

## The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 191

Jane

"I still can't believe it!" I exclaim, telling Devon how happy I am about the pups getting into the Dark Moon Academy for the fifth time. The pups were less than thrilled when I told them, clearly not understanding what's so great about the institution, but Devon understands. He almost seems as excited as I am.

After Ethan's dismissive attitude and the pups underwhelmed response, it felt amazing to have someone share my glee. We're already at the New Years fair, and though I told myself I was going to wait to announce the good news until Devon asked me about my day, I ended up blurting it out as soon as I saw him. He was still walking across the parking lot when I practically yelled it at him, but he didn't even miss a beat.

Devon's handsome face split into an ecstatic grin, and he scooped me up into a tight hug, pulling my feet right off the ground. "Janey that's fantastic, congratulations!" He's listened to my excited chatter ever since, never once trying to change the subject or dissuade me. After we got our tickets, which he paid for despite my protests, he turned his attention to the pups.

Pups, you must be so excited about your new school!" He prompts, smiling down at them.

The pups look up at Devon with guarded expressions. It's clear they aren't sure what to make of him yet, though they seem to like how often he makes me smile. I like it too. It's been a long time since I smiled this way.. though I didn't realize it until my cheek muscles grew sore so quickly – not used to being employed.

I mean, is just a school." Parker shrugged. "Aren't all schools the same?"

"Are you kidding?" Devon asks cheerfully, "This isn't just any school! You're going to get to do so many cool things you wouldn't be able to do if you went someplace else: Field trips, science experiments, sports like archery and fencing, art and music classes with the best teachers on the continent. There's a swimming pool and a planetarium – and stables where you can ride horses!

"Really?" The pups gape, finally understanding why I've been dancing around like a crazy person all afternoon.

"Really." He nods solemnly, "And when you get older you can even sleep there during the week and live in dorms with other students."

"But you won't," I object pointedly, making my dramatic and silly. "There's no way I could survive without seeing my babies every day."

"Don't worry, Mommy." Parker says, smiling up at me. "We won't let you die from no cuddles. We'll sneak home even if we do sleep there."

"Thank you, angel." I profess, petting his silky hair.

You know, this is such good news that I think we need more than the fair to celebrate." Devon announces, gesturing at the carnival around us. I think we need fireworks."

The pups stop in their tracks, their eyes wide and their faces lighting up with happiness. "Fireworks?"

That's right." He confirms, "I mean the city will set off big fireworks at midnight, but I thought you might like to set off some of your own." He suggests thoughtfully, rubbing his chin, "of course if you don't like that idea -"

"No we do, we do!" The pups chirp, jumping up and down.

I dunno," Devon teases, It might be more boring than I thought, making we should just forget about it."

No! We want to, we want to!" The kids cry, clasping his hands and dragging him towards a nearby fireworks booth. I follow, laughing to myself, then realizing how long it's been since I laughed too. The pups had lots of fun and sweet moments with Ethan before the truth spilled out the other day, but I hadn't been able to find joy in it – because I knew what was coming. This is different. This is pure fun, and I don't have to fear that Devon is going to turn around and become a monster.

When I catch up to them at the booth, I lean close to Devon, dropping my voice so that the pups can't hear. You do know that if you set my children on fire on our first date, it's going to put a damper on things."

Devon chuckles, slinging an arm around my shoulders. "Don't worry Janey, by the time Ethan and I were five we were already blowing things up totally unsupervised."

"Somehow I don't find that comforting." I joke, eyeing the fireworks my pups are picking out, and hearing my inner mom list all the dangers in my head. I'm not really worried, but five does seem young for fireworks. I don't want my babies to be hurt.

Devon is watching me, and he gives me a squeeze.

We'll be careful." He promises. "You have my word -I won't let anything happen." I'm still frowning, thinking that even the best parents can't prevent everything, but Devon distracts me, Though I do find it very interesting you called this a date." He remarks, eyes twinkling. "I thought we agreed to be friends for now?"

I shrug, "Maybe I decided I want to be brave."

Taking it slow doesn't mean you aren't brave."

Devon answers, looking as though he hates having to dissuade me. "It just means you're taking care of yourself.»

I know exactly what he's doing, Devon has always been so selflessly good that he'd never put his own interests above another's needs. Arching my brow, I decide to test him. "Does that mean you don't want it to be a date?"

Devon chuckles, shaking his head. "Janey , if you had any idea how long I've been waiting for this, that clever little mind of yours would implode."

"Really?" I ask, a flash of doubt assailing me. I'm not anything special, not really. It always seemed too good to be true that Ethan wanted me and of course that turned out to be true. It was too good to be true. Could Devon honestly be that interested in me? Is this too good to be true as well? Am I ever going to be able to trust another man ? Even one I've known since childhood?

Devon pays for the fireworks and hands the bags to the pups, "come on, munchkins, lets go find a nice big field where we can set these off. We need lots of space without a lot of people around." The pups happily comply, taking off to begin the hunt for a good spot. Devon and I follow behind them, and at first I think he's going to ignore my question. The pups are happily chattering together, and after a moment Devon clears his throat.

"When I left, I told myself that time and a bit of distance would cure me of loving you." He admits, rubbing the back of his neck and betraying his shyness about discussing this. I was determined to find myself a mate that was even better than you – though I never really believed someone like that existed."

I snort, "of course they do."

You know how it is though," He smiles sadly. "The heart wants what it wants."

I do know," I answer, sobering.

Yes, well I met plenty of she-wolves over the years: beautiful, clever, funny – everything I could want in a mate. I fell in love with a few of them too, but none of my relationships lasted. When I was with someone else, I did forget about you – I managed to wanting you, missing you... but in hindsight, I think I was just distracted. It was like a string of rebounds from a relationship that I only ever dreamed about. And when the rebound was over, I was left thinking about you again."

Devon?" I inquire, for the first time wondering if his attachment to me is more than just unrequited attraction. You don't t... I mean... do you think... it's not possible that we're mates, right?" I remember what Ethan told me about meeting his mate, that he'd felt the bond, but didn't care. I haven't ever felt any kind of bond with Devon, but if it's possible not to want some one despite it, surely it's possible not to feel it at all? I mean it takes some couples a long time to figure out they're mates, so it must be possible.

"I hope not." Devon replies, surprising me,

Because if we are I have a bad feeling you're going to break my heart."

I stop dead in my tracks. I don't want to break your heart. I don't want to break anyone's heart."

He smiles, "Not even Ethan's?"

I chuckle sadly, shaking my head. No, I think I'd like to kill him, but I don't want anyone to feel the way I do- it's too cruel."

Devon laughs, "Fair enough."

Just then, Ryder, Riley, Parker and Paisley come bounding back to us, shouting with excitement. We found a place, we found a place!"

"Well let's go!" Devon replies, equally excited. We let the pups drag us to a meadow beside the fairgrounds, where more than one family are doing exactly what we are. We begin setting up the fireworks, and I watch with pleasure as Devon carefully teaches the pups how to set them off safely.

With every new explosion of light and color, my babies ooh and ahh, and I'm so distracted watching their happiness that I forget my conversation with Devon. It's not until much later, when I'm lying awake in bed replaying the night in my head, that I realize – he never actually answered my question.

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