“We don’t know that, Cora,” Ella replies, shaking her head. “We don’t know the details – it could

have been a mistake, you seeing him. And – and me, **if** you say **I** was there.”

“But don’t you see, Ella?” Cora whispers. “He’s been following us our whole lives. Us, not just you.

Me, somehow? Somehow...I've been part of this plan all along."

"Well," I say softly, "you, too, are the daughter of a goddess. If he somehow knew our history, and

wanted a child of her line..."

"Then it makes sense," Cora whispers, finishing my sentence when I cannot, "that he'd want two

viable options."

I stare at my sister, my heart dropping as I realize that this...is so much deeper, and more

complicated, than we ever could have known.