

Chapter 61 - Jane Wakes Up

Ethan

I could kill Eric.

Sitting next to Jane's hospital bed while she sleeps, the only thing I can do is imagine all the different ways I could hide his body once I'm done tearing him to shreds. The bastard knew Jane and the pups had come home and still he kept coming at me, forcing me to defend myself. Then he actually bit my mate and landed her here.

The doctor's assured us she just lost a little too much blood and would be right as rain in a couple of days, but I can't stand seeing her like this. If I wasn't already ashamed of terrifying the pups and setting a horrible example for them, I might go through with my macabre plans for the other man. I'll never forget the sound of Jane's head hitting the floor, or the cries of the petrified children. I'll never forget the sight of my beautiful mate collapsing in front of us, the helplessness I felt as I rushed her here. More than anything else, I won't ever be able to rid my mind of the scent of Jane's blood or the guilt of knowing my actions led to her injury.

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I overruled Eric when he wanted to come with us, insisting he stay with the pups he claimed to be his own. I know they'll probably be even more confused and worried when they wake up and we aren't there, but I couldn't bring myself to be separated from Jane under the circumstances.

When she moans in her sleep, I'm out of my chair in an instant. Sitting on the edge of her bed, I stroke her hair back from her face. My name is on her lips before her lashes even flutter open, sending a great pang through my chest. "Ethan?"

"Hey little wolf." I greet her, feeling more relieved than I can put into words. It wasn't rational, after all the doctor promised she'd be okay, but I already thought I lost her once, the idea of going through that agony a second time was too much to bear. "You're alright."

"What happened?" She frowns, looking up at me in confusion.

"You lost too much blood, baby." I tell her gently, "You collapsed right in the middle of yelling at me and Eric." Shaking my head, I add. "Next time you're hurt I don't care what else is going on, you have to let me help you first."

"You don't get to scold me, Ethan Blackwell." Jane sullenly declares, "it's your fault I'm in this predicament."

"You scared the hell out of me. I'll scold you all I want." I inform her, feeling the corner of my mouth twitch up when her pout deepens, "Especially because you shouldn't have been anywhere near us. Goddess forbid something like this happens again, but if it does you can't interfere - you have to take the pups and get out of

there.”

“You’re blaming me for you and Eric acting like immature cavemen?” Jane asks in disbelief.

“No, I’m saying that you can’t protect the pups if you aren’t around to raise them.” I remind her, “They were already scared, but Paisley wouldn’t have run in after you if you hadn’t left her in the first place.”

“So what, I should have just let you two kill each other?” She asks, her voice softer than it had been a moment ago. I feel sort of like I do when Paisley misbehaves, I hate seeing her upset, but I know I can’t let her get away without consequences. I feel like a bloody hypocrite lecturing Jane for something that was my fault, but this lesson is too important.

“If it comes down to choosing between me or Eric, and yourself, you have to choose yourself.” I confirm sternly. Jane is giving me huge puppy dog eyes, but I don’t think she’s doing it to manipulate me. In fact, she almost looks pained by the idea of putting her own survival above ours. Her vulnerable expression brings out my inner wolf, like a hound on a scent, I zero in on the cause of her concern, “Who are you so worried about losing, Janey? Me, or Eric?”

“Eric of course.” She answers, much too quickly. “He’s my fiance, and you would have killed him – you almost did.”

"I still might." I mutter under my breath.

"I heard that." Jane quips in reply, sitting up and starting to climb out of the bed. "Woah there, where do you think you're going?"

"Home, to my pups." She says, as if it's the most obvious thing in the world.

"Not happening, sweetheart. The doctors want to keep you here overnight" I explain, guiding her back down onto the pillows.

"But the pups!" She argues.

"I'll take care of them." I promise.

"But," Jane objects again, "I don't want to stay here. It's uncomfortable and the food is terrible and this gown is scratchy and horrible." Now her puppy dog eyes are one hundred percent a put-on, but luckily I have lots of experience resisting such tactics.

"It's just one night." I croon, tucking the blankets around her more tightly. "And you'd be amazed how good the food is in the VIP wing." Jane looks around for the first time, realizing that she's not in a standard room, but a very cushy suite. Other than the unflattering gown, it's more like being in a hotel than a hospital. "Besides, when was the last time you had a night off?"

"But..." She tries again, scanning the room for another excuse to leave, "But..." After a moment of fruitless



searching, she slumps back in the bed, crossing her arms over her chest. "I really don't like you, you know that?"

"I know you don't," I chuckle, but when I lean over to kiss her forehead, I can't help but notice her lashes falling shut as if she's savoring the feeling.

As I pull away I hear the door open, and four familiar little voices. "Mommy!"

"My babies!" Jane exclaims, happily opening her arms to them.

They rush the bed, clambering up next to her heedless of my cautioning call, "Careful! Be gentle with Mommy."

Jane hugs and kisses them, letting Parker dig his knee into her injured thigh even though I can see her wincing.

Plucking him off her and rearranging them, beside her, I glance at the door and find Eric looking on with a wide smile. While the kids bombard Jane with questions, I stalk over to the other man. "You brought them? I thought we agreed seeing her like this would frighten them?"

"They were begging to come." Eric explains, "they made her a card and everything."

I don't doubt they were begging to come, but looking back at the bed I can't help but notice Jane wincing repeatedly as the exuberant kids climb over her on the wide, plush bed. Studying their young faces, I notice Paisley's lower

lip trembling as she stares at the IV and transfusion tubes protruding from Jane's arm, one clearly full of blood.

"Mommy, are you gonna be okay?" Ryder asks, eyeing her exhausted expression and pallid skin.

Scowling at Eric, I gesture at the pups. "They're four and Paisley has spent half her life in hospitals surrounded by death."

He looks uncertain as Jane answers, "yes love puddle, I'm going to be just fine. I just need a little rest."

Still, like typical toddlers, they begin asking "why" about everything around them. "Why's that tube in your arm?" "Is that blood?" "Why is that machine beeping?" "Why can't you come home now?" Jane answers all the queries with the practiced ease of a woman used to wrangling three munchkins, but I know how tiring it is to field a pup's curiosity even when one is in perfect health.

"Hey kids," Eric steps in, approaching the bed. "Why don't you show your Mommy the card you made for her."

"Uncle Eric it was s'posed to be a surprise!" Riley scolds him.

"A card?" Jane asks excitedly, "did you guys make me a card?"

The pups pull out a big piece of construction paper covered in their drawings and folded in half. "Oh it's

beautiful!" Jane exclaims, "Let me guess, Ryder drew the dinosaur, and Paisley did the unicorn?" They nod happily, and Ryder chimes in, "It's a doctor dinosaur! So it can make you all better."

"Are you sure it wouldn't eat me?" Jane asks with faux worry.

"Mommy i's a doctor!" Ryder exclaims, "it took an oath not to eat 'ny people at work."

"Oh of course, how silly of me." Jane apologizes with a grin, looking back to the card. "And Parker made all the pretty flowers, and Riley... are those two wolves fighting?"

"Yes, but look!" She points to the next page, "then they kiss and make up!"

Five heads turn to stare at Eric and I, and I promptly put that idea to rest. "Oh no, not gonna happen."


"I don't know." Jane smiles slyly, "I think that's a good idea. Under my roof we always have to say sorry and kiss and make up after disagreements."

The Goddess blesses me in the next moment when my phone begins to ring, and I pull out my cell, seeing the name of the investigator leading Paisley's case roll across the screen. "Sorry, I have to take this."

Stepping out into the hallway before they can object, I raise the device to my ear. "Ethan Blackwell speaking."

“Alpha,” The man's familiar voice sounds in my ear, “I'm afraid I have some bad news.”



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