

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups

Chapter 4. From omega to alpha

Jane

Gazing at my sons, who share their father's bronze skin, dark hair and eyes, I assess. "It's going to be difficult to keep our presence here a secret." This is an understatement. My boys look so much like Ethan it's actually laughable. We're going to have to be very careful.

"You said it." My friend quips lightheartedly.

Glancing at Linda out of the corner of my eye, I hedge, "Have you seen...?"

"Yes." Linda answers immediately, needing no explanation. "She's perfect, Jane. Healthy and beautiful, your perfect miniature."

"And Ethan?" I ask, hating myself for asking.

"Still with Eve." Linda relates, "But he dotes on Paisley like she's the sun, moon and all the stars. Whatever else has happened between you, he's a wonderful father."

"Good." I breathe, comforted to hear my other daughter is in such good hands, yet longing to see her with my own eyes. "You think he'll give her up, when the time comes?"

Linda's face falls, "Jane, she's his entire world. I don't know what you're planning, but I don't think reuniting your family is going to be as easy as you think."

"We'll see." I reply coolly. Linda may have been my eyes and ears in the city since I left, but she doesn't know Ethan like I do. I know how cruel he can be, I know how good he can be at faking emotion when he really feels nothing. After all, how many years did he pretend to love me before he showed his true colors?

In the years that have passed since we parted, I've kept my distance so that Paisley can benefit from all the world class medical care her father can obtain, but now we're nearing the end of her treatment. She needs one more major operation. One more, and then I won't need to hide anymore, I won't need to pretend.

"Jane, I love you." Linda broaches carefully, "But I'm begging you, please don't underestimate how much Ethan cares about Paisley. You haven't seen them together. I have."

“And he hasn’t seen me since I left.” I remind my friend. “I’m not going to let him walk all over me this time. I’m not going to let him take my daughter from me. He might think a father’s devotion is strong, but he has no idea the power of a mother’s love.”

Linda

I barely recognize my friend.

The Jane I knew was a meek omega, too timid to speak up in school even though she was smarter than anyone else in the class. But this woman – this being – is a force of nature who bends the elements themselves to her will.

She holds herself like an alpha, giving off a scent of authority and power befitting any Luna.

Becoming a mother seems to have suited my friend very well. I can only imagine that if she’d been this strong during her marriage to Ethan, Eve would never have been able to get her claws into the imposing alpha.

Even her appearance has changed. Jane has always been beautiful, with her long golden hair and flawless porcelain skin, but where she used to downplay her looks, she now embraces them. Even dressed in simple work clothes, she looks so effortlessly lovely I feel like a slob standing next to her.

“I made an appointment for you at the atelier later today.” I share, unused to serving such a supportive role to my gentle friend.

“Thank you.” Jane smiles, with absolute grace. She might be a strong, independent she-wolf now, but Jane still started out at the bottom of the food chain. She knows what it takes to do hard work, to defy one’s destiny.

“You know Eve owns the shop?” I caution her.

“Oh, I know,” Jane grins, “I’m looking forward to seeing her face when she realizes whose perfume she’s been peddling all these years.”

“You aren’t worried she’ll spill the beans to Ethan?” I ask anxiously.

“Not even Eve is that stupid,” she snorts. “Trust me, she’s going to do anything she can to ensure we never cross paths.” Her stunning green eyes light with mischief, “which is just fine by me.”

Jane

Eve’s overpriced, over-styled shop is an absolute eyesore. Like so many unfortunate she-wolves who assume wealth is the same as class, my ex-husband’s mistress filled

her store with the most gaudy, extravagant items she could find, regardless of whether they hold true artistic value.

My perfumes, anonymously designated with the french word for she-wolf: La Louve, line her counters. I'm sure Eve has no idea the exclusive scents she's given prime placement on her shelves are my creations, and though I can't criticize her taste in perfume, I know she's only selling them because they're so in demand.

When I try to enter the atelier, dressed casually in the same clothes I don in the laboratory, the snooty sales women look down their long noses at me. "Miss, are you lost?"

"No." I assure them confidently, "I have an appointment."

"We don't offer appointments to mutts like you." The sales woman answers, her lip curled in disgust.

Raising my brows, I counter. "Is this how you greet all your customers? It's a wonder you're still in business."

"Don't make us call security." The second she-wolf threatens, circling behind the cash register and brandishing a cordless phone at me.

"Would you at least like to know my name, before you decide whether or not to throw me out?" I question archly, thoroughly enjoying their outraged expressions.

"There's no need." The first sales woman replies snidely. "You clearly can't afford our merchandise, and we don't let just anyone into our boutique."

The she-wolf must think I have an appointment to shop, not to investigate the reports which brought me to the city in the first place, of a high-end boutique trying to pass off cheap imitations as my luxury brand.

"Is that so?" I remark coolly, lifting one of the delicate glass bottles bearing my chic logo to my nose. Scenting the spray nozzle, I instantly realize the reports were true. Instead of the ethereal blend of night-blooming flowers and dark spices that comprise my signature aroma, there is a sharp, metallic undertone to the fragrance. This is not my perfume.

I can see the women opening their mouths to continue arguing out of the corner of my eye, but I press on before they can get a word in. "If you're that concerned about your image, you might be interested to know that this perfume is fake."

"Excuse me?" One of the she-wolves snaps. "How would you know, you couldn't afford to buy an ounce of La Louve if you saved your entire life!"

“Appearances can be deceiving.” I announce simply, setting the bottle back down on the counter and leveling the shallow she-wolves with my gaze. “This might look like the real thing, but I assure you it is not.” The womens’ faces are flushed crimson with barely contained fury, and I continue, “Though you are right I’m not a client – my appointment is with your sales manager. My name is Elise Carrington, and I own La Louve.”