

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 204

Jane

I'm staring at Devon with utmost apprehension, my thoughts racing at a mile a minute. What in the Goddess's name is he about to tell me? All of a sudden, I realize that whatever it is – I don't want to hear it. My heart is racing every bit as fast as my thoughts, pounding violently against my ribcage.

To imagine that yet another person in my life – one I taught myself to trust despite all my bad experiences, who I've come to trust above anyone else save Linda- might have betrayed me, is just too much to contemplate.

Devon is watching me anxiously, trying to work up the courage to say whatever it is he intends. The hand I rejected a moment ago now clasps his other, shaking with the force he's using to lock his fingers together. Already I know whatever is coming must be very bad indeed- or he wouldn't be so nervous.

"I'm sorry, Devon." I choke suddenly, lurching to my feet. "I can't do this. I can't be here right now."

"Jane wait-" He stands as well, reaching towards me as if he worries I won't be steady on my feet. "

It's not what you think!"

"No," I shake my head, cradling my hand over the curve of my belly. "I have to go." I stalk out the door before he can stop me, and though the heavy wood slams behind me, I can hear him swearing up a storm.

I rush to my new car, it's silver paint still gleaming with a factory wax finish. I slide into the drivers seat and start the engine, locking the door when I see Devon rush out of the house behind me. I shift it into gear and take off towards my apartment, tears streaming down my cheeks. I thought I'd cried a lot during my first pregnancy, but this one is quickly proving me wrong.

"Goddess Damn It, Ethan!" I cry into the empty car.

Wasn't it hard enough with the quadruplets?

Couldn't you give me even one baby that won't rip my heart out just getting here?"

I know the only thing that's going to make me feel better right now is seeing my pups, but I also know I can't go home to them in this state. It's not only that I don't want them to see me cry, Dr Nora has been warning me about not imposing my personal traumas on them. I don't want to teach them that people are bad and not to be trusted, even if my experiences have made me feel that way.

Sobbing, I pull over and lower my head to the steering wheel, letting the tears wrack my body until I can breathe again until the deluge finally ebbs and slows and I can think clearly. I do a few breathing exercises, and dry my face, checking the rearview mirror to make sure my skin isn't too splotchy.

When I'm finally ready I get back on the road, but when I arrive at the apartment I realize Devon has beaten me there. Apparently my stopover to cry gave him the headstart he needed, because his car is parked outside. He must not have realized I wasn't home yet, because his car is empty and unattended.

I go upstairs, keeping up my breathing exercises in the elevator. When I arrive, the babysitter has already left and Devon is alone with the pups. I can hear their laughter before I even walk through the door. I push inside, finding Devon on the floor beneath a wriggling puppy pile.

Three dark heads pop up when I enter, and suddenly the excited pups are charging me, Mommy" Three beloved voices cry in unison.

"Hello my babies!" I exclaim, pulling them into my arms and kissing their sweet faces. As soon as I see them my spirits lift, even though the traitor lurks in the background. It's amazing how they can make my heart swell with a single word, a single touch. I feel so much lighter, even when Parker looks up at me with an impish grin and declares, "Mommy, your tummy gets rounder every day!"

"I know." I chuckle, "And just you wait, by the time I'm ready to bring this baby into the world 'll be so big and fat I'll have to waddle like a penguin. I won't even be able to stand up by myself, you three will have to buy a crane just to lift me."

The pups giggle. "Mommy we don't have money for a crane." Ryder objects.

"Don't worry." Riley interjects, "we'll take cares of you and then you'll never have to get up 'gain."

"Really?" I inquire. "You'll wait on me hand and foot?" I lower my voice to a scandalized whisper.

But what if I have to pee?"

"That's true." Parker muses, "She pees all the time now."

"Maybe you can learn to sleep standing ups?"

Ryder proposes, "then you won't have to worry bout getting up again."

"I'll tell you what," Devon cuts in, coming to stand behind them. "if you pups can wait on your

Mommy while she's resting, I'll handle getting her up and down."

"How chivalrous." I remark, the humor gone from my voice. "Pups, can you give me and Devon a moment alone please?"

"Why?" Riley narrows her eyes, her young voice rising in a familiar lilt. "Are you gonna tell secrets?"

"No sweetheart, we just need to talk." I lie, hating that this man is making me mislead my children.

The children scamper off to their bedroom, and I wait until the door closes behind them to turn on Devon. "I say I can't do this' and run out, and your response is to chase me down?" I demand.

"Jane, please, just hear me out?" Devon pleads, keeping his voice low and glancing to the pups door. "I haven't been actively lying to you, I've just been withholding something- something personal about myself that I was too afraid to share – surely you can understand what that's like – of all people."

Despite myself, my heart softens towards the man.

At the same time, I know better than to let my guard down just yet. "If I can understand it so well, why didn't you tell me before now?"

"Because I didn't want to scare you." To my amazement, Devon's voice is thick with emotions."

I didn't want you to hate me... before I even got a chance to prove to you that I'm not... that I'm not a monster"

"I. why would I think you're a monster?" I ask, uncertain that I heard him correctly. Devon is many things, but I have a hard time imagining anything that could make him think so poorly of himself.

"Just promise you'll listen," He begs. "If you listen, I'll tell you everything."

"Okay" I agree, "Come sit down."

We go into the living room, and I settle on the couch. Devon takes a seat beside me, and takes a deep breath. "When I left the Nightfang pack, I didn't really have a plan." He begins, looking at me with wide, sad eyes. "I just knew that I had to go, I needed to find a new pack and try to start over. So I went searching, I traveled around looking for any place that felt like home. I approached different Alphas inquiring if they might have a place in their leadership structures – not even as a Beta, just in any position where I might be able to make something of myself"

"About six months in, I was up north, visiting this pack called the Night Walkers. I was young and naive, I didn't know anything about most of the territories I was visiting -I walked in blindly, and in most cases it turned out okay. But the Night Walkers... it wasn't until after I arrived that I realized they weren't called that because of their wolves' qualities or habits, it was because they were cross-bred with another species."

"Another species?" I repeat, not believing my ears.

What do you mean, like another kind of shifter?"

"No," Devon gulps. "Like.. vampires."

"Vampires?" I parrot dumbly. "But they were outlawed centuries ago. No one has even heard of a vampire being in shifter territories in living memory."

"That's what I thought too." Devon nods, "but I was wrong. They're kept it a secret by necessity, because if other wolves knew about them, the entire pack would be at risk."

"So what happened?" I press, fascinated now.

"I walked in like a fool, and I survived two weeks before.. before they turned me" Devon confesses, not able to look me in the eyes now. "It took me two years to get the bloodlust under enough control to finally get out, and ever since I've been doing everything in my power to keep the secret under wraps. I made a career for myself despite everything, I've put it behind me, but it's still a part of who I am.. it always will be."

"Are you saying... Devon are you trying to tell me that you're a vampire?" I gape.

When he looks at me, his eyes are no longer the dark pools I've come to know. Instead they're glowing crimson – unlike any wolf I've ever seen.

Yes "

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