

# The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 201

Jane

Three Months Later

I keep waiting for life to return to normal. But I'm not sure it ever will. In the three months since I gave up Paisley for the second time, a lot has changed. The pup's 5th birthday came and went, and though my youngest came to celebrate the event with us, Ethan stayed behind in the NightFang pack with his new mate.

The news about Nina had taken me by little surprise – I'd always known he would find a she-wolf to replace me, though I admit I hadn't expected it to happen so fast. I also hadn't expected it to be his fated mate. When the news broke, I pretended it didn't hurt, but I think everyone knew I was simply putting on a brave front. The distance between us makes it easier to convince myself Ethan doesn't still hold power over me, but the truth is not a day goes by that I don't think of him – that I don't mourn his loss.

Of course, I miss Paisley too, just not in the same way. Longing for my child is a very different matter than longing for my mate, and though she is not near me, we still talk every day. I never speak to Ethan, unless it is to arrange future visits or calls. I suppose the difference is that I haven't lost my daughter completely, but I know I'm never getting Ethan back no matter what I do.

But time passes whether we want it to or not, and as winter slowly thawed into spring, I saw my life changing in incredible ways despite my grief. If I didn't know any better I'd think I had a guardian angel watching over me. My friends have been obscenely generous since I returned to the Dark Moon pack, but my good luck goes far beyond Linda, Eric and Devon spoiling me.

It seems like every time I come up against a problem or stumbling block, it disappears before I can begin to truly worry: When my fragrance company was having difficulty winning a bid on new laboratory because our main competitor held political leverage over the seller, the other buyer suddenly walked away without any explanation, leaving the path clear for me to win the sale. When I came up against a permitting issue with the research and development wing of my production, the pack regulatory agency abruptly changed its policy, allowing me to secure my permits. When my car broke down, the dealer delivered a new, upgraded model to my door before I could even get an estimate on the repairs from my mechanic, stating a factory recall had entitled me to a brand new vehicle – but I never even called them.

Of course, it's not only my problems solving themselves, it's also oddities like winning that spa voucher. I've won raffles at the pups Academy and random sweepstakes without ever entering. And when I attended a silent charity auction, I ended up winning an all expenses paid, dream vacation for the pups and I, even though I didn't bid on it.

I've even started receiving lavish nursery furniture and infant accessories which I was too shy to put on my baby shower registry, not wanting to impose on my friends. Sometimes I actually wonder if my mother's ghost is going to reappear and explain that she's been pulling the strings from the afterlife, because I can't think of any other explanation. I know my friends are responsible for some things, but any goodwill they felt they owed me has been repaid a thousand times over at this point.

Despite the good luck, I've been going to therapy twice a week- once with the pups and once on my own – in order to try and move forward from everything that happened. It hasn't been easy for any of us, but I can truthfully say that we're all doing better every day. In fact, I'm feeling so steady and grounded that I've finally decided to go out with Devon on a real date – not a family activity or a forced outing to prove anything to myself or Ethan, but a true evening of romance.

I don't know if I feel anything for Devon yet, but I figure I have to keep my heart open to the possibilities. After all, Ethan found his fated mate, my mate might be out there too. My wolf hates the idea, but listening to her instincts landed me in a terrible relationship more than once, so this time I'm listening to my head. Besides, Devon has been a devoted friend through these last months, going to Lamaze classes and doctors appointments with me, providing a male role model for my boys, and showering Riley and I with affection – I couldn't ask for a better boyfriend, right?

I've been trying to find the right time to bring up the topic of dating with him, but every time I decide to attempt it I end up losing my nerve at the last moment. So tonight I didn't give myself time to think. I stopped at his house on my way home from work, only pausing to ask my sitter to stay a bit later with the pups.

When I knock on the door, it takes a moment for Devon to answer. However, once he does, his entire face lights up. "Jane!" He smiles and hugs me warmly, ushering me inside. "I wasn't expecting you."

"I know." I hesitate for a moment. "Is that okay?"

"Okay? It's the best surprise I've had all day!" He insists. "Can I get you something to drink?"

"Just water." I request, rubbing my growing belly.

I'm almost five months along now, and my baby is currently tapping dancing on my bladder. "Could I use your restroom though?"

"Of course." He agrees, "You know the way."

I give myself a pep talk over the mirror once I've relieved myself, telling my reflection I've come too far to chicken out now. When I finally emerge, Devon is waiting for me with a knowing expression. "Is there a reason you were telling yourself to woman up' in there?"

"Oh," I flush. "You heard that?"

"I did." He answers gently, passing me a glass of water and pulling out a chair for me in the dining room.

"Well, I came to see you because I've made a decision." I announce, summoning my strength.

"Yes?" He prompts easily.

"Well, you know I've been working through a lot of my insecurities in therapy and trying to get a handle on my trust issues." I begin, realizing how telling this simple fact is. Before Devon I never would have shared such personal details with anyone. "And I don't want to put pressure on you I mean, know how odd this situation is and I know I come with a lot of baggage.. I mean I already have four pups and another on the way, it's not like with other she-wolves. Not that my children are baggage, just that there are lots of strings attached and they're wonderful strings but-"

"Janey, you're rambling." Devon chuckles, reaching out to take my hand. He gives it an affectionate squeeze, and I gulp in a deep breath. "

Just tell me, whatever it is – it can't be that bad."

"I want to go out with you.. like, on a date." I blurt out before I can stop myself. "If you're still interested, I mean. I think I'm ready."

Devon blinks, looking somewhat stunned. Still, he doesn't release my hand, and I have to take that as a good sign, right? The seconds drag by, and when he doesn't say anything, my heart sinks. "Oh," I murmur, pulling my hand away.

His warm fingers tighten around my own, "No, it's not what you think!"

"Then what is it?" I inquire, staring at the table where our hands lie clasped.

"Look" Devon sighs, "When we first reconnected, I was hoping you might finally see me in this light.. after all this time. And I thought if I could just make you see how good we could be together, then eventually I could work up to sharing the truth with you." He drags his free hand through his hair,

"But that was before I really understood how badly Ethan hurt you, and I've seen all the progress you've made in the last few months. I couldn't live with myself if I did anything to set you back after you've come so far... and I can't in good conscience start something with you without telling you."

"Without telling me what?" I press, my heart thumping nervously in my chest.

"You're not the only one with baggage, Jane." He remarks pointedly. "And I don't want to scare you away, but I also don't want to be another man who lies to you."

Now I do pull my hand away, sensing betrayal ahead. Not Devon. I think. Please don't let kind, caring Devon be like all the rest of them. Haven't I been mistreated by enough men? Weren't Eric and Ethan enough to last me a lifetime? "Have you been lying to me?" I squeak.

"Yes," Devon answers gravely. "I'm afraid that I have."

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