

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 228

Chapter 228 - Visit to the Refugee Camp

3rd Person

The next morning Isabel woke to find James in bed beside her, fully clothed and quietly speaking to Sadie, who was snuggled between their bodies. Outside, the caretakers Isabel hired to help with the nursery were already getting the pups up and fed, so she let herself relax a while longer. She peeked one eye open, trying not to think about how nice it would be to have James wrapped around her again. Sadie came first, of course, and she was excited to see her - but her wolf was struggling with her competing desires.

"I don't think it's fair for anyone to be so cute you know." James was saying, his fingers gently tickling her tummy. She grinned and giggled, wriggling and stretching her plump arms. "And that smile! It's criminal. Don't you know people will eat you right up if you show them that dazzling smile? I'm tempted myself, and I love you to pieces."

Sadie babbled happily up at him, speaking her sweet baby language as joy and amusement pulsed through their nascent bond. "Oh no!" James said with theatrical horror. "I don't think I can resist, Sadie bug. It's just too much to bear. I'm going to do it! I'm going to eat you up."

He lowered his mouth to her tummy, kissing her repeatedly and making exaggerated, "nom, nom, nom," noises. Sadie squealed happily, and Isabel couldn't feign sleep any longer. She opened her eyes fully, and found James watching her with a look of reverence and overwhelming affection. "Good morning beautiful."

"Good morning," Isabel mumbled, fighting the blush working up her neck and trying to pretend her insides hadn't just turned to mush. She diverted her eyes to the baby between them. Sadie blinked her gorgeous wide eyes at her adoptive mother, and an incandescent smile stretched over Isabel's features. "Hello my love." She asked, running her hand over the pup's downy head. "How long has she been up?"

"Just a little while ago." James smiled. "She didn't make a sound, just lay there like a little angel."

"That's because she is one." Isabel informed him earnestly, noting that Sadie was already changed and wearing a fresh onesie. She reached through her bond with the little girl, but found she wasn't yet hungry and felt perfectly content just as she was. Appreciation for James welled in her heart, because even though she'd known he would make a loving father and strong protector, not all Alphas are so eager to do the more tedious parenting tasks. "Thank you for letting me sleep in."

"I figured you haven't had the chance in a while." He replied easily, reaching out to stroke her hair. She should have objected, but she couldn't bring herself to say the words. It felt too nice to be touched this way again, and for the first time since meeting her mate, Isabel truly considered what it might be like to make love to another man. She imagined James kissing her, stripping off her clothes and exploring her body with his hands and mouth. Much too quickly, her body began to heat up, and she forced those thoughts from her mind. The last thing she needed was for James to scent her arousal.

"When was the last time you slept in?" Isabel asked instead, genuinely concerned that he made this sacrifice for her.

"Today was sleeping in." James chuckled. "I've been doing five am flights for so long that even making it till now feels like a luxury."

Isabel turned to look at the clock, noting it was already seven. "What about today's flights?"

"Dominic ordered me to take the day off." James admitted with a frown.

"Are you worried how it will go without you?" Isabel questioned, sensing his disquiet.

He shook his head. "I know the other pilots can handle it." James paused, watching as Sadie rolled over and snuggled up to Isabel's breast with a sweet coo. "Oh I see how it is." He joked as Isabel reflexively circled her arms around the pup, cuddling her closer. "Now that Mommy is awake I might as well disappear."

"Nonsense, she loves you." Isabel smiled, trying to block out the sound of her wolf - who was currently demanding that she invite the pilot to hold them.

It turned out she didn't need to, because James's sly wolf immediately took advantage of the extra space between them. He shifted closer and looped an arm around Isabel's waist, the heat of his fingers searing the she-wolf's lower back through the thin fabric of her dress. A noticeable shiver raced down her spine, and Isabel glowered as James smirked. "Tell me why you aren't happy to have a day off." She deflected, trying to breathe in Sadie's pure scent without also taking in the soldier's enticing fragrance.

James sighed, "I know this isn't the case, but part of me worries that Dominic only gave the order because he thinks I've lost my edge." When Isabel looked confused, he continued, "Yesterday we found out that it was probably my fault that the spy who bombed his convoy got into Vanara. The working theory is that he disguised himself as a refugee and snuck onto one of my flights last week."

A beat of silence met his words, and for one horrible moment, James was terrified that Isabel would lose her interest in him. What good was he as a mate or father if he made such grave mistakes? If he couldn't detect lethal threats and endangered the very people he was meant to keep safe?

Instead, Isabel's face transformed from pensive to horrified. "He might have killed you! Do they think Damon is going to send more assassins this way? What if the next one decides to take over the plane? What if his army lies in wait at the coast and ambushes you?" Her panic was so swift and sharp that Sadie began to squirm and fuss, feeling the unpleasant feeling filtering down through their bond.

James's wolf was conflicted. He didn't like seeing Isabel upset one bit, but he certainly enjoyed seeing her so disturbed by the thought of harm coming to him. He began to purr, stroking her spine and pressing his chest to Sadie's back so she could feel the comforting vibrations. "You're not worried about me, are you little wolf??" He asked, only slightly smug.

As he'd hoped, the jibe snapped Isabel back to her usual self, and the frightened look in her brilliant blue eyes faded. "I'm not going to let my daughter lose another parent." She proclaimed sharply, tightening her grip on Sadie and adding her own soft sounds to the soothing efforts. "So help me James, if you make her lose you too, I will never forgive you."

"I have no intention of going anywhere, Isabel." James promised, grazing his knuckles over her cheek. "If someone wants to take me from you two they're going to have one hell of a fight on their hands. I won't go down easily."

"Going down isn't an option at all." Isabel corrected him. "If they try to lay a hand on them, you rip them the shreds and get out of there. Don't go doing noble things like turning back to save babies or..." She trailed off, her voice thick with emotion. She tried to cover it by kissing Sadie's head and averting her eyes, but James saw everything. 1

"Is that really what you'd want?" James questioned, the corner of his mouth quirking as he nodded to Sadie. "For me to leave a precious pup like this sweet muffin behind, just to save my own ass?" They were so close now that he could see the moisture welling in her eyes, and the near imperceptible quiver of her plump lower lip.

"I know I don't want you to die." Isabel replied grumpily, deciding that enough was enough. She started to get out of bed, but James stopped her, keeping her pinned with one strong arm.

"Because you'd miss me?" His suggested, the spike of adrenaline in

Isabel's scent triggering his prey drive. His wolf was coming to the surface, and Isabel's was responding in kind. She was becoming more demanding, wilder and less manageable with every moment that passed.

"Because the pack needs you, and Sadie needs you." Isabel answered fiercely. "Now let me go, I need to feed the baby and get everything ready for the visit this morning. The delegations will be here in a few hours and the nursery is always a mess after breakfast."

"I'll let you go." James agreed, his eyes glowing now, "in exchange for a kiss."

Isabel froze, looking remarkably like a startled rabbit. "Don't be ridiculous." She scoffs, again trying to rise.

"Come on, what's the worst that could happen?" He temped her. "You've kissed me before, and I seem to remember you enjoyed it quite a bit."

"I was distraught." Isabel bit back, "it's not the same."

"Oh I see." James flashed his fangs, "well in that case we'll just have to stay here all day and kiss Sadie bug instead."

Isabel glared, and then an idea struck. "Can I decide where I kiss you?"

"Anywhere you like." James agreed.

"Fine, then I want to kiss your hand." She announced slyly, and James almost laughed. He knew exactly what Isabel intended, but he played along.

"Alright." He extracted his arm from her middle, freeing her from her makeshift cage and opening the door for an escape. The moment his grip loosened on the she-wolf, she attempted to leap up with the baby. Of course, James was ready and waiting, so he jumped up with her and dragged her into his arms.

Isabel barely had time to register what had happened before James was dragging her mouth to his - one powerful hand on her nape, the other

cradling Sadie's head between their bodies. Isabel whimpered as their lips collided, all her defenses falling away. Her wolf howled happily in her head as James expertly claimed her, extracting breathless kisses from her lips over and over again - until neither one of them could remember where they ended, and the other began.