

Chapter 102 Jane Has A Visitor

Jane

“Luna, you should really try to rest.” The police commander advises, sitting on the sofa while I pace back and forth across the living room. “You’re going to exhaust yourself.”

“And you really shouldn’t call me that.” I say in return. “Ethan and I aren’t married anymore.”

“Well whatever your title,” He amends, “you killing yourself with worry isn’t going to help your pups.”

“Spoken like someone who doesn’t have children.” I grumble. “And by the way, I didn’t see you showing this kind of concern for the Alpha. Why is he allowed to race off and hunt down murderers, but I can’t even pace without ‘exhausting myself.’” I mock, holding up air quotes.

“I’m sorry.” He concedes, “you’re right, I don’t have pups, and I can’t imagine what you’re going through right now. I didn’t mean to be patronizing.”

“That isn’t helpful either!” I snap, “I don’t know why people think it’s comforting to say they can’t imagine another person’s pain. Just make the effort and practice some empathy, rather than pointing out how horrible it is to me.” It’s not until I hear myself, that I realize how loudly I raised my voice. The commander is looking sheepish now, and I can’t help but feel guilty for taking out my fear and frustration on him. “I’m sorry.” I sigh. “I didn’t mean –”

“It’s okay.” He tells me, raising his palms in concession, “emotions are high right now. Trust me, it’s nothing new when you’re in this line of work.””

His understanding only makes me feel worse for lashing out at him. “Be honest with me,” I request, “in these cases, how often do you actually find the pups?”

“When the abduction was reported as quickly as it was? And when we know precisely who has them?” He clarifies, “There’s every reason to be optimistic, Jane.”

“You’re not just saying that?” I press.

“I don’t believe in giving people false hope,” He shares, “I learned better many years ago. If I thought they were done for, I’d be telling you to prepare yourself for the worst.”

“Thank you.” I exhale, sitting down for the first time since we came upstairs.

Of course, the moment I do, a knock sounds on the front door. I’m on my feet and hallways across the room before the commander can stop me. “Wait! It might be–”

I swing the door open without a second thought, and reel back when I see Detective Smithers standing on the other side.

“You!” I snarl, launching myself towards him with a vicious growl. Unfortunately before I can land a single blow to the wretched man, arms like iron bars loop around my middle, pulling me back.

“Let me at him!” I order, “he helped her try to murder my baby! He tried to ruin our lives!”

“And he’s also the only person who might be able to lead us to Eve now. He can’t very well do that if your hands are around his throat, my lady.” The commander scolds, setting me on the ground behind him.

“We don’t know that for sure.” I mutter, “It’s worth testing, at least.”

The commander glances over his shoulder, shooting me an exasperated look. “Or, we can ask him why he’s here.”

“Fine.” I bite, looking past him to the disgraced investigator.“What the hell do you want?”

The man sort of deflates, but he doesn’t look guilty or ashamed for all he’s done, only resigned. “I’m sorry – about everything.” He says gravely, “you have no idea how much I regret what’s happened.”

“Bull.” I cut down the lie before he can say another word. “You forget I’m a mother, detective. I know a real apology from a fake one, and I know when a person is truly sorry versus when they are just trying to escape consequences.”

“She has a point, Smithers.” The commander points out. “One has to imagine that if you truly felt guilt for your actions, they would have stopped before you got caught.”

“Fine.” The disgruntled ex cop mutters, “You don’t have to believe me, but whether I’ve repented or not, I have information to trade.”

“Can I hit him now?” I ask the commander, getting angrier by the minute. “You know I truly believed you were just corrupt – I didn’t think anyone could possibly be so stupid.” I inform him. “But if you think it is a good idea to tell me you have information about my pups, and expect me to give you something for it without ripping your head off first, you’re even dumber than I imagined.”

“What information do you have?” The commander speaks over me, throwing out his arm to stop me from lunging forward again.

“I can lead you to the pups.” The detective offers, “but I want immunity.”

“Immunity?” The commander repeats, “from what? Being charged in the kidnapping?”

“From being charged with anything.” He corrects. “I want my freedom.”

“Have you lost your mind?” The commander scoffs, “you’ve committed countless felonies. You attacked the Alpha’s own family.”

I want to tell him that Ethan will kill him sooner than let him walk free, but I have enough sense to keep my mouth shut. Telling him he’s doomed will hardly convince him to spill his secrets. The fact remains that this man has information I desperately need, and I will promise to pay any price on earth in order to extract it from his lips.

“And you are running out of time.” The investigator threatens, as if reading my mind. “When I left Eve, she had your pups locked in a basement and was trying to figure out how to kill them. It won’t take her too long to figure it out.”

“So what, you left a group of defenseless toddlers to her mercy so you could come here and bargain with us, when you could have knocked her out and freed them then and there?” I inquire.

“I couldn’t hurt Eve.” He objects, “she’s the mother of my child. I don’t agree with what she’s done, but I still love her.”

I didn’t realize how badly I needed to hear his confession about the paternity of Eve’s pups, until a little knot unwinds in my chest. I realize now how badly I let Eric get into my head, how thoroughly I let myself be fooled by the man I thought was my friend.

Still, I don’t have time to think of that now. “I think the words you’re looking for are: I’m a spineless waste of space too whipped to stand up to a woman half my size.” I suggest.

“Where are they?” The commander adds, “I won’t promise you immunity, but I can promise you things will be much worse for you if you don’t tell us. If she lays a hand on those pups, it won’t just be attempted murder of obstruction of justice charges you’re facing. You’re talking about the Alpha’s pups – how do you think he’ll react if he finds out you could have helped them and didn’t? If we’re running out of time, so are you.”

The investigator grimaces. “Maybe so, but the decision isn’t up to you.” He argues, gesturing to me. “It’s up to her. How much time are you willing to waste, Jane?”

The commander looks to me for guidance, but I stare straight past him. “You can have your immunity.” I promise.

“But –” He objects.

“I’m Luna, remember?” I growl pointedly, “what I say, goes.”

The commander blinks at me, his eyes widening almost imperceptibly as my words sink in. I have no power to promise the detective a single thing, and we both know it. Turning back to his former investigator, he orders, “Take us to the pups.”

I grab only my cell phone and my keys as the former detective leads us downstairs, and text Ethan as we walk. I explain the situation as briefly as I can, and tell him to track my phone so he can know our location. With any luck he’ll arrive only moments after we do.

The disgraced investigator takes us to a corner of town I’ve never seen before, a sector of the city that looks like it’s been completely left behind. Half the businesses are closed, and everywhere we look sketchy figures skulk around corners and scuttle out of sight as we draw near. I can’t believe Eve would deign to come to such a place, but I suppose she doesn’t have any choices anymore. I simply pray my pups are safely locked away while she continues to plot.

As we draw nearer, the ex detective urges us on, “it’s just up here.”

I speed up my pace until I’m almost running. I can smell Eve now, I can smell my babies, and I leave the men behind. My heart is pounding in my ears, but when I come to the doorway where their scent is strongest, it stops completely. The door is standing ajar, and it’s dark and silent inside. I know, before I even go inside that we’re too late. Eve has already moved them... or worse. I’m still standing there when Ethan arrives a moment later, and when he sees the look on my face, I know I don’t need to say a word. I simply shake my head, and fall into his arms.

They're not here.