

Accidental Surrogate For Alpha By Caroline Above Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Brother

Ella

288 Vouchers

The stranger looks a lot like Sinclair, and the word “brother” strikes my interest. If they’re siblings, why is Sinclair looking at him so harshly? They don’t seem friendly at all.

“This is Ella.” Sinclair announces, sliding his arm around my waist. “My future mate, and the mother of my pup.”

“Our pup.” The words are out of my mouth before I can stop them. I’m not sure why I said it, but the way Sinclair declared the pups as his – as if it belonged to him and not me – brought out my maternal instincts. I even growled a little as I staked my claim, making Sinclair’s lips quirk with amusement.

“You don’t really believe that, do you?” The man scoffs. “I’ve never seen or heard of you before, I didn’t have the faintest idea my brother was expecting, and he hasn’t even marked you.” I realize he’s right. Sinclair had mentioned scent marking me before the campaign dinner – whatever that means – but he hasn’t done it yet. Luckily his pup’s presence is strong enough to make me smell like a wolf, but this man clearly isn’t fooled by our pretense as a couple. “Let me guess, he just picked you up off the street because you make such a pretty womb?” A low rumble is vibrating against my side as Sinclair’s wolf begins to growl. Meanwhile I flush with embarrassment, it’s not the truth, but it’s close enough to make me want to hide behind Sinclair’s strength and dominance. Where did that come from? The little voice in my head asks. You’ve never hidden from a problem or backed down from a challenge a day in your life. That’s true, but then again, I’ve never had anyone to hide behind before.

288:Vouchers

The man is still speaking, making fun of my naivete for expecting Sinclair to honor my role as our baby’s mother. “And you actually think he’ll keep you around once you squirt the kid out? Clearly brains and beauty don’t go hand in hand.”

“Clearly ugliness and cynicism do.” I bite back, feeling bolstered by Sinclair’s steady presence at my side. “If you ask me the fact that you haven’t heard about me says more about your low status than my own. You’re obviously not important enough to warrant the Alpha’s time.” Sinclair chuckles darkly, giving me a small squeeze to show his approval. “She has a point, Roger.”

The man, Roger, glares at his brother before offering me a look that almost appears pitying. “Mark my words, he’ll toss you to the curb at the first opportunity.”

I notch my chin up, “You underestimate me, and Dominic.” I announce, feeling a thrum of excitement to speak his given name for the first time. I think it’s actually coming from the baby, as if I can feel Sinclair’s pleasure to hear me saying it through our pup. “He has more honor in his little finger than you do in your entire body. That much is obvious and I’ve only just met you.”

Roger opens his mouth to argue back, but Sinclair stops him. “Roger, give it a rest. Show some respect to your future Luna.”

“Really Dominic, you’re going to keep up this act?” He counters fiercely. “How did you even manage this, aren’t you sterile? How do you know the brat she’s carrying is even day in your life. That’s true, but then again, I’ve never had anyone to hide behind before.”

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In a flash Roger is suspended in the air, with Sinclair’s huge hand circling his throat, holding him aloft. He squirms and tugs at Sinclair’s white knuckled fingers, but I don’t think he’s truly afraid because he shoots me a triumphant smirk. “More honorable, huh?” Roger quips. “You certainly have an interesting definition.”

“Do not speak about my pup that way.” Sinclair snarls, “I know it’s mine because we are bonded already, and I will be bonded to Ella after our formal mating ceremony. If anyone needs to learn some manners, it’s you.”

Roger shrugs. “What do you expect, we never had a mother.” He shoots another scathing look in my direction, “It’s a shame your pup won’t either. You could at least have the dignity to be honest with her.”

Before I can keep track, Sinclair has dropped him to the floor. “Get out, before I really lose my temper.”

Roger clambers to his feet and calls over the blonde woman who fought me over the blue dress. “Come on, Sasha, we’re leaving.” Before they depart however, Roger offers his brother one final scowl. “You miscalculated badly today, brother. What do you think the Alpha council is going to say when they find out you attacked your own family in broad daylight

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over nothing more than a few honest words? The council wants a stable king, not a loose cannon. Clearly that pup hasn’t done a da*n thing to

even you out. Just you wait, your campaign is going to be over by the end of tomorrow's dinner."

Part of me wants to run after Roger and kick him right in the
11.35

behind, I can't believe what just happened. I don't blame Sinclair either, I don't think his aggression had anything to do with being unmated, I think it was because he feels so protective of his pup, and by extension – me. Besides, his brother has to know what a sore spot his fertility struggles are. How cruel does a person have to be to bring up such a thing.

"I'm sorry about that, Ella." Sinclair's attention is already back on me.

"I shouldn't have lost control that way."

"If I'd been strong enough to attack him, I would have done it myself." I confide, leaning into his warmth. His energy is still very agitated, and all my instincts are driving me to comfort him the same way he's comforted me today. "What did you mean about a mating ceremony?"

"Oh," He shakes his head, brushing the topic aside. "That's just for show during the election. I don't expect you to actually go through with it. It's simply a way of explaining to people why you don't bear my mark."

"Oh." I murmur. Why does that disappoint me so much? I know Sinclair is handsome, but we're different species and he's completely controlling, I can't truly be attracted to him

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Even as I think it, I breathe in his scent, and feel heat begin to pool low in my belly. Snap out of it! I scold myself. That's just the baby, it wants to be near its father. It's just another wolfy mindlink thing... isn't it?

I look up to Sinclair to make sure he's not watching me struggle to untangle these confusing feelings, and for once, his attention is very far away. My relief immediately gives way

to sympathy as I take in his distant expression. "Don't be offended – but your brother is an ass

*ole." I say gently.

Sinclair looks down at me, his grim features softening to a smile. "You

can say that again.”

“Do you want to talk about it?” I press, curious but not wanting to intrude on his private business.

“Oh,” He sighs, dragging a hand through his hair. “Roger and I... we’re very different people – as you saw. We’ve never gotten along.”

“Why not?” I inquire.

Sinclair’s face darkens, and I worry that I’ve pushed into such sensitive territory that he’ll refuse to tell me any more, however he surprises me again. “I took his mother away from him. She died protecting me, and he’s never forgiven me. There was already bad feelings between us – he’s older, but I was always stronger. It was clear from a young age that I, and not he, would be my father’s heir. So there was always jealousy and competition – then Mom sacrificed herself for me, and that was it.”

“I’m so sorry.” I express, intuitively wrapping my arms around him for a hug. I can tell he’s surprised, I don’t think many people instigate hugs with the future king, but I’m not a wolf, and all I see is a man in need of affection in front of me. His arms come around me in reply, and his voice purrs in my ear. “You really are full of surprises, you know that?” “What’s so surprising?” I ask against his chest, using the excuse to breathe in his delicious scent again. “You hugged me when I needed it – why shouldn’t I return the favor?”

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“I’m just used to taking care of others, that’s all.” He shares.

“And I don’t know anyone brave enough to touch me without permission.”

“And here I thought wolves were supposed to be all tough and brave.” I joke, pressing my nose to his pec. “They sound like a pack of scaredy-cats to me.”

Sinclair laughs, sounding like a completely different man than the haunted creature he’d been a moment ago. “You know, if you keep this up I’m not going to be able to wait until tomorrow to scent mark you.” I’m getting ahead of myself now, feeling overconfident amidst his praise and safe to poke his buttons now that his horrible brother has gone away.

“Why are you?”

“Because I want it to be strongest before the campaign dinner.” Sinclair explains.

“It wears off?” I ask, putting two and two together.

“Your scent is getting so strong sometimes I forget how little you know about our ways. Did Aileen explain anything about this to you?” He questions.

“No – I think she was more concerned with teaching me political things.”

His eyes light up, though I don’t know why. “So you don’t even know what scent marking is?”

“No.” I flush, waiting for him to continue. When he doesn’t I prompt, “are you going to tell me?”

“No.” He replies slyly. “I’m going to show you.”

