

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 166

3rd Person

"Okay, so how're we gonna do this?" Paisley asked, sitting around a large piece of construction paper with her siblings. Ryder - who had the best handwriting of all four - had written "Operation Santa" at the top of the page. Other than its title however, the page was entirely blank.

"Well, we know the North Pole's at the top of the world, right?" Riley asked, waiting until the others nodded in agreement before continuing. "So if we just keep walking north then eventually we'll have to get there!"

"Yeah but that could take ages!" Parker cautioned. "

The Dark Moon pack is north, but there's at least two other packs between us and the pole."

"That's a good point." Ryder agreed, "So maybe if we travel to one of the other packs and start there?"

"Yeah! But we can't take too long, we have to make sure we can get there and back afore Christmas." Paisley warned.

"Maybe we can get a ride back with Santa!" Riley suggested, her eyes sparkling with excitement.

"Wow, that would be amazing!" Ryder giggled.

"Okay so what do we need?" Paisley asked. "Really warm coats, snow boots, snacks.."

"Maybe some fish in case we need to d'stract any polar bears." Parker mused aloud.

"Ooh, good idea." Riley nodded, starting a list o their paper.

"We should also take hot cocoa, and marshmallows, to help stay warm." Ryder added. "I wish we knew how to ski, that would make getting there a lot faster."

"How about a sled" Ryder asked, "if we make friends with one of the polar bears, they might even pull us!"

"This is the best plan." Paisley praised, grinning.

"We still have to figure out how to get north first."

Riley reminded them, "it's gonna be miles and miles before we get anywhere near the arctic."

"Hmm, we're too little to drive." Parker remarked thoughtfully.

"We can't drive a car," Riley agreed, "but we could easily drive a sleigh. What if we ask Mommy to go back to the tree farm, just for the bonfire one night. She'd probbly agree, and then we could take one of the horsey sleighs from the stables."

"That's stealing." Paisley protested, crinkling up her little nose in distaste.

"We'd only be borrowing it." Ryder reasoned, "we'll leave a note promising to bring it back."

"Then we definitely need a compass." Parker added,

"I don't think horsies have GPS."

"Good point." Riley noted. "Do you think we should leave a note for Mommy too - so she knows we're with Santa and she doesn' need to worry?"

"I dunno - you know how Mommies can be, they worry 'bout everything." Parker countered. "Member what Dr. Nora said? Mommy would do anything for us.

"Yeah, if we leave she might try to come after us anyway." Ryder agreed. "She doesn' know how well we've planned everything. She'll think we're in trouble."

"I don' wanna scare her. If we get a good enough head start then she won't be able to catch up." Paisley frowned.

"Okay, let's do it!" Riley chirped. "Ryder, you write the , Parker you get the s'plies. And Paisley and I will ask Mommy to take us for the bonfire. Deal?"

The others grinned, "Deal!"

That night Jane bundled up the pups and returned to the Christmas tree farm. She'd been hoping they would decorate the tree together that evening, but she was just glad the pups wanted to continue doing activities together. They'd been through such a difficult ordeal that she was willing to do just about anything to raise their spirits, besides, they were starting school in the new year, she wasn't going to have as much time with them once they became kindergarteners.

When they arrived they headed straight for the bonfire, and Jane retrieved ingredients to make s'mores before cuddling up with the pups in front of the fire. The trees surrounding them on all sides had been strewn with lights, and it truly felt like a winter wonderland. She tried not to think about Ethan, about how wonderfully he would have kept her warm if he'd been there with them.

Instead she focused on her babies, praying they didn't ask to go back and ask Santa to reunite their parents again.

"Have you thought any more about what you want for Christmas?" She asked, gently guiding Paisley's hands to avoid sticking the marshmallow she had skewered on a stick directly into the flames of the fire.

The pups shrugged, not realizing she'd overheard their conversation with Santa. They knew exactly what they wanted, but they also realized she wasn't going to get it for them.

"Hmm," Jane hummed thoughtfully, "How about one of those big beautiful art sets they have in the craft store?" She asked Ryder, stroking his hair back from his eyes. "You love to paint."

"Maybe." He replied, his attention focused on his own marshmallow. The pups were determined to put their plan into motion, but they'd all agreed that there was always time for sweets.

"How about you, Parker? What would you think about a chemistry set - you could do all sorts of experiments?"

"Mommy you don' have to get us fancy things."

Paisley insisted, "Santa will take care of our presents."

That's what I'm afraid of. Jane thought bitterly. She hated knowing she couldn't give the pups what they truly wanted, and it didn't help that it was the only updated by jobnib.com" thing she wanted too. She'd gone to her first therapy session the other day, and her doctor had advised her to acknowledge and address the fact that part of her fury with Ethan was because she still loved him so completely. She wanted him for Christmas too, and she knew they were all in for a disappointment.

"I know Santa is on the job." She tried to smile, "but I want to get you something too. Riley, any thoughts? Riley peeked up at her with a sly smile. "How 'bout a pet bunny?"

"A pet bunny?" Jane exclaimed, internally thinking how adorable her mischievous daughter was. "I don't know about that - you'd have to take care of it." She had to admit that a bunny was less work than some other pets, but she was pregnant and any new pet with a new baby in the house was going to multiply the work. "Pets are lots of responsibility."

The suggestion had gotten all of the children's attention, and they were now clambering around her."

Please Mommy! We promise we'll take extra special care of it." Paisley begged.

"We'll be so 'sponsible you'll never have to lift a finger." Ryder added.

"Hmm, are you sure you Wouldn't rather have some new socks?" Jane teased. "So your feet will always be cozy?"

"Mommy no one wants smelly socks!" Parker exclaimed.

"What about a nice mop, so we can always keep the house clean?" Jane joked.

"Mommy that's cwazy!" Ryder objected, "Mops aren' fun."

"Yeah, bunnies are fun." Riley remarked pointedly.

"Alright, alright. I'll think about it" Jane agreed with a grin, "Now pay attention to your marshmallows or they'll burn."

Jane felt a thousand times better now that she had an idea for making her children's first Christmas together extra special. However she was having an increasingly hard time sitting still by the fire. The baby was pressing on her bladder, and she desperately needed the restroom. "How about a bathroom break, little ones?"

She suggested.

"But Mommy, the 'smores are almost ready!" Parker objected.

"I know, but Mommy has to go." Jane laughed, truly amused to have the tables turned on her this way.

"Can't you hold it?" Riley asked.

"Not really." Jane admitted.

"Then just go, we'll stay right here." Paisley promised. "We won' move any muscles."

"I don't know." Jane frowned, not liking the idea of taking her eyes off of her babies so soon after getting them back.

Fortunately, there was another mother with small pups next to them, and she offered Jane an understanding smile. "Don't worry, I'll keep an eye on them."

"Okay munchkins, be good - I'll be right back!" Jane vowed, evicting Ryder from her lap so she could go take care of business.

Little did she know that this had been precisely the opportunity the pups were waiting for. As soon as Jane walked away they hatched their plan, making a distraction for the other mother by knocking her toddler's marshmallow into the fire. They felt badly, but they knew it was necessary. While she tended to her wailing child, they snuck off towards the stables.

When Jane came back from the restroom a few minutes later the other mother was looking around in shock and horror, realizing that her four charges were no longer sitting around the fire. Jane stopped dead in her tracks, feeling her heart stop beating completely. "What happened, where are they?" She hissed.

"I'm so sorry! I don't know what happened, I turned my back for one moment and they were just gone!" She cried. "I'm so, so sorry."

Just then the other woman's child piped up from the fire, "Mommy, what's this?"

The little boy was holding a small folded piece of paper, and Jane gently took it from the child. When she unfolded it she immediately recognized Ryder's neat handwriting.

Mommy,

We went to the North Pole. Don't worry. We'll be safe with Santa and we'll get a ride home from the reindeer.

See you soon - love,

Parker, Paisley, Riley and Ryder.

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