

# The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 160

Ethan

My family is gone.

I watched the clock through the night, waiting for confirmation from my spies that Jane and the kids landed safely in the Dark Moon pack. I sent a contingent of agents to the territory as soon as I purchased the plane tickets, ensuring my people would be on the ground before my family arrived.

I've never had permanent spies in the Dark Moon territory before, but I certainly will now. I may not be able to be near Jane and the pups, but I need to know they're safe, I need to know how they're doing. My spies will allow me to watch them from afar, to live vicariously through their reports.

Living without them seems like an impossibility, but then again living without my mobility is never something I imagined happening either. I always assumed I might die in battle, and part of me wishes I had instead of having my wolf permanently trapped inside me. It's not that I think losing my legs is the end of the world, but for a wolf, the ability to transform is everything. A trapped wolf is bound to go mad eventually, especially without a mate. I know my future is terribly bleak, and I don't know how much time I truly have before the balance tips and I become incapable of logical thought.

If I'm lucky I might be able to hold myself together for a few years, and I have to make the most of the time I have left. The pack can't find out about my condition. If it were suddenly to lose its Alpha with no plans or successors in place, the power vacuum could destroy the entire territory. I've got to figure out some way to hide this from my people so that I can put up a good front and make preparations for the eventual transition. I'll tell my Beta, Matthew, the truth. I'll make sure he knows to look out for the signs so that he can put me down if I start to truly lose it and begin harming the pack. I'll find a protégé to train to eventually take my place as Alpha, and trust Matthew to take my boys under his wing when they grow up.

Making these plans, even as vague as they are, helps me avoid thinking about all I've lost. I don't regret any of it, because my sacrifice means that my family is safe and sound, but I'd be lying if I said it didn't break my own heart to lose them, or to see myself brought so low. This is not the ending I envisioned for myself, and it's going to take a long time to come to terms with it – if I ever can. I'm afraid that being away from my family will make me lose my mind faster, but I can't bear the idea of them seeing me that way, of saddling Jane with caring for me in that condition.

Maybe I am more prideful than I admitted to Linda, and that may be something I confront in the months to come, but right now I simply have to figure out how I'm going to pull this off. I put in a call to a medical think tank and research scientist in the capital, requesting an immediate consultation.

They arrive at the hospital in record time, no doubt out of deference to the man who finally rid the Kingdom of Aimon. I brief them of my situation, letting my surgeon explain the details and listening on with feigned disinterest as I try to ignore their sympathetic gazes. I don't think I would mind the pity, if it wasn't a reminder of all the things I'm desperately trying to put out of my mind.

"I need some way to stand, to appear mobile."I explain to the gathered specialists. "It's imperative to the security of my pack that I appear strong, at least until a suitable successor can be trained and take over. Right now there is no one to take my place, and if I go back like this..." I trail off, shaking my head.

"We understand, Alpha." The research scientist expresses gently, "I'm so sorry to learn about your condition."

There's no need for that."I tell her, trying not to sound too gruff. "I don't need consolation, just solutions."

"We could get you some braces that would allow you to stand." My surgeon suggests, "but I must warn you that they do damage the legs."

My legs are useless.? I remind him, "So it doesn't really matter if they're damaged."

"They also wouldn't allow you to move – it would be very difficult to use them in any meaningful way.

He adds.

We may be able to help there. The doctor from the think tank jumps in, looking excited. "If you can fit him with the proper braces, I think my robotics lab might be able to engineer an automated control system which would move the braces for the Alpha, essentially allowing him to walk and remain upright."

"Really?" I exclaim, not quite believing there's truly a solution.

"Yes, and that would keep your limbs moving to prevent muscle atrophy – which will be very important for hiding the condition and potentially keeping you healthy in the event of a cure." The doctor continued eagerly.

"And what are the chances of that?" I question, looking back to my surgeon. "I mean you said it was a possibility down the road, but talk to me about likelihood – what percentage are we talking about?"

My heart sinks when the surgeon averts his gaze.

Alpha, it's true that long term improvements can be made in cases like yours, but these things normally don't happen on a timeline that a shifter of your stature can withstand.

"What does that mean?" I inquire, not quite understanding.

Well it's one thing with children, she -wolves and omegas, beings whose wolves are less dominant – less active." He shares. I've seen recoveries in some cases like yours after years of physical therapy and -good luck, but the shifters who have experienced those Successes have been able to retain a sound state of mind despite their wolves being trapped for so long, because they aren't as strong."

'Basically you're saying the stronger the wolf, the faster you go nad." I summarize gravely.

Yes, your wolf needs to be let out more often because it's the only way for you to burn off all your excess power and energy. The surgeon continues.

So the chances of you staying sane long enough for a recovery are very low."

"How long do I have?" I ask, fearing that I may have overestimated the amount of time I have left.

All three experts are staring at the ground now, and my insides tie themselves into knots. "I've never seen a case of an Alpha of your strength in this situation." The surgeon murmurs, guess, I'd say you have a year. I understand the necessity of your plan, and I think it's important to find a solution for the short term, but you need to "but if I had to prepare yourself, Ethan. You need to get your affairs in order. If we're lucky, you may have more time than that, but you know your wolf better than we do – have you ever gone more than a few days without shifting?"

'No." I confirm, wishing I could shift this very moment. When I get stressed or overwhelmed, the only thing that ever helps is releasing my wolf, going for a run in the light of the moon and burning off the tension. Suddenly it hits me full force what the rest of my life will be- my wolf constantly clawing to be free, my body trying to give into the instincts, but ultimately falling flat. It's no wonder it drives people mad – my wolf is hard enough to contain in the best of times.

The doctors can clearly see my emotions boiling up and preparing to consume me. "We can give you a sedative , to try and help keep your wolf docile." The researcher offers, but it will become less effective over time as you build up a tolerance."

I nod, pain slicing through my chest. I would rather die now than experience the torture of slowly going mad this way, but I don't have that luxury. I can't leave my pack without a transition plan, and I hate to think of leaving Jane and the pups unprotected –I need to make sure they're okay before I go anywhere. I just wish I could be with them again. I don't want to think about my children growing up without a father, or Jane living out the rest of her life too scarred to ever trust anyone again – to ever find someone to love and care for her. That isn't what I want.

"Leave me." I order suddenly, feeling myself on the verge of a breakdown. Now that the drugs from surgery have finally worn off and the true implications of my future are being made clear, I feel reality slamming into me like a steam roller – flattening me beneath its wheel. I want to cry – I want to scream and rant and rave.

I'm never going to see my children grow up. I'm never going to hold Jane in my arms again. I'm never going to. shift, or feel the freedom of running through the forest. I'm going to have to rely on others to do everything for me, lose all autonomy, and eventually go out of my mind from the agony of my wolf being trapped inside me.

It's truly too much to bear. Without thinking, I slam my fist into the tray table hovering beside my bed. I wanted to beat it, to take my fury out on it, but it smashes into a hundred pieces at the first blow.

Instead I punch the railing of my gurney, denting the metal but relishing the sting of pain in my knuckles. I do it again and again, wailing my hands into the steel until they're bruised and bleeding. The next thing I know a pack of nurses and orderlies is there, trying to subdue me, but I'm roaring out my fury and fighting them off. It's not until a needle pierces my skin and a powerful sleeping drug is injected into my veins that they can finally stop my attempts to destroy the room.

Darkness closes in and for once I welcome it – I don't want to feel these things.I don't want to feel anything at all. I just want to go to sleep, and never wake up.

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