

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 208

Jane

The day after Paisley, Ethan and Nina arrive in the Dark Moon pack, we spend the day at the park with Devon and the other pups. We packed a picnic, went on a hike, and stopped at the playground afterwards so the pups could expend any energy they had left over. For the most part I watched Ethan with the pups, searching for any signs of strange behavior – anything that might explain the conversation I overheard last night.

I'm sticking close to Devon and seriously debating just coming out and asking one or both of the men what's going on. However the fact that they've clearly been colluding to keep me in the dark all this time makes me think I'm better off investigating on my own.

I keep replaying their secretive whispers in my head, trying to untangle the hidden meanings in their words. For whatever reason, Ethan clearly asked Devon to look out for me and the pups. He'd said he didn't have a choice... whatever that means. As I watched Ethan gallop around the playground with our pups today, I had to note that he certainly looked happy to be with them again.

He kept stopping to watch them play, an expression of joy and longing dominating his handsome features.

There was also a deep sadness I couldn't place, one which kept creeping into his eyes every time he stopped for too long. Eventually one of the pups would notice and drag him back into the game, but something about it set off alarm bells in my mind.

My wolf would begin to whine and pace every time he started looking that way, insisting that something was very, very wrong. The more time that passed, the more certain I became that she was right, but I'm sure if I try to confront him about it he'll jump down my throat. I have to bide my time, I have to figure this out without letting Ethan know I'm onto him.

After returning home, we made plans for the eight of us to go to dinner at our favorite restaurant, but when it was time to go the pups started insisting they should ride with Devon and Nina. This surprised us all, and we collectively froze, staring down at my mischievous quadruplets. Devon's sedan was just barely big enough to hold the six of them, which meant Ethan and I would be forced to drive to the restaurant separately. "Pups, what are you up to?" I inquire. "Why are you so determined to ride with your Aunt and Uncle?"

"Cuz Devon has a really cool car, and we want to get to know Nina better!" Parker explains with an innocent smile.

"Now why don't I believe you?" I respond, bracing my hands on my hips and looking from one precious face to the next. My best guess is that they simply want to get me and Ethan alone together, but I'm not sure why they might think this would do any good. Alone time was never our problem.

"It's okay, Jane." Devon shrugs, "It's only a short ride."

"He's right." Ethan agrees, "Besides, I need to talk to you about a few things in private, this is as good a time as any."

I'm sure the color drains from my face, I'm not sure I want to be alone with Ethan if this is the case.

Besides, I don't trust that this isn't some sort of clever scheme engineered by my babies. I keep watching the pups suspiciously, narrowing my eyes. "You four better not be up to anything."I warn. "You'll be in trouble if you are."

"We promise, Mommy." They chime in unison.

So Ethan and I leave for the restaurant, and I find myself squirming in my seat, my hands cradling my belly protectively when the baby begins to kick. I hiss in a gasp as a particularly sharp thump hits my uterine wall, and Ethan glances over in concern. "Are you alright?"

"This kid of yours is tap dancing on my bladder." I inform him dryly, watching him closely for a reaction. A month ago I wouldn't have dared to remind him that the pup growing inside me is his, but after last night all bets are off.

Ethan looks as though he's fighting the impulse to speak, his lips twitching before he eventually breaks, "Can I?" He asks, lifting his hand towards my stomach.

"Go ahead." I invite, bracing myself for his touch.

A moment later his huge hand is splayed over my belly button, and I hesitantly slide it to the left – to the spot where the baby was just kicking. It only takes a second before another thump crashes into Ethan's palm, and now it's his turn to gasp. For the briefest of seconds, I think I might glimpse wetness on his lashes, but then we stop at a red light and he promptly clamps his eyes shut.

Something's wrong. My wolf insists for the dozenth time. His wolf doesn't feel right. He hasn't felt right since he rejected us, but now he feels really strange – like he's only half there.

The baby seems to sense its father's presence, because it really begins to wallop it's tiny feet against Ethan's hand now. "Oof, I guess it likes you."I observe, feeling a bit short of breath from all the internal activity.

"You don't know what it is yet?"Ethan inquires, removing his hand at last, and accelerating as the light changes.

"No, I wanted it to be a surprise." I murmur, eyeing him curiously. "What did you want to talk to me about?"

"Oh." Ethan blinks, almost as if he forgot. "I thought I might leave Paisley with you for a few weeks."

"Really?" This wasn't what I was expecting, but I'm beyond excited by this idea. "What about her school?"

He shrugs, "Its kindergarten. She can practice her shapes and letters just as easily here as she can at home.'

I suppose this makes sense, but I also don't know why he's suggesting this now – especially after turning up here without any warning. It's not like him. "Ethan, is everything okay?"

"Yeah, everything's fine." Ethan assures me, not sounding entirely believable. "I just think she's been missing you and the other pups."

"Well we'd love to have her, as long as you don't mind." I offer, trying to drown out my wolf's pitiful whines.

"Of course not. She should be with you all" Ethan responds easily, with complete conviction.

"Does that mean.. are you regretting taking her back?" I question, suddenly wondering if I misunderstood his conversation with Devon. Has my imagination been steering me in the wrong direction all along?

Ethan shoots me a look of genuine horror. "Never."

He softens as we pull into a parking place in front of the restaurant. "I just know that it's not the same. I feel guilty that I can't give her everything she deserves."

"Welcome to parenthood" I scoff, though not unkindly. I've struggled with the same thing from the day my babies were born, and I don't know any parent who hasn't.

"I know, but it was different before I knew you were alive. I didn't know there was an option then."

He admits, frowning as he exits the car.

I follow suit, wanting to ask a thousand questions and more, but before I can say another word, my phone chirps. I look down, seeing a message from Devon. You need to come home, the pups locked us in a closet.

When we arrive home a little while later, we find the pups huddled outside the coat closet, giggling up a storm. Their mouths drop open when they see us, "What are you doing here? Riley questions indignantly, "You were s'posed to go to dinner."

I roll my eyes, nudging them out of the way so I can reach the door. "Lesson number one for kidnapping, my loves – confiscate your victims' phones."

The pups groan, and I hear Ryder mutter, "We forgot the phones!"

I unlock the closet door, pulling it open to reveal a very disgruntled looking Devon and Nina. I usher them out into the open, "What happened!"

"Ask your pups." Nina instructs, her eyes narrowed with rage.

Devon isn't quite so annoyed. After all, they can't have been locked up for more than fifteen minutes. "When we got to the car there was a nail in the tire. We came back up here to try and find your car keys and the pups told us they were in the closet. When I couldn't find them Nina came in to help.. and the rest is history."

I turn on my pups, crossing my arms over my chest. I'm about to scold them silly, but before I can say a word, Ethan's laughter fills the air."

Aren't you clever, you sneaky sneaks!" He praises, ruffling their hair.

"Ethan." I hiss pointedly, calling his attention to my stern expression.

"What?" he says, looking nonplussed.

"Is that really all you have to say to them?" I growl. "

They basically kidnapped our dates."

No, that's not all I have to say." Ethan answers, turning back to our children. I expect him to adopt his Alpha voice, to give them the lecture they deserve. Instead he kneels down to their level and pulls them into his arms. "I love you."

I couldn't be more shocked. I want to throw my hands up and demand answers, but before I can Nina stomps over to Ethan. "A word, Alpha?" She grits out, positively fuming.

He disappears with her into the quest bedroom, and I tum to Devon, more confused than I can remember being in quite some time, "What on earth is going on?"

And wouldn't you I know it, but the beta lies right to my face. "Jane, I have no idea"

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