

# Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 208

## #Chapter 208 - Cora Comforts Roger

3rd Person

Cora wasn't sure what she was doing.

Her sister needed her, so why was she walking away from Ella's suite? Why wasn't she offering to help make arrangements for a funeral, or trying to help Henry convince the stubborn Luna to accept her loss and focus on caring for herself and the baby? Why was she determinedly walking the same path she had only nights before, when she'd been vulnerable and reckless enough to seek out Roger?

Because you've lost your damn mind. She thought bitterly. Worrying about a man who doesn't deserve your time or attention - someone who betrayed his own family and endangered Ella's life. So what if he's gorgeous and clever, so what if he understands you even better than you understand yourself... and makes your stomach go all soft and squishy everytime he looks at you with those fierce wolf eyes... he's still a scoundrel. He can't be trusted.

But despite Cora's confused inner musings, she was worried. She hadn't seen hide nor hair of Roger since the news broke about Sinclair's death - and that was three days ago. Ella may not have realized it, but after she collapsed the doctor sedated her for a full 72 hours, and Cora knew that was part of why this was such a struggle. Ella was waking up as if his death had just happened, but the rest of them had been battling through the last few days without her. They'd exhausted every possibility, every hope, and eventually accepted what Ella could not.

When she reached Roger's rooms, Cora knocked softly, unsure if he was even there. However her question was soon answered, when a bitter growl sounded from somewhere inside. "Go away!"

"Roger, it's me." Cora called, fighting back a quiver of fear. "I just wanted to check on you."

"I said go away." He barked again, and Cora thought she heard something smash.

Taking a deep breath, Cora summoned all her courage, briefly wondering if she'd lost her mind. She knew better than to interfere with a man in such a state, and though his harsh words and angry tone sent nervous tremors through her body, she couldn't help herself. She turned the door handle and warily opened the door. The scene which met her was more concerning than anything she'd imagined.

His suite was a bit larger than hers, but no less opulent - at least it had been. Now it lay in ruins - every piece of furniture had been broken or toppled, every decorative vase and framed portrait smashed and ripped. Papers and shards of glass, pottery and wood fragments littered the floors, making the room nearly impassable. Cora sucked in a shocked breath, pressing her hand over her mouth to suppress the sound.

"What the hell are you doing? Don't you have ears?" Roger snapped, appearing in the door to the bedroom. He was shirtless, dark trousers slung low on his hips, muscles rippling on his abdomen and arms. His dark hair was tousled and a thick layer of stubble swathed his cheeks. In his balled fist he held a half empty bottle of dark brown liquor, and he was swaying slightly on his feet, his eyes unfocused.

Cora cursed in her mind, suddenly wishing she'd come earlier. Roger was clearly in very bad shape, and she wasn't sure if he was a threat to her in this condition. "I'm sorry." She stammered, trying and failing to look at anything but the mess or his contoured muscles. "But, from the looks of it, you're not doing well."

"Of course I'm not doing well!" Roger bit, taking a swig from the bottle and stalking forward. He trod over the debris as if he didn't even realize it was there, and Cora winced as glass and splinters dug into the soles of his bare feet. Blood seeped out to blend in the wreckage, and Cora gulped as he drew nearer. "My baby brother is dead." Roger reminded her - as if she could forget. "How would you be?"

Cora felt herself cowering, even though she knew better. The last thing you're ever supposed to do with an irate wolf is behave like prey, and here she was flooded with adrenaline and contemplating flight. "Not like this." Cora managed to utter, glancing again at the destroyed suite, i

"Well I'm sorry if my grief is messier than yours." Roger sniped, closing the door behind her and making her flinch.

Why do you even care? I thought you were never speaking to me again."

"I wasn't planning on it," She admitted, "but given what happened I... I just thought..."

"Wanted to check to see if I was celebrating?" Roger suggested coldly, still prowling forward until Cora had no choice but to back away, her shoulder blades colliding with the door. "I finally got what I wanted right? Dominic out of the way and the pack in need of an Alpha?"

"Of course not!" Cora countered sharply. "I knew you would be sad, I just wasn't prepared for you to be quite so..." She trailed off, trying to find the right word before he growled and she involuntarily squeaked, "rabid."

Roger laughed without humor. "Why not? Don't you think I'm some sort of monster? Isn't this exactly what you expect of me?"

"Stop it!" Cora hissed, trying to cease the shaking in her voice. "I know what you're doing Roger and you can't bully me into leaving so that you can carry on wallowing this way."

"Why? Isn't it working?" He demanded, lowering his head to her neck and drinking in her scent. Cora's stomach flipped, and she could smell the whisky on his breath. "I can taste your fear, little human. That's how strong it is. So why aren't you running away?"

"I'm not going to." Cora insisted, clenching her eyes shut. "Because I know you won't hurt me."

"Is that so?" Roger rumbled ominously, trailing a finger down the length of her arm, extending a claw but only letting it graze her with a featherlight touch. "And how do you know that."

"You said it yourself." Cora croaked, trying to ignore the sensation of his warm breath on her skin, his proprietary touches, which seemed to set her entire body ablaze. "We're kindred spirits. I know that no matter how terrible and unforgivable your thoughts might have been towards your brother at the height of your anger and jealousy, losing him is a loss from which you will never recover. And your grief is all the worse for how cruel you've been to him in the past."

She gulped, "And I... I know you won't hurt me because I'm not the one you're angry with... I'm not the one you hate."

"So who is?" Roger asked, his gravelly voice like a caress.

"Yourself." Cora breathed, wondering how in the Goddess's name she could be so frightened and turned on at the same time. She couldn't deny the way standing up to an unhinged wolf terrified her, but the mere fact that she was able to do so was something of a miracle. Cora had never been able to stand up to anyone this way, and Roger was a hundred times more dangerous than any of the people she'd come up against in the past. Then there was the way he was looking at her, the way he was touching her - impossibly gentle despite his menacing behavior.

She watched as her accusation hit home, and suddenly Roger's eyes shuttered. His shoulders sagged as some of the chaotic energy ebbed out of him, and the next thing Cora knew, he was resting his forehead on her shoulder, one of his powerful hands gripping her waist as tightly as he gripped the liquor bottle. "I just got him back..." Roger murmured miserably. "I wasted so many years blaming him for things he couldn't control, ignoring him when all he wanted was to be my friend." A drop of moisture landed on Cora's skin, and she realized Roger was crying. Tentatively, Cora wrapped her arms around his broad shoulders, wondering how it was possible for anyone to be so huge. She settled one hand in his dark hair, stroking the silky locks as he continued to bare his soul.

"I was never the brother I should have been. I never looked out for him or taught him about the world. I didn't protect him when we were little, and I didn't do it now - when he needed me most." He heaved a sob. "It was my job and I failed him." i

The liquor bottle dropped to the ground, just one more piece of debris in all the ruin, and Roger clamped his arms around Cora's middle, squeezing her tightly as he bore his soul. Any threat or sensual intent was gone now, and Cora stroked and soothed him as he wept. There were tears in her own eyes too, in sympathy for his loss, but also for her own mistakes with her sister.

This hadn't been what she planned when she came looking for Roger, but she was glad she'd listened to her instincts. Roger clearly needed comforting, and even though she decided not to let this change anything between them, she was only too eager to take care of him... she didn't want to think about why that might be the case. She simply leaned into his arms, and gave him the solace he desperately needed.