

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 197

Jane

"I.. what?" I stutter, wondering if this is another fever dream, or if Ethan actually just suggested splitting our children up again.

"We have to accept the reality of our situation, Jane." Ethan continues, pursing his lips. I barely contain the impulse to scoff – he has some nerve saying this to me, as if I haven't been coping with the fallout of his reckless decisions for months now. "Paisley isn't going to stop running away, so the only thing I know to do is to keep her with me so she won't have anywhere to run."

"But everything is different now!" I insist, my lip trembling at the very thought of giving up my daughter. "We can't just pretend like we never met. She's unhappy being away from you at the moment, but what happens when she starts missing me and the other pups. You want to keep them apart for the rest of their lives?"

"No, of course not." Ethan sighs. "I think we give her the choice. And whoever she picks, she can always see the other for visits, even full holidays."

"You know perfectly well she'll choose you!" I accuse, wondering what bothers me more knowing she likes Ethan better, or knowing it's my own fault.

"But I just got her back." I argue weakly, knowing this isn't really a good excuse to make my child miserable. "We hardly had any time together before the kidnapping, and half of that was spent in hospitals or playing games with you. I've been waiting for her for years."

"I know that." Ethan frowns, looking very severe.

And I hate to say it, but I think this is the price of that decision. She wants me, because she doesn't know you."

I want to scream that this isn't fair. He knows I never felt like I had a choice in leaving her. He knows that he's forbidden me to stay in the NightFang pack."So you'll change your mind about keeping her, but you won't change your mind about letting me stay – about the other pups?"

Ethan's features harden, and I know his answer before he ever opens his mouth. "I'm only putting this on the table because she'll kill herself trying to get back to me otherwise. This isn't what I wanted."

"Leaving her wasn't what I wanted either." I hiss. "I was trying to ensure she survived too, I was trying to protect them all the best way I knew how."

"Paisley knows that. But it doesn't change the fact that she spent all those years without a mother."

Ethan sighs, looking as though he might truly possess some empathy for my plight – assuming such a thing was possible.

"But this has been my plan from day one, this was always the plan." I murmur uselessly. I will never regret the choice I made to leave Paisley in Ethan's care, if I hadn't she never would have survived. But this isn't the way it was supposed to work out Ethan laughs humorlessly. "Jane, if anyone understands what it's like to make plans for your children, only to have everything backfire because kids have minds of their own, it's me." I flinch, not because his statement is harsh, but because it rings with so much honesty that I feel sick again.

As parents, we try our best, but the sign of being a good mother or father is raising independent, free thinking pups. We can't be angry with Paisley for living up to our expectations."

"But I want her." I say in a small voice, feeling very silly now. Tears are spilling from my eyes, and I'm shocked to feel one of Ethan's strong arms come around me. I try to lean into him, to bury my face in his neck and cry myself out in his comforting embrace – the way I used to. Instead he holds me at arms' length, offering only the barest sympathy for my emotional distress. "I want all my babies."

She's mine! I think bitterly, I shared her long enough.

"You'll have Parker, Ryder and Riley." Ethan promises. "And you'll have the new baby too.

Besides, this isn't the end. I'll make sure Paisley can visit you and the other pups as often as she wants"

"You won't visit with her?" I clarify, wondering if I'm asking for myself or my pups. At present, the other pups don't want anything to do with Ethan, though that might change. My wolf on the other hand, she's still praying he'll wake up and realize what a fool he's been to reject us and that's far more likely to happen if we remain near one another.

"I don't think that's a good idea." Ethan hedges, still patting my back as if I'm a stranger, and not the woman he was vowing to love to the ends of the earth a few months ago.

I nod briskly, stepping away from him. "I need a few minutes... before we ask her."

Ethan eyes me worriedly. "I'm not sure you should be on your own right now."

"Goddess Ethan, I just want to pull myself together, I'm not going to do anything desperate." I counter, rolling my eyes and wondering how he manages to be so impossible. It seems like everytime I want him he pushes me away, but the moment I desire time to myself he's on me like glue.

"That isn't what I meant." Ethan admonishes, raking his eyes over me with obvious worry."

You're just not very steady on your feet yet."

"I'm fine." I insist, pushing him away. I stalk into the women's room, bending over the sink and fighting the urge to scream out all my overflowing emotions. The last thing I need is for Ethan to think I'm even more unstable than he already does. I count to ten, then I count to twenty, taking deep breaths all the time. At a certain point I decide that there's no way to prepare myself for losing my daughter again. I just have to brace myself and rip the bandaid off.

When I finally emerge, with my shoulders set and a determined grimace on my face, Ethan asks. "Are you ready?"

"As I'll ever me." I mutter – as if anything could be ready for this.

He calls the pups over, and they approach us hesitantly. Paisley immediately asks to be picked up, lifting her arms to me in silent request and all but breaking my heart in two. I promptly scoop her up, cuddling her close and trying not to burst into fresh sobs.

What if this is the last time I ever get to hold her?

"Pups, we have something we want to ask you."

Ethan begins, sounding almost as nervous as I feel.

"We want you all to be safe and happy, but at the same time, we understand that the right thing for some of you, might not be the right thing for all of you.

"Mommy, what's he saying?" Parker asks me, eyeing Ethan suspiciously. Of all my pups, Parker has been the wariest of Ethan since learning of his rejection.

"He's saying that we're going to give you a choice."

I explain, knowing that my three oldest won't hesitate to come home with me, and feeling no danger of giving them all the same option we're offering Paisley. "You can come home with me, or you can go back and live in the Nightfang pack with your Daddy. Of course I hope we can all stay together," I continue, pulling back so I can look Paisley in the eye, "but I understand if you want to be with Ethan."

Paisley is starting up at me with wide, shining eyes, no doubt a mirror image of my own. "I've been dreaming of you so long, Mommy." She tells me, "All I ever wanted was to have a Mommy of my own."

"I know, angel." I confide, even though I hate hearing how she pined for me. "I was dreaming of you too."

"And I loves you more than anything." Paisley adds, "And I loves my brothers and sisters. But I think needs to be with Daddy."

"Paisley you can't!" Riley objects, tugging on her sister's leg to get her attention, "you're s'posed to be with us!"

"It's okay, Riley." I whisper.

"But we only just mets! And we're going to have a new baby soon!" Ryder interjects, coming forward as well.

"It won't be goodbye forever." I advise, my breath shaky, "just until we can visit again."

"But when will that be?" Parker inquires, his face crinkled in displeasure. "You can't suspect us to go very long without seeing Paisley. She's one of us."

"She can visit as often as you like." Ethan promises, meeting Parker's gaze with a stern promise. "But the most important thing is that she's safe. And she won't be as long as she keeps trying to run back to me."

"I don't like this." Riley objects.

"Me neither!" The boys confirm.

"Well I'll be honest, I don't want to be away from your sister myself, but we have to do what's best for everyone." I confess. "So Paisley, is this your decision, to stay with your Daddy?"

She looks up at me, and I feel as though my entire world hangs in the balance as she opens her mouth to reply.

[Previous Chapter](#)

[Next Chapter](#)