

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

Chapter 193

3rd Person

It had been only too easy.

Paisley had known that getting herself put in time out would give her the space she needed to escape, though she couldn't deny how good it had felt to shout her rage at that stupid Devon. She didn't care how nice or funny he was, he wasn't her Daddy, and she didn't want anything to do with him. She did feel badly for upsetting her Mommy and the other pups, but Ethan had taught her that sometimes you have to make very hard decisions in order to do the right thing.

Sometimes you even have to hurt the people you love to protect them.

Paisley had been watching the cars driving in and out of the rest area, and when Jane turned her back, the clever pup swiftly ran to one of the vehicles traveling back south. She climbed into the back seat of a car belonging to an elderly couple, covering her small body with a blanket. She prayed and prayed that they would leave quickly, and for once the Goddess was on her side. The car pulled out of the parking lot just as she heard Jane begin to cry out her name.

By the time her Mommy had informed the others that Paisley was missing, she was speeding down the highway, on the way back to her Daddy.

When Ethan's phone rang and Jane's name appeared on the screen, he dried his tears and cleared his throat, hoping he wouldn't sound too emotional when he answered. "Hello?"

"Ethan?" As soon as he heard Jane's frantic, terrified voice, he sat up at attention.

"Jane, what's wrong?" He demanded, already regretting letting his family out of his sight. He should have gone with them! He shouldn't have let them make the journey alone, his injuries be damned!

"It's P-Paisley." Jane cried, hiccuping through her tears. "She's m-missing."

"What do you mean she's missing?" He hissed. "What happened?"

"She was so upset and we stopped at a rest stop. She's been throwing tantrums all morning so I put her in time out. I swear I only turned my back for a second and she was gone!" Jane explained, sobbing so violently she could barely get the words out.

Ethan clamped his eyes shut. "She's trying to run back here." He immediately guessed, "Do you know if she's on foot? Could she have snuck into another car?"

"I think she must have because there's no scent trail."

Jane answered, heaving in deep breaths.

"That's good." Ethan assured her. "She's safer in a car than she is out in the elements."

"But what if the people who own the car decide to take advantage, what if they're more kidnappers?" Jane fretted, clearly imagining every worst scenario. "I can't believe this is happening again! We barely got them back! You were right, I'm not fit to be a mother, I can't even keep my babies from being stolen or running away."

"Jane, you need to get it together." Ethan answered sternly, beyond relieved to finally be able to speak with her honestly. "The chances that she stumbled into a kidnapper's car are extremely low. And it's not your fault. Every parent knows how fast little ones can run off."

"Exactly, which means I shouldn't have ever taken my eyes off her!" Jane shouted into the receiver.

"Jane, the other pups need you to be calm. They need your comfort right now." Ethan insisted. "And you can't help Paisley if you fall to pieces. Where's Devon?"

"I'm here, Ethan." Devon's voice answered, obviously standing close enough to take the phone from Jane.

Her sobs grew muffled then, and Ethan suspected the other man was holding his mate. He tried not to overflow with jealousy. He knew he'd created this situation and he believed the beta was better for her, but that didn't stop his wolf from being outraged over another man comforting Jane in her time of need. "I don't know if Paisley had time to make sure the car she chose was traveling in the right direction. If we're lucky she's headed back to you, but there's a chance she's moving north. What do you want to do?"

"How close are you to the Dark Cities?" Ethan inquired, checking the clock.

"About half way." Devon answered promptly. "I don't think we should backtrack, in case she's headed in that direction, but I'm not sure we should continue and risk passing her."

"This is the story of my life." Ethan muttered gruffly, feeling as overwhelmed as Jane to find himself back in this wretched situation. There was no fear on earth like not knowing where your baby was, if they were safe or injured. He'd pay any price, if only he could go the rest of his life without feeling that fear. "Stay where you are. Paisley is bright, and if I had to guess I'd say she was planning this. Hopefully she's on her way to me, but we have no way of knowing for sure."

"And in the meantime?" Devon asked, making soft shushing sounds in the background.

"I'm going to call the authorities and put them in contact with you. We'll find her." Ethan insisted, not even allowing himself to consider another possibility.

And in the meantime, just do me a favor and take care of my family."

"You have my word." Devon vowed.

"How are the other pups?" Ethan questioned, not needing to ask about Jane because he could still hear her heartbroken sobs.

"They're pretty shaken up, though some of that is..."

Devon trailed off, as if unsure how to complete his thought.

"Because Jane is so upset?" Ethan guessed, picturing the horrible scene in his mind.

"Exactly." Devon confirmed.

"You can remind her that they need her, and it might help.." Ethan assessed. "But I'm afraid this is more than grief. She's been through a lot and she's probably reliving the kidnapping now.. in fact, I know she is." He amended, images of the Southern Isles flashing in his mind. He shakes his head. "Honest to Goddess, it might be better to drug her – if you have anything on hand."

That way she'll rest and the pups Won't be traumatized watching her."

"You think her PTSD is that bad?" Devon replied, sounding mildly horrified.

"You tell me." Ethan suggested, wishing he could be there instead of his old friend. He knew how to soothe Jane, he knew what she needed in times like this, and though he could suggest solutions to Devon, he doubted they would work. Or was it that he hoped they wouldn't work?

Ethan felt a rush of shame, knowing the answer already. What was wrong with him? How could he hope his friend's connection with Jane wasn't strong enough to comfort her when she was suffering this way. How could he hope for such a thing at all? Wasn't this entire plan based on hoping Devon could replace him?

Sinking his fangs into his tongue until he tasted blood, Ethan offered up the best advice he could provide. "You can try purring for her, make sure she feels like you're in control and that the other pups are safe. Distract her if you can. If nothing else works, or if she starts having true flashbacks, do anything you can to put her to sleep – just be gentle."

Paisley came first.

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