

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 198

Ella

I pace back and forth outside Gabriel's chambers, absolutely beside myself over Philippe's fate. I have the worst feeling that Sinclair is going to fire or demote the guard because of my actions, and I'm already preparing a furious speech to deliver to my mate if he does so. I can't hear a single word of their conversation because the King's chambers are soundproofed – a luxury I decide Sinclair and I should definitely invest in when we return home.

The waiting is horrible, but eventually my faithful guard emerges, looking thoroughly dejected. I can't stop myself from racing up to him with man energy. "Did he demote you? Is he still on the call –I'll talk to him–"

"Woah," He catches me by the shoulders. "It's okay, Ella. He didn't demote me, he just did a lot of yelling"

"Im so sorry." I profess wringing my hands.

"Don't be." Philippe says evenly, staring me straight in the eye so I can see the honesty in his expression. "You were right. Being someone's guard is a really intimate relationship. You have to trust me with your very life, with all your secrets

He sighs, shaking his head. "Most people get to choose their guards but you didn't pick me, you didn't even know who I was when Dominic assigned me to you."

"So?" I protest, still feeling indignant on his behalf.

"So it's right that I should have to prove myself to you." He chuckles. "Trust has to be earned."

Philippe pauses, giving me an assessing look. "But I have to tell you that if it had gone on much longer. I don't think I could've kept it up.. part of protecting you means looking out for your health and well-being even when you don't want me to do it. You weren't doing well and I'm glad Dominic got through to you. I don't want to be in that position again."

"I respect that." I reply contritely. "And Ill try to do better." I promise, wondering if my sudden urge to explain myself is actually to help him understand, or to make myself feel better. I have a terrible sense that it's the latter, but I forge ahead anyway as we begin walking down the opulent corridor."

These last few months have gone by in such a whirlwind. My entire life is different now and I'm still struggling to catch up."

"It's so strange to me that I matter to people now..three and a half months ago I was alone in the World. I had my sister and no one else. And now I'm a wolf and I'm going to be a mother, and I have a mate and a pack, and I'm in charge of a world I didn't know existed, and I'm in the middle of a war, and I might even have parents out there somewhere." I know I'm rambling, and Goddess love Philippe for standing beside me and listening without judgment. "I love it, but it's still hard. I'm still suffering major growing pains... maybe most of all when it comes to being part of a pack and not just being a lone wolf anymore." I confess, wincing.

When I look over I find Philippe watching me closely. He leans back on his heels, pursing his lips. "Is that part of why you're so intent on continuing the hypnosis?"

"Which part?" I inquire, not even sure about all the words I just blurted out.

"The fact that your parents might be out there somewhere." Philippe clarifies, "I don't think any of us... I mean we all realized you'd been left with the humans and that the Goddess was involved, but I think maybe we were so distracted by how amazing it all is that we didn't consider what it might mean for a woman who probably spent her entire childhood praying that her parents might turn up one day and tell her it had all been a mistake"

My eyes widen, and suddenly I feel very vulnerable. I wrap my arms around myself. "What orphan doesn't have those fantasies?" I shrug."

Cora and I used to say our parents were spies working together on a top secret project for the government and that they'd had to leave us in the orphanage for our safety. But they left us together so we wouldn't have to be alone." I smile at the bittersweet memory. "But we grew up... and we realized that we just weren't wanted. We weren't any more special than any of the abandoned kids in that horrible place."

Philippe is still watching me, and I realize I haven't answered him. "I think it's part of it." I confess. "I've been saying I have to find out where I came from – which is true. But in my brain finding out where I came from is one in the same as finding out who my parents were and why they left me." I chafe my arms, feeling suddenly cold. "

And maybe that's why I've kept Cora out of it too.. because for the first time since I was eight, I feel like there's hope I might find the answers... and that's not a chance she has."

He nods. "It's funny the things that can motivate us without us even realizing it." He observes.

That's why therapy is so useful."

"Oh come on." I groan, thinking of my mate's edict.

"Not you too!"

Philippe raises his hands in self defense, "hey, I'm just following my orders."

"Suuurre." I deride, throwing my arms up. "That's what they all say."

Two days later I'm back in the sitting room with Leon, Henry, and my small audience of babysitters.

They've all agreed to leave Leon and me in private for the therapy session following today's ether trip – a fact the therapist was only too smug about- but for now they've all piled into the room to show support.

The drug is already taking hold of me, but this time I don't need any guidance from Leon to travel into the past. As soon as the walls come down in my mind, I'm taken even farther into my memories than I've gone before.

I'm six years old, and for the first time ever, I have a visitor.

The headmaster didn't tell me who the strange lady is, or why she's here so late at night, but she's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. The strange thing is that I find it hard to take in all of her features at once. I can only focus on one aspect at a time, and when I do I get so lost in the feature that it feels impossible to look away.

She has long gold hair, so starkly metallic and luminous that it looks like strands of pure starlight. Her eyes are wide and dark, and if I look closely enough, I swear there are whole galaxies swirling in her inky irises. Her limbs are long and willowy, and with the way the shadows ebb and sway around her, I can't be sure where they end.

Her skin is fairer than any I've ever seen, and it seems to glow like mother of pearl. She wears a dress of gentle white fabric that reminds me of clouds, and being near her gives me the strangest surge of energy. I'm finding it hard not to bounce off the walls, but I know grown ups get mad when kids get hyper and then bad things happen.

"Did you hear me, Ella?" She asks in a voice that is both musical and soft like a summer breeze.

"Oh." I peek up at her face, feeling dizzy when all her stunning features combine. "No, sorry. I's distracted."

"That's okay." She assures me gently, and my tense muscles relax. "I came to tell you a story."

"Really?" I ask in awe. The only stories I ever hear are from bigger kids, and they're usually not nice–"

Is it a nice story?"

"In some ways." She answers, tilting her head. "In some others it's sad, but it's a story you need to hear all the same."

"Why?" I inquire, in the way of all curious children.

"Because one day you'll need to remember it, so you can find your way back home." She informs me, with more patience than I've ever seen in a grown up.

"Okay" I consent, not really sure what's coming.

"Would you like to sit in my lap?" She offers, "I think maybe you find it hard to look at me."

I nod shyly, though less because I want to stop enjoying her beauty, than because I want to experience what it's like to be held – just once. I'm not really sure how to go about it, but she plucks me up into her arms and settles me in her lap. Her body is warm and cool at once, reminding me of a light in the darkness. no, not just any light but moonlight.