

Accidental Surrogate for Alpha

Chapter 226

#Chapter 225 – Camp Visit

Ella

James is just within reach now, and my wolf can't help but think about how very biteable the soldier suddenly looks, in fact, he looks downright mouthwatering. There's a tender bit of flesh poking over the top of his belt, where muscle and fat stores combine to give the man his barrel-like build. I could easily sink my fangs in there without inflicting permanent harm, not to mention it would hurt like hell. Then again... just in case I do want to do lasting damage... other much more vulnerable parts aren't so far away.

I've never had such bloodthirsty thoughts before, but I also don't question them – not after James suggested the attack on my mate was somehow fortuitous. "Lucky?" I repeat sharply, prowling closer now and trying to remember that Isabel would hate me if I truly hurt him. "Lucky that he lost his Beta and closest advisors? Lucky that he almost lost his own life? Just where do you think this pack would be without him, was it luck that got all those refugees off the continent?"

"No it was me!" James argues back, his color rising. "I'm the one who's been going there every day and witnessing their tragedies. The other and pilots and I have been dealing with this madness all on our own, and now we don't only have to look out for armed attacks, but for spies too? It's too much!"

"And who gave you the planes and money to make the trips?" I counter, my hands on my hips. "Who gave you the other pilots, and a safe place to land? Who worked with Gabriel to give our people a second home here? Who arranged for the nursery where your own daughter now lives?" I'm pacing now, and I can feel Sinclair hovering close behind me, prepared to reach out if I lost control of my wolf completely. "None of that was luck, James. That was all Dominic – all his sacrifices."

"As they should be." James hisses back. "That is the duty he bears, the oath he takes as an Alpha. What you do not understand about being a soldier is that no wolf, no matter how important, is worth the lives of innocent civilians. If it comes down to it, the Alpha should die protecting his people, rather than let them be hurt."

"Well he can't very well go back and hold up the entire front himself!" I burst, throwing my arms out in exasperation. I look to Henry, Gabriel and Roger to back me up, but they only watch in silence. "What would you have him do, James? Go home and set up his army between Damon and the refugees? So that the spies have to go through him first?"

"Maybe he should." James suggests simply, looking past me to my mate.

The taut leash I've been holding on my temper – and my wolf – snaps, and suddenly I'm lunging for the pilot with a vicious growl. A powerful arm catches me around the middle before I can sink my claws in James's handsome face, and a familiar voice purrs in my ear. "Easy now, trouble. James is right."

I swing around to look at him in outrage. "How can you say that, he–"

"Compared to what they might have attempted, we were lucky they only attacked a few high ranking wolves – wolves who were all combatants in this war, rather than civilians. I would always rather the target be me than one of my people. You know that, Ella." Sinclair replies gently. "And putting myself between Damon and the refugees isn't a new idea, baby."

"It isn't?" I inquire, my voice suddenly very small as I turn to look at him.

"No." Sinclair confirms grimly, "And we haven't done it because moving forward would take away our strategic advantage, access to weapons, and the time we need to plan a coup. But it wasn't an easy decision, Ella. I know that our people will hurt worse for the strategy, and when this is all over they'll be within their rights to hold me accountable for that choice."

"It was the only choice." I reaffirm, knowing he doesn't need my approval, but that it always helps. "You can't protect us if you aren't here. No one would begrudge you that."

You still ought to let me bite him. My wolf snipes as I glare daggers at James.

No baby, no biting. Sinclair warns, pulling me close and breathing in my scent.

Come on, just a little one? I whine. He probably won't even feel it

Sinclair looks as though he wants to smile. Then what would be the point?

I think for a moment, adrenaline still pumping through my heart in over time. Vengeance

He chuckles deeply, kissing my neck, "I'm glad we're on the same page." Sinclair declares, and it takes me a minute to realize he's answering my last verbal statement, rather than my ferocious thoughts. "Dwelling on the past won't do us any good now. We need to figure out how to keep this from happening again."

"How, we can't exactly demand their ID papers like a commercial airline – most of them have lost everything but the clothes on their backs." James objects.

"We can send in troops, but that would be like an invitation to Damon." Gabriel adds, "Besides, I don't want the relief efforts to be militarized – it's a recipe for disaster

"Well we've got to do something." Roger states soberly. "That video I showed you is nothing compared to actually being there."

"He's right – we can barely get the planes on the ground, let alone vet the people we're bringing on." James affirms, sounding pained.

"What about all the Vanaran's technologies?" I ask, "They've got drones and state of the art weapons and who knows what else. Isn't there some way we can do surveillance before our transports land?"

"The problem is that not every shifter is in our government databases, most of the IDs would be useless because most of the refugees aren't known to us." Sinclair explains with a heavy sigh.

"But it isn't the unknowns we're worried about." I reason. "The soldiers working for Damon are all civil servants right? And if they aren't, they're rogues and scoundrels that have run into the law in the past. So between service and arrest records, we should be able to identify the majority of Damon's forces with facial ID technology? Right?" I pose, wanting to make sure my logic is correct. "It wouldn't catch everyone, but surely it's better than nothing."

"That's not a bad idea." Henry praises, nodding in approval. "Could we do it without further frightening the refugees? I'd hate for them to see the drones and think they were being attacked."

"If we tell them beforehand..." James suggests hesitantly. "We'd have to be gentle about it so they knew we aren't suspicious of them, just people pretending to be them."

"That's a really difficult line to walk." Gabriel exhales, not sounding discouraged, but daunted. "Our pilots would need to be trained for striking that kind of balance. How do you interrogate someone's identity without accusing them of being a spy?"

I can't withhold a small snort. The men turn to look at me with raised eyebrows, and I huff softly. "By not assuming they are spies. You assume they're innocent and hope you're wrong, not assume everyone is guilty and then force them to prove otherwise." I shake my head, "honestly, treat them with dignity and respect. Only investigate if you have a reason to be nervous, and otherwise trust that the others will sniff out any traitors among them."

"Ella has a point. As long as our enforcers remember who the true enemy is, we can get through this." Henry agrees, "We can keep our people safe without novelxo.com infringing on their rights. We just have to keep our heads on straight."

"Alright, but we still need to increase evacuations. We have confirmation that Damon knows about our operation now. We need to either get everyone out at once, or change strategies." Roger advises.

"I don't think we should do anything just yet." Sinclair sighs. "Damon will be expecting this, waiting for us to lash out in panic."

"Maybe." Gabriel purses his lips, "Do we even know who's advising him anymore?"

"My sources say he's gathered the novelxo.com most spineless of the continents' elder councils – he gave them all the choice to serve him or die, so most of our elders are gone, and only the worst remain." Sinclair explains gravely. "But they aren't all idiots." Silence meets this announcement, and though I might not have grown up among wolves, I can guess what a tremendous loss this is .

"And does Damon know you're still alive?" Henry asks hopefully. "How fast is information traveling between here and home."

"As fast as ever. By now I'm sure he's heard." Sinclair answers, giving me a squeeze.

"I wish there was a way for us to stay completely hidden until the time is right." Henry groans, scrubbing a hand over his face.

"Well there's one way." Roger states stiffly. "We have to find Damon's spy and get rid of them. Dominic I made it my personal mission to find the man responsible for the bomb, but I want to do more. Put me in charge of counter-intelligence. I want to root them out."

"Roger you're already my Beta." Sinclair smiles, "the jobs don't get any more important."

"This one does." Roger confirms. "It's my brother's life, my new sister and nephew – it's everything."

Sinclair smiles. "Then the job is yours."