

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 168

Jane

“Daddy!” The sound of my pups’ frightened voices send me jerking upright in bed, suddenly and completely awake. I rush to their bedroom, flipping on the light and finding all four children piled on one bed, tears running down their cheeks.

“Oh my loves, did you have nightmares?” I croon, immediately moving forward to comfort them.

They nod, but instead of running into my arms, they tighten their ranks. “Yes, but we don’t want you, we want Daddy!” Paisley cries.

Pain slices through me, so powerfully it steals the breath from my lungs. I feel as though I’ve been punched in the stomach. No matter how bad things are between us, I’ve always been the one my pups turn to when they’re frightened or upset. “Well Daddy isn’t here.” I say shakily.”So you can have me, or nothing.”

“T-then we ch-choose nothing.” Riley informs me through her sobs.

I close my eyes so they can’t see me cry, nodding as my insides harden to stone. “Please don’t be that way.

You know I love you, I don’t want you to be sad or scared, won’t you let me help?”

They stubbornly shake their heads, cuddling closer to one another. “Fine.”I sniff turning for the door. “Do you want me to leave the light on?”

They exchange glances. “Do we have to go back to sleep?”

I glance at the clock, it’s after three AM, late enough that they could probably stay up and make up for lost sleep with an extra long nap. “No, I suppose not.”

I can’t stand this. Normally I would cuddle them back to sleep and sing them lullabies, the fact that they won’t let me comfort them feels like the worst rejection, and I’m trying very hard not to fall to pieces in front of them. We head into the kitchen and I make them some warm milk, hoping they’ll get drowsy and go back to sleep, but prepared to stay up with them if they don’t. I’m exhausted myself – between the eventful evening and the baby quickly growing in my belly. It’s getting harder to keep up with my pups every day.

They sit at the table in utter silence, and I emit a belabored sigh. “Do you want to tell me what you dreamed about?”

I don’t expect them to actually share their dream with me, but after a few extended moments of silence Parker speaks up. “We were back at Daddy’s ‘partment, playing in the living room. Then Eve and ‘Nita and the King came in and kidnapped us. We were locked in a cold dark room, listening to them talk about what to do with us. Eve just wanted to hurt us, but ‘Nita and the King wanted to use us to get to you and Daddy.”

“And you all dreamed the same thing?” I ask.

They nod, confirming my suspicion. This doesn’t surprise me. The pups have always shared dreams for as long as I can remember. “Well the good news is that it wasn’t real.” I tell them gently. “You know none of those people can ever hurt you or Daddy and I again. Eve is in prison, and Anita and the King are dead.”

The pups nod, leaning against one another for comfort, but they don’t say anymore. “You know when you were missing I used to have dreams about you. At the time I thought it was just my imagination in overdrive, but now I think it might have been the Goddess trying to lead me to you. I had one dream about you racing down a river, and fighting a huge snake. I had another where you were trapped underground, trying to get out. I always used to wake up screaming and crying, just like you did.” I share.

“Did Daddy have dreams ‘bout us too?” Paisley asks.

“I’m sure he did.” I say honestly. “But he never told me about them. I think he was worried it would make me more afraid, but sometimes it’s nice to know that other people are feeling the same way you are.”

“Daddy used to let me stay up and tell me stories when I had bad dreams.” Paisley tells us, staring solemnly at her la”p.

“Oh, what kinds of stories?” I press.

“Stories‘bout you.” She whispers, peeking up at me.

I can see how terribly conflicted she is. Of all the pups, she’s the one who’s stuck hardest in the middle. She had four years with Ethan, he was her entire world before I came along, and I was just a fantasy. I’m sure I’m not even coming close to living up to her fantasy, but...

“Will you tell us a story ‘bout Daddy?” Ryder asks, looking as though he’s not sure whether this will make me angry or not.

“Okay.” I agree, hating to think my babies might be afraid of my temper. “What kind of story?”

“How ‘bout the first Christmas you spent t’gether?”

Paisley requests.

“Okay.” I concede, delving back into my memories. “

Well, the first year we were married wasn’t very exciting.”

Not to mention it’s not even the least bit appropriate to share with my children. We spent the entire holiday in bed together, making love in every possible way and position Ethan could think of. “But the first Christmas we spent as a couple was actually a lot of fun. His parents didn’t know we were dating-“

“Why not?” Riley asks.

“Well, we were sixteen, and Ethan’s Mommy and Daddy didn’t think I was good enough for him. We came from different worlds in a lot of ways, and we knew they’d try to make us break up if they found out.” I explain, trying not to condemn Ethan’s mother too strongly, knowing Paisley loved her.

“That’s ‘spicable.” Parker grimaced.

“Despicable,” I correct gently. “And Ethan and I never let it stop us. He was determined for us to be together no matter what they thought. You know we actually had to get married in secret?”

“You did?” Riley exclaims in awe.

“We did.” I smile. “But that first Christmas, we were just kids, and I grew up without a lot of things. My mom worked really really hard, but we were poor so I never had any presents... a lot of times we didn’t even have food to eat.” Riley, Ryder and Parker have heard this before, but Paisley hasn’t ever heard me speak about my childhood before now.

“Why not?!” She asks, her eyes wide with disbelief.

“Because not everyone in the pack is as lucky as we are now. Some people really struggle, and it can be impossible to change things when you don’t have any money or any way to make more.” I answer softly, wanting to make sure she understands that the privileges she’s grown up with aren’t universal. “Your Daddy knew this, so he always brought me extra food and looked out for me. And that Christmas he gave me my first ever Christmas present.”

“You mean you’d never had presents ‘afore?” Paisley inquires, absolutely shocked.

“I used to get little things in my stocking from Santa,

“I reply, “but I never had any big presents. I wasn’t expecting to get any that year either. I figured Ethan would bring Mom and I some of his family’s Christmas feast, but when he turned up at my door, he was carrying an armful of gifts. He even had something for my mother.”

“What did he get you?” Riley asks eagerly.

“Well, there was a beautiful necklace far nicer than anything else I owned. There were expensive chocolates and a pretty red dress. And you know that plush wolf that sits on my dresser?” I prompt, waiting for them to nod before continuing. “He gave me that too. It looks like his wolf and he used to joke that it would protect me when he wasn’t around.”

The more I think about these memories, the harder it is to keep my emotions in check. I can feel the pups watching me like little hawks, and I try not to let on how nostalgic I’m feeling.

“What did you get him?” Parker questions curiously.

“I painted him a picture.” I shrug. “As I said, I didn’t have money, so all the gifts I gave were things Li made.”

“I know that painting.” Paisley chirps. “Daddy used to keep it in his office, but he always used to catch me sneaking in to stare at it, so he moved it to my room. Is really pretty” she tells the others. “Of a wolf playing in the snow.”

I actually knew this, I’d seen the painting in Paisley’s room at the penthouse, but I didn’t realize how it had gotten there. “Well, there you go.” I conclude weakly.

That was our first Christmas.”

The pups are watching each other again, speaking their secret quadruplet language I can never understand.

“Won’t you miss him this year?” Paisley asks after a moment.

“Yes.” I answer honestly, sick of lying and knowing they won’t believe it anyway.

“Then why can’t we be together?” Ryder demands.

“Because it’s simply not possible.” I reply, gentle but firm. “I wish it was, but there are some things we can’t change, and this is one of them.”

“I don’ understand.” Parker frowns.

“I know you don’t, sweetheart.” As I look around at my young children, I decide that I might not be able to fix everything in their lives, but I can at least try to call Ethan. I haven’t let myself consider this possibility before -knowing I won’t succeed and not sure my pride can take another defeat. But looking at them now, I realize I have to try. I know I’ll probably come to regret it, but I’d regret it more if I didn’t try every last recourse for my pups. So this afternoon when they do down for their naps, I’m going to svck it up and call their father for the first time since he rejected me.

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