

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 192

3rd Person

Paisley blinked her tired eyes open, stretching and yawning as she looked around her darkened room.

The other pups were cuddled around and beneath her. As the smallest of her siblings, Paisley always got to be on the top of the puppy pile – but Riley, Parker and Ryder hadn't stirred, remaining sound asleep even as she slid out of bed.

She couldn't be sure how late it was, but the sky outside her window was still pitch black. She planned on sneaking into her Daddy's room and crawling into his bed – just like she had done every night since returning to the Nightfang pack.

However this night was more important than all the others, because it was their last night before returning to the Dark Moon pack. In the morning Jane was going to pile the children into the car and return home at long last – she'd even invited Devon along since they were traveling in the same direction.

Paisley wasn't ready to say goodbye to her father, and she felt completely at odds with her siblings.

They didn't understand why she still wanted to stay with Ethan when he'd been so mean, and she couldn't tell them his secret. She was still furious with Ethan too, but for different reasons. She both understood why he couldn't let her stay – yet hated him for putting his foot down. It was too many big emotions for the young pup, and all she knew at the end of the day was that she loved her father more than she was angry. So she kept crawling into his bed at night, trying to soak up as much affection as possible before they were parted.

Paisley didn't pause to knock on Ethan's door, though that wouldn't have done any good because when she entered the master bedroom she found it empty. Confused, she scented the air, following his trail to his office. She didn't know why she hesitated outside the door, but she did. She peeked through the keyhole to spy on the scene within, feeling her stomach sink when she saw her father bent over his desk with his head in his hands – weeping.

Paisley immediately started crying herself, but she still waited. As she watched, she saw Ethan's edges blur and shake with terrifying violence. She could see his claws extend from his clenched fists, before retracting, then extending again. His entire body was vibrating, leaking raw power and overflowing with palpable anguish and rage.

Ethan's eyes were clenched tightly shut, his fangs bared as he tried to weather the pain wracking his form. Belatedly Paisley realized what she was seeing – her father's wolf trying to escape but remaining trapped by the bonds of his human flesh.

He forced himself out of his chair then, as if he thought it might not hurt so badly if he was standing. However the movement was too sudden, and he crumpled to the floor, landing with a crash.

Paisley watched as Ethan's shoulders slumped in resignation, and he simply sobbed his grief into the carpet, settling in to wait out the agony.

Paisley stepped back from the door, unable to stand watching any longer. Her young heart had been through so much strife, but she couldn't ever remember feeling so utterly heartbroken.

In that moment, Paisley made a decision. She didn't care that Ethan and Jane were insisting she had to go back to the Dark Moon pack, she could see how badly her father needed her. She could see he was just being stubborn. Paisley knew that she had to find a way to stay with Ethan, even if she had to run away from Jane and her siblings. She loved them with all her heart and she wished they could be together, but Jane, Ryder, Parker and Riley would be okay without her – they had each other. But if she didn't find a way to stay, Ethan would be all alone, and she couldn't let that happen.

When the other pups went back to the Dark Moon pack with Jane, Paisley was going to find a way to remain with Ethan even if she had to run away in order to do it.

The next morning Ethan and Jane found themselves scouring the house for Paisley. The other pups loaded into the car without complaint, but Paisley was nowhere to be found. They eventually tracked her down in the attic, and despite an epic tantrum, Ethan dragged her kicking and screaming to the car. Jane and the other pups were also crying by the time Paisley was settled in the back seat, though Ethan managed to retain control of his emotions until the car was out of sight. He offered Jane a cold farewell, then shared a solemn look of understanding with Devon, before retreating into the Penthouse.

Paisley was furious.

She cried all the way out of the city, and nothing Jane or her brothers and sister could say would calm her. Eventually she ran out of tears, exhausting herself and falling into a deep sleep.

Jane wasn't relieved. She continued weeping even as the pups settled, apologizing profusely to Devon, even though he assured her it was alright.

"I can't stand this." Jane confessed. "And I don't mean to be such terrible company, it's just that you're only ever as happy as your unhappiest child – you know?"

"I know." Devon sympathized, squeezing her hand.

"I'm so sorry you're going through this, Jane. And you don't need to worry, it's not as though I expect you to entertain me."

"Well thank you for coming along." Jane expressed, trying to slow her tears enough to smile at him. "My vision is so blurry I probably would have crashed the car by now."

"Well we couldn't have that!" Devon exclaimed, not releasing her hand. "And I know there's not anything I can say to make any of this any better, but I truly believe Paisley will recover in time. It's hard now because she's so little, but in time she'll understand that a parent who abandons her doesn't deserve her adoration."

Jane had thought this herself, but now she wasn't so sure. She knew how childhood traumas could haunt people for the rest of their lives, and of all her pups she was most worried about this experience scarring Paisley. However before she could say a word in reply, a furious little voice piped up from the back seat, "You don't know what you're talking 'bout"

It seemed that Paisley's nap had been short-lived.

She was awake again, and she obviously did not care for Devon's analysis. "You have no rights to talk about my Daddy! You're just a stupid stranger – you shouldn't even be here! And you smell like wee!"

"Paisley!" Jane scolded, "That's not very nice, Devon is doing a very generous thing driving with us."

"It's okay, Janey. " Devon insisted. "I understand if Paisley needs to be mad at me."

"Don't call hers that!" Paisley shouted. "Only Daddy calls her that!"

"Paisley, you need to calm down." Jane admonished. "I know you're upset, but you know better than to lash out at other people when you feel bad. It isn't fair to Devon."

"I don't care what's fair to him! He's a poopy-head!"

Paisley insisted.

"Paisley, Devon's nice!" Parker interjected, feeling the need to step in and help. "Member the fireworks, and how much he makes Mommy smile?"

"Shut up!" Paisley exploded, feeling more outraged and overwhelmed than she could ever remember feeling. "I hate him! I hate all of you."

"You shouldn't say things like that." Riley frowned deeply. "You're our sister. We have to stick together."

"The only person I wanna be together with is Daddy!" Paisley wailed.

"Maybe now is a good time for a stop." Devon sighed, glancing at the young faces in the rearview mirror. Paisley was not the only one in tears now.

Ryder was also crying, and Jane was well on her way to more weeping. "Let's stretch our legs and get some fresh air."

Devon pulled the car into a rest stop, and the distraught party carefully clambered from the car.

Jane tried to take Paisley aside, but the little girl just continued to fight, so in the end she focused on making a snack for the pups, hoping some quiet time would help calm Paisley's epic meltdown. Jane was no stranger to tantrums, she was an expert in managing two or three at once, but she still hated seeing Paisley in this state because she knew it wasn't just immaturity – it was true sorrow.

Leaving Paisley in the shade of a large tree and telling her she would be happy to talk once the pup calmed down, Jane began making sandwiches, glancing at the restrooms to ensure Devon was okay with the other pups.

She only turned her back for a second. A single second. But a second was all it took. By the time Devon returned with Ryder, Parker and Riley, Jane was frantically scouring the area around the picnic table, her green eyes wide with terror.

"Jane, what's wrong?" He asked, immediately scanning their surroundings as well. When he didn't see the fourth pup, he understood without Jane saying a single word. But her agonized cry came nonetheless, and it cut straight through him.

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