

# The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 181

Ethan

I can't hide my frown. I'm touched that Paisley wants to stay with me, even over than being with Jane and her siblings, but it's impossible. First, because I meant it when I said I want her to enjoy just being a kid, especially after all her medical problems. Second, because it's simply not safe.

The doctor's warnings are still ringing in my head, and though Paisley might not be at risk for attacks from potential Alphas hoping to eliminate their competition like Parker and Ryder are, the episode in the Southern Isles prove that she can be targeted in other ways.

Moreover, if I can't heal myself, I won't only be unable to protect my precious girl, I might be a threat to her myself. Yes, I made Matthew agree to put me down before I go truly insane, but what if he's not fast enough? What if he doesn't realize how far gone I am until I hurt Paisley?

"Paisley I wish you could stay with me, but it's not possible. I sigh, rubbing her back and breathing in her familiar scent.

But then who will take care of you?" She argues, narrowing her eyes at me. Her energy is dangerously close to tantrum territory, and though she's never been very prone to throwing fits, when she does have a meltdown she doesn't hold back.

Doctors and nurses and other people I hire." I answer, using the most soothing tone of voice I can muster.

But tha's not the same!" She objects. "You need someone who loves you. Doctors and nurses aren't going to hug and kiss you when you needs them."

They might, if I ask nicely enough – or if I pay them lots and lots of money. I joke.

"Daddy be serious." Paisley admonishes, glaring at me. This isn' a funny business."

I think you mean a laughing matter." I correct gently, wondering why I'm bothering when I love hearing her childish misappropriation of words and phrases. Because it's your job to teach her. My wolf reminds me bitterly. Just like it's your job to protect and care for her.

You know, you choose the worst times to be reasonable, I complain, internally groaning. My wolf is the one who most often pushes me to be emotional rather than logical, but he can often surprise me when it comes to things like this. He wants Paisley and our family here too, but his protective instincts are stronger than that desire.

Turning my attention back to the disgruntled bundle in my arms, I continue, "And I know you want to help me, but stress isn't good for little girls. I don't want you worrying about me."

But I'm gonna worries about you no matter what." Paisley insists. An' I'll worries less if I'm here. Besides, you keep saying I'm growing ups. I won't be little for much longer."

Which is exactly why you have to enjoy it while it lasts." I explain.

Daddy you tooked care of me all that time I was sick. Paisley reasons. "Now is my turn!"

"Lovey, I'm supposed to take care of you, that's what being a parent is all about. It's not your job to take care of me." I share. If I lived to a grand old age the tables might eventually turn in precisely the way she's suggesting, but she's still just a pup, and I'm probably not going to live to be an old man – even if I get better. Alpha's don't have terribly long life spans.

But Daddy -" Paisley tries to insist.

No, Paisley." I say, using what she calls my Daddy voice. "I love you, but this isn't up for discussion. You can't stay with me, as much as I want you to – it isn't safe, and it isn't right. You belong with your Mommy and your siblings. And that's final. "

A few hours later the pups are fed, bathed, and refusing to go to bed. They're determined to wait up for Santa, but Jane is well practiced at wrangling puppies at bedtime.

Well you know, Santa won't come if you stay up." She sighs, feigning regret. "He only visits pups that are sleeping. And the sooner you go to sleep, the sooner he'll be here."

The pups exchange meaningful glances, already in their pajamas and trying to hide yawns of exhaustion. They obviously don't want to risk Santa skipping the penthouse, but they're not entirely convinced – not yet at least. But okay if you're really determined, " Jane continues throwing up her hands. "I guess Santa can always come next year."

"Okay, okay!" They exclaim in unison. We'll sleep, we'll sleep!"

The pups immediately clamber into their beds, actually taking their proper places in the four bunks rather than creating the puppy pile in which they normally rest. "Good night, little ones." I smile, dropping klsses on their foreheads. "When you wake up, it will be Christmas."

"Goodnight Daddy," they each say in turn, returning my klsses. Paisley sounds a bit somber as she tells me she loves me, but I know there's nothing to be done for it. I step from the room as Jane moves forward to wish the pups goodnight, but something stops me from going too far.

Instead I hover just beyond the doorway, listening as my mate takes a seat on one of the beds.

Listen kids, I know you were just trying to have fun tonight, but you can't put up mistletoe and try to trick me and Daddy that way." She says evenly. I can tell she's trying to keep her tone light, but there's layers of emotion buried underneath.

"But Mommy, we've seen you and Daddy klss afore, and we know it makes you happy." Parker replies.

You've been so sad ever since we went home.

Riley adds, sounding less confident than usual now.

"You and Daddy should be together." Ryder concludes.

(You all know I've been sad?" Jane murmurs, sounding both guilty and surprised.

'Mommy, why else do you think we've been trying to get you back togethers?" Parker asks, and I can hear an eye roll in his tone.

"I thought you wanted to go back to Daddy because you miss him." She replies softly, sounding so haunted it breaks my heart.

Well we do!" Paisley exclaims, but that's not the only reason we wanted Daddy back."

We've never seen you happier than you were with Daddy." Riley continues, and I can hear slight movements, pups leaving their beds to gather around their mother.

"We want our family to be whole." Ryder concludes.

I peek around the edge of the door, seeing all four of our little ones snuggled up to Jane. She's seated next to Riley, but Parker, Paisley and Ryder are halfway in her lap, their little pajama covered feet dangling in the air. "You all have stop worrying about me. She instructs. "I'll be happy as long as I have you. But your Daddy and I aren't going to get back together. I'm very sorry to tell you that, but it's the truth.

But why not?" Parker inquires, leaning his head against Jane's br3ast. "We know you loves each other "

It's not about love." Jane replies, and though she doesn't know it, she's telling them a lie. This is all about love. If I didn't love Jane and the pups so much, I wouldn't sacrifice my own happiness for them this way, If I didn't love them so much, I wouldn't let them go. One day maybe I'll be able to explain better, in a way you can understand, but right now all you need to know is that we both love you, and we're doing the best we can."

Mommy?" Paisley asks shyly.

Yes, angel?"

Is this all happening cuz we tried to follow you that night? And got ourselves pup-napped?" She questions, sounding as though she's very afraid of the answer. "You and Daddy seemed different afore we were taken."

Listen to me very carefully." Jane replies, her voice tight. "Because I mean what I'm saying.

None of this, is your fault. Your Daddy and I split up a very long time ago, for some reasons you know, and others you don't. We were never going to end up together, and that has nothing to do with anything that's happened these last few months."

Another lie. If I'd had my way, we all would have lived happily ever after following the rescue, but that was before. Before my injury, before my insanity, before everything changed.

"And that's why you can't play tricks like that again." Jane forges on. "It only makes things harder, and as hard as it is to hear – it won't change anything."

"We're sorry, Mommy." Riley apologizes, nuzzling Jane's shoulder. We didn' mean to upset you.

"I know, my darling." Jane sighs, kissing Riley's brow. "Unfortunately that's one lesson you'll learn more and more the older you get. What you intend, and what actually happens don't always agree. You have to be very thoughtful about your actions, even when you mean well.

That's confusing." Parker sighs.

I know, but it's also not something you have to worry about tonight." Jane smiles sadly. "All you need to worry about is going to sleep and waiting to see what tomorrow will bring. I promise it will be a better day than today."

"We love you, Mommy." Ryder professes, giving Jane a klss on the cheek.

I love you too.

Previous Chapter

Next Chapter