

Chapter 16 Secrets Revealed

Jane

Staring at my ex-husband, who idly sits in his car and orders me into the back seat as if he's some kind of king, I arch my brow. "Thank you, but no."

"It's hard to get a taxi around here." Ethan grins. "Please allow me the honor, my beauty. "

Any number of women would pay to have one of Ethan's knock-out smiles directed at them – but not me. Not again. I pretend I didn't hear him and continue walking. The car slows to a stop. Within moments the Alpha is standing beside me on the curb. He moves too close, towering over me so that I have to tilt my head to look up at him. "Is it name calling if it's true?"

"You tell me?" I demand. "If I say you are a self-righteous bastard, do you think I'm being honest or rude?"

I'm not sure what I expected. In fact, I'm astonished I had the nerve to speak such brazen words, but I do know that the last thing I was prepared for is the wide, wolfish grin Ethan offers me now. "You've got some nerve, little wolf."

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Ethan rakes his gaze down my body from head to toe, with tortuous intensity. "Is that what we are?"

"It is." I confirm, internally sighing with relief when my own car pulls up beside us. If I hadn't been in such a rush to get out of there I would have waited for the driver outside the atelier. Striding forward and pulling open the shiny black door, I offer my former mate one last glance over my shoulder. "And it's all we'll ever be."

I swear, I don't take a breath until I'm safely in the car. Protected by the dark, tinted windows, I stare out at Ethan as we pull away. If I didn't know any better I'd think he could see through the thick glass. His attention stays squarely on me until we are far out of sight, but no matter the distance between us, it still feels as though his possessive eyes are on my body.

It makes the fine hairs on the back of my neck stand on end, and my heart beat miles too fast. It isn't fair that he should be able to have such an effect on me after so many years. I feel like a young girl again, the foolish creature who believed the Alpha could love me for me.

I force the thoughts from my mind almost as soon as they occur, I know better now. Far better. That isn't a mistake I will make again.

Ethan

I can't stop smiling.

Maybe I'm crazy. After all, I have proof now that my wife faked her death and hid for me for years, and yet... all I can truly process is the fact that she's alive.

She's so different from the Jane I knew. Confident, brave and so strong it defies all logic. There is no omega left in her, if there ever was at all. This Jane would never let me dominate her so completely, she would fight me every step of the way.

Of course, my little omega mate hadn't been entirely without strength. She did attack Eve for trying to help my mother... didn't she? At the time everything seemed so clear. My mother and Eve both told the same story, and even Jane could not explain her actions.

I can't pretend to understand what happened that day - or what has happened since. All I know is that my mate is alive and well, and I intend to bring her home, no matter the cost. Paisley needs her mother, and if I'm right, then I may have a second daughter as well.

Whether she likes it or not, I'm going to unravel this enigmatic she-wolf's secrets if it's the last thing I do. She is everything I've been missing these last few years, and

everything I've ever wanted. Not to mention how beautiful she looked. How adorable I found her fiery spirit.

Already I'm imagining taking her to bed, kissing every inch of her body and making her whimper and moan in my arms. My wolf is growling hungrily at the mere thought, and I picture laying her out in front of me and devouring her like the feast she is.

All in good time, I tell my slobbering wolf. Because as far as I'm concerned, that's all it is: A matter of time.

Jane

"I made something for you." I announce to Linda, hiding a small gift wrapped box behind my back, "As a thank you for all your help with the kids this week." And in the weeks to come, I think bitterly, remembering the clause in Ethan's contract demanding my presence in the city for the foreseeable future.

"What - no, don't be silly." Linda demurs, though she holds her hand out for her present.

Laughing softly, I produce the box, and watch with pleasure as she rips the paper away. Inside is a delicate glass bottle, with her name printed across the front in a cursive flourish. "La Louve's newest scent, in your honor."

She sprays a bit of the amber liquid on her wrist, bringing it to her nose and breathing in the perfume. "Oh Jane, I love it. Thank you so much! I can't believe you did

this.”

“Can’t you?” I tease. “I owe you everything, Linda. “This doesn’t even come close to repaying your kindness, but it’s something.”

Her familiar arms squeeze me tightly. “Thank you so much! Where did you even find the time to do this - between dealing with Ethan and Eve.”

“I’m a woman of many talents.” I joke. My friend knows all about what happened today. In fact we’ve already argued about it and put the matter to bed. When she heard how keen my former mate seemed to spend time with me, she insisted her must be interested in pursuing me again, and I should consider giving him a second chance now that I am so strong.

Even I have to admit I thought about it for a moment, but in the end my senses returned and I reminded her that this would never happen. I will never forgive the Alpha for what he did to me, and I could never trust a man capable of such cruelty.

By now our short-lived fight is long forgotten, and we’re getting ready to take the pups to an open house at the exclusive daycare center in the center city. It seems wild to me, but apparently even pre-kindergarten programs are so competitive here that you practically have to donate a fortune to get your children accepted.

I’m prepared to shell out a good bit of money to secure my children’s future, and I’ll even pander to the stuffed

shirts who run the daycare center. After all, we're stuck here for the time being, and I can't afford for Riley, Ryder and Parker to fall behind in their education - no matter how advanced they already are. What I'm not willing to do, however, is put them anywhere within Ethan's orbit - which is why it is so incredibly inconvenient that he walks in the door of the open house with Paisley and Eve, not ten minutes after my own brood arrives.

I smell him before I see him, like the crackling heat of a bonfire and wild mountain air: spicy, masculine and so intoxicating my body instantly feels drunk with desire. Stupid omega instincts. I think bitterly.

Staring across the cafeteria, I catch a glimpse of bronze skin and dark hair, the powerful form of an apex predator. He's wearing all black, and moving through the crowd as if he owns the place. Of course... that's not too far from the truth.

Beside him, looking so sweet I could cry, is my Paisley. My heart sinks and races at once. It was a mistake to come here. I should have considered that my former mate would also think of sending Paisley to school here. He can't be allowed to see the other pups, he can't know they're mine, and Paisley can't be allowed to see me. I can't bear to reject her again, but I also can't admit she's mine.

"Linda!" I whisper frantically, grasping my friend's arm so tightly she winces. "Ethan's here, you have to pretend

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the kids are yours!"

"What, are you crazy?"

