

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 203

Ethan

Paisley looks confused by my announcement, but Nina sits up at attention. “What did the doctor say?”

“He said I’m finally a viable candidate for a spinal surgery that might restore my mobility.” I explain, not wanting to beat around the bush, “and save my life.”

“Ethan that’s wonderful!” Nina beams, looking as though she wants to hug me. Unfortunately for her I still have Paisley in my arms, so she doesn’t move from the couch.

I look to the sweet bundle in my arms. Her brow is furrowed in thought, and I can see the gears turning in her young mind. “Like one of my surgries, Daddy?” She asks eventually. “When they don’ know if it ‘ll actually work or not?”

Goddess how I hate that she knows to ask these questions, that her own experiences have made her more attune to the flipside of my words than a grown she-wolf. “Yes, angel.” I confirm. “There’s only a fifty percent chance it will work if I do it now. Do you know what that means?”

“Like half and half.” She nods, gnawing on her lower lip in thought and looking so much like Jane I could cry. After a moment she looks back up at me, and I know what she’s going to ask before the words leave her mouth. “What’s the other half?”

Fuck. I think miserably, did she have to inherit her mother’s brains? She’s too bloody smart for her own good. I sit down next to Nina, settling Paisley in my lap and looking at them both, though the majority of my attention stays on my daughter. My fated mate has been incredibly helpful and supportive these last few months, but she’s not the one I’m worried about.

“Basically, this is my only chance.” I confess, staring deep into her emerald eyes. “If I wait, it still might not work and I probably wouldn’t be myself anymore even if it did. And if it fails, well, I might not come home again.”

Actually, if it fails, I won’t come home again. The other option is permanent paralysis, but I’ve already decided that I would rather meet my end on the operating table, then spend the rest of my life trapped. It’s not that I want my life to be over sooner than it has to be, I just don’t want to put Paisley through the trauma of watching me go slowly mad, and I don’t want to risk harming her. If the surgery doesn’t work I’ll have two months left with her at best – before my sanity breaks for good. And though every day with my baby means the world to me, this is about her, not me. I want her to remember me bravely facing the end, not foaming at the mouth and snarling at her. So, if I go through with the surgery I’ll include a provision to deliver euthanasia in the event of the procedure’s failure – the only question is whether I go under the knife now, or wait for better chances.

“But if you don’t have the surgery, you’ll die anyway.” Nina states softly, glancing apologetically at Paisley. I know she hates having these grown up conversations in front of a child, but I’ve put my foot down about this. I’m not going to hide the truth from Paisley, I’m not going to give her a complex about fearing death, and I’m not going to let her face the future unprepared.

“That’s right.” I confirm, squeezing my daughter a bit tighter.

“Why do you have to die at all, Daddy?” Paisley pouts, right on cue. I know she both understands these concepts without fully appreciating the complexity or permanence of it all, which means we often end up in conversations like this.

“Because everyone does sooner or later, Princess.”

I remind her, “but I don’t want to leave you any sooner than I possibly have to, which is why we have to make this decision together. If the surgery works then I can live a long time. I can get old and wrinkly, and growl at all your boyfriends when you start dating and walk you down the aisle at your wedding.. but if I don’t have it then I won’t even make it to your next birthday lovey, and nothing we can do can change that.”

“But if it doesn’t work you might go even sooner!”

She argues, tears welling in her eyes.

“I know” I grimace. “And I don’t want that, but the pack is secure now because of Nina and Matthew, and if anything happens to me you’ll always have your Mommy and your siblings.” I exhale, feeling the weight of the whole world on my shoulders as I try to make a five year old understand a lifetime she can’t even comprehend yet. To her two months feels like years, and I’m only too aware of it. “I want to be in your life for years, Paisley, not months – don’t you?”

She stares up at me for a few minutes, chewing over the idea in her mind. Tears are streaming down her cheeks now, but I don’t try to stop their flow. I know she needs to work through all these feelings on her Own. Eventually she crosses her arms over her chest and tilts her chin up defiantly.

“Fine, but you should know I already has a boyfriend”

This announcement is enough to distract me momentarily. “What, you do?”

“Yes.” She answers primly. “Billy, from school.”

“Oh,” I try to tell my growling wolf to calm down.

She’s five, five year olds hold hands on the playgrounds and call it dating, it isn’t real. “And how long has Billy been your boyfriend?”

“Since yesterday.” Paisley announces, “He carried my bookbag for me today and everything.”

“Did you know about this?” I ask Nina, still trying to calm my irrational protectiveness.

“I did not.” Nina smirks. “We were too busy playing surprise hide and seek.”

“Well,” I strangle a protective snarl and try to make my voice even. “How about I take you to school tomorrow and I can meet this Billy?” I suggest.

“Ethan, you cannot run around growling at kindergarteners.” Nina scolds. “I’ll take Paisley tomorrow like usual.”

“She’s right, Daddy.” Paisley agrees, facing me so she can’t see Nina’s astonished expression, as far as I know the two have never agreed about anything. “You’re not allowed to scare off my boyfriends, even if you are dying.”

There’s nothing like a child’s honesty to cut you down to size. I think wryly. “Alright, alright. You Win, now go get in the bath so I can talk to Nina.”

Paisley scampers off much too willingly, which makes me suspect that she has no intention of getting in the bath and every intention of eavesdropping on us. “I better hear splashing, young lady!” I call after her. There’s a tiny huff and then the bathroom door pulls shut, shortly followed by the sounds of the tap running.

“Well?” I ask, turning back to Nina. “What do you think?”

She leans forward, resting her elbows on her knees. “Frankly, I don’t think my opinion matters here – you just got the only one that does.” There isn’t any bitterness in her voice, only honesty.

“I’d still like to know what you think. I know when we agreed to this arrangement I warned you it might only be a few months, but I doubt you expected it might only be three.” I reason, searching her pretty features. It’s the strangest sensation, to be with someone who feels so familiar, to whom I am undeniably connected and who is undeniably attractive, yet feel absolutely nothing. Every time I consider a she-wolf in a romantic light, I can only think of Jane. It starts as a comparison, then explodes into unrequited longing.

Goddess how I miss her.

“I won’t lie to you, I’m not thrilled that my reign as Luna might be so short, but the way I see it, I’m in the same boat as Paisley. If you don’t do this, the best I can hope for is what, three more months?

Four?” She guesses.

“More like two.” I correct gently. “That’s when Matthew and I decided.. well, we’ve made arrangements.” I explain.

Nina nods. “In my books, five months isn’t much better than three.” She shares, clasping her fingers together. “I want you to live for your sake and your daughters – but also for my own.”

Now I hesitate. “Are you saying that you would want to stay with me afterwards, if it goes well?

“That was the agreement wasn’t it?” Nina inquires.

I help you, and you give me the spot I deserve by your side.”

“I know, but I mean, would you want to make it official – to actually be mates?”

“Yes Ethan.” Nina assures me. “I think you should go through with this surgery, and if it doesn’t work then I’ll help ensure all your plans for the pack and Paisley are carried out per your wishes. But when it succeeds, I want us to get married, and start a family of our own.”

[Previous Chapter](#)

[Next Chapter](#)