

Chapter 60 - Jane Gives a Lecture

Jane

When I left the house, I hadn't been too confident that it would still be standing when I got home, but to my relief the apartment building looks intact when the kids and I return from lunch. Unfortunately that was where the good news ended. When the pups and I reached the top floor and the elevator doors dinged open, I instantly heard the sounds of snarls and smashing glass.

"Kids, stay here." I caution, herding them out into the hallway. "Promise me, okay?"

"We pwomise." Four little voices chime in unison.

Rushing to the front door, I barely step out of the way in time before two huge, furry bodies crash through the wooden panel. I yelp and jump back, struggling to make sense of what I'm seeing. The two wolves are a blur of movement almost too fast to make out, but I can see that Eric is injured. Blood seeps through his gray fur as Ethan's jaws lock around his neck.

"Ethan don't!" I shout, surprising both men. They look up as one, but while Ethan seemed to sober when he realized I was there, Eric saw an opening and lunged for the other wolf's throat. My ex-husband jerked away just

in time, growling fiercely and reentering the fray.

The wolves rolled back into the apartment like a pair of bulls in a China shop, rebounding back and forth between the walls and furniture and destroying everything in their path. Stumbling in after them, I try to figure out some way to break up the fight. Seeing a single unbroken vase left on the table, I snatch it up and pour the water over the writhing furballs, groaning in frustration when they don't even blink.

"Mommy?" Whipping around, horror washes over me when I see Paisley standing in the doorway, already on the verge of tears.

I'm not the only one who heard her sweet voice. Again Ethan looks up, freezing in place even as Eric digs his razor sharp claws into his stomach. Running to Paisley, I scoop her up into my arms without bothering to watch what happens next in the fight. "Sweetie I told you to stay back!" I remind her, my voice harsher than I intended. The pup shimpers, and I immediately apologize. "I'm sorry. I'm not mad, you just scared me, little one. You have to stay here"

"But I'm scared." She snuffles.

"I know baby." I profess, stroking her soft here, "let your brothers and sister help you. They're scared too." The other pups nod and close in around Paisley, bundling

together in a four way hug.

I was angry before, but now those two idiots had gone and endangered my pup. I didn't intend to shift when I went back storming into the penthouse, but I blinked and suddenly I was on all fours. Charging inside, I jumped straight into the melee, forcing myself between the two men.

They instantly stopped, though Eric managed to get a bite into my thigh before he realized it was me and not Ethan. I whine as his teeth sink into my flesh, jolting backwards and accidentally smacking my head into the floor. The next thing I know both men are hovering over me in human form, their worried faces blurring in and out of my vision. "Janey, baby, are you okay?" Ethan questions urgently.

Eric looks overwhelmed with guilt, "I'm so sorry, Jane. I didn't - I thought."

"Get away from her!" Ethan thunders fiercely.

Slowly shifting back, I eye the deep gouges in my leg and push myself up onto my hands. "You two are in the doghouse." I hiss. "My pups are right outside that door. You're going to help me up, put some fucking clothes on and clean this place up. And then you can explain to them why two fully grown adults -who were lecturing them about using their words not two weeks ago, I might

add—" I remind Ethan, "were brawling like a pair of pups still in need of training leads."

"You need to let us look at that first, little wolf." Ethan says sternly, nodding toward my thigh and reaching for my head, "how hard did you hit your head?"

"I don't want to be touched by either of you right now." I growl, pushing him off.

"Mommy?" Four dark heads are poking around the edge of the door frame; four sets of tear-stained eyes, four runny noses.

Looking over Ethan and Eric – the former glistening with sweat and breathing heavily, already sporting a black eye and a few good gashes, while the latter looks as if he's been dragged through a meat grinder – both completely naked and hovering over my own, nude, bleeding body, I can only imagine the nightmares my children will be having tonight.

"Don't let them see I'm hurt." I whisper, looking around for anything to hide the damage from view.

"Hold on one second, kids." Ethan orders, jumping up to run get a bathrobe. A few moments later I'm covered up and having a resistance band tied around my leg like a tourniquet, and all four of my pups are cradled in my arms while the men start righting furniture and sweeping up glass.

"It's okay, everyone's okay." I murmur, kissing each of their sweet-smelling heads. "Mommy's sorry the big grumpy wolves tore down the house, but everything's alright now." Ethan has been hovering close, clearly overwrought by the sounds of the pups' tears. Eric on the other hand tries to go about his task but he's not much better at hiding his concern than Ethan. Glaring at both of them over the children's heads, I mouth: you did this. Paisley pulls away from me first, turning to look for Ethan with a hiccup and a pitiful cry for her Daddy. Ethan scoops her up without a second thought, snuggling her against his chest and rocking her back and forth. "It's okay angel, I'm here."

"Okay." I say when my leg starts to go numb, "I think everybody could use a nap."

It isn't easy to get the pups to go down, they're all so upset that they don't want to let us out of their sight. Still, they're also exhausted from all the excitement. When they're finally conked out and breathing the deep, even pattern of sleep, I turn on the men.

"What the hell is wrong with you two?" I demand hotly, standing in front of them with my arms crossed over my chest.

"I'm so sorry." Eric professes, looking truly guilt-stricken. I hold up my palm, cutting him off, "What happened to

"civil" Eric?"

"Things got out of hand, I - I wasn't thinking." He mutters.

"That much is clear." I snark, "And Ethan, did you think that destroying the house was the best way to welcome us to it? I ask you, how is this —" throwing my hands out on either side of me, I gesticulate to our ravaged surroundings, "better than the rat-infested hole I just left?"

"You know that's not what I planned." He remarks, stalking towards me. "But while we're on the topic, what were you thinking?" Ethan questions, glaring right back at me, "Why in the Goddess's name would you jump into the middle of two Alpha's fighting?"

"Because my daughter almost walked into the line of fire, because you scared her half to death." I snarl. "All four of my pups were in danger because you two had to go and act approximately one tenth of your ages. And for what? What did we learn here boys? Did you answer whatever question you were trying to figure out?"

Swaying slightly on my feet, I level a foreboding glare when they try to approach me. "Baby, I really wish you'd let us look at your leg." Ethan presses.

"Don't baby me!" I snap, feeling oddly light headed. "The only babies in this room are you two dummies!"

"I'm sorry." Ethan states grimly, "You have no idea how

terrible I feel, I never would do anything to risk the pups, please know that.”

“Who started it?” I inquire, already knowing the answer.

“Which one of you took the first bite?”

“I did.” Ethan confesses, “but in my defense –”

“There is no defending this.” I cut him off, “but I can imagine why you did it.” I utter, scowling at Eric until he’s squirming beneath the weight of my gaze.

“I provoked him.” Eric admits, “he pissed me off and I–”

“I don’t want to hear it.” I know it’s not very fair of me to keep asking them questions and then not let them answer, but I swear every time they open their mouths I want to scream. I can’t recall ever being this angry before, and it doesn’t help that the room is spinning this way. Bracing my hand on the back of the sofa, I continue, “you four owe unfathomably large apologies to the kids.”

The men exchange a meaningful glance, “you four.”

“Yes, all four of you big, infuriating, impossible, unbelievable –” I trail off, pressing my hand to my temple and clamping my eyes shut. A strange, rising warmth works through my body as the blood whirrs in my ears, “I don’t feel so good.”

A moment later the floor is rushing up towards my face, and the world goes black.