

Chapter 68 - Ethan Stands up for Jane

3rd Person

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"Janey, what's going on? You're being as skittish as a startled rabbit." He asked, turning her to face him.

"Nothing." She uttered, averting her gaze.

"Eyes." He ordered, noting the way she squirmed against him rather than obey. "Now, little wolf." He ordered. Jane gradually peeked up at him from beneath her lashes, sulking as she caved to his authority. "Tell me the truth."

"Nothing's wrong," She repeated, "I'm just tired."

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"Detective, come in." The sound of a glass breaking filled the air, and Ethan turned to see Jane staring at the door with wide eyes, the wine glass she'd been holding a moment ago now smashed at her feet. "Are you okay?" He asked, worriedly, trying to recall whether or not she was wearing anything on her feet.

She recovered quickly, turning to grab a broom, "I'm fine, sorry."

"Just give us a sec." Ethan told the investigator going to help Jane. Rounding the counter he saw a pair of house slippers on her feet, and she held up a hand to him. "I've got it, Ethan. Go talk to the investigator."

"Actually I'm here to speak with you, Ms Blackwell." The detective replied.

Ethan was so distracted by the way Jane's shoulders slumped in defeat, that he almost didn't notice the officer calling her by the correct name – almost. "What's this about?"

"Well I came to follow up on our conversation at the funeral." He explained, baffling Ethan and making Jane deflate even further.

"I didn't realize you spoke at the funeral." Ethan frowned, thinking that the whole day had been a daze, but he felt like he would remember Jane telling him this.

"Oh really?" The detective questioned slyly, eyeing Jane

in a way Ethan didn't like one bit. "I suppose I shouldn't make anything of that, should I?" He gloats. "Now, I know you wanted to have a lawyer for our next meeting, but –" "Wait a minute." Ethan interrupted. "Why would she need a lawyer, and why are you interviewing her at all. My mother was the victim, not hers."

"Because," Jane announced shakily, "He thinks I killed her."

"Excuse me?" Ethan snarled, staring at the investigator in shock. "What the hell is she talking about?"

"We have evidence, Alpha." The detective answers, "Very strong evidence."

"And why the hell is this the first time I'm hearing about this?" He demanded, looking back and forth between them. For a moment he thought this explained Jane's odd behavior perfectly, but then he recalled that the funeral was over a week before, and she'd only started acting oddly in the last day or two.

"I didn't want to burden you with it when you were mourning." Jane whispered.

"A likely excuse." The investigator scoffed.

Ethan glared at the man, before turning back to Jane.

"You should have told me this, Jane." He told her simply, "whether I was mourning or not. And you," He snarled, looking at the investigator, "I want a word alone – now."

As Ethan led the detective out into the hallway, Jane slumped down, resting her elbows on the counter and cradling her head in her hands. She heard the kids running in a moment later and didn't even have time to feel exasperated about their knack for terrible timing. "Careful!" She called, stopping them in their tracks, "don't come into the kitchen kids, there's broken glass."

They scrambled up onto the stools in front of the bar instead, the boys helping Paisley and Riley with a lift, before clambering up the poles like monkeys themselves. "Mommy, why was that tective being mean to you?" Riley asked as Jane swept the glass into a dustpan.

Jane wasn't surprised that the pups had overheard. They were master eavesdroppers after all. "It's a little complicated, sweetheart."

"Why? Parker asked, cocking his head to the side.

"Because," Jane sighed, "He thinks I did something bad."

The pups exchanged worried glances. "Something to Granny?" Paisley asked.

Jane scanned their faces, struggling with how much to tell them. She didn't want to confuse or frighten them, but she didn't want to lie to them either. "Yes."

Out in the hall, Ethan was listening as the detective described the status of the investigation, relating the evidence about Jane's dress, as well as a few others he

hadn't revealed to Jane: her bloody footprints around the body, a few of her hairs in Petra's clenched fist.

"Listen to me." Ethan ordered. "The killer could easily have taken a dress from Jane's closet and hair from her hairbrush, she lives here." He stated, forcing the words out through clenched teeth. "And Jane didn't have blood anywhere on her body, under her nails or flecked on her skin, which she would have if she'd killed a woman with her bare claws. Not to mention she didn't have any motive."

"She's attacked your mother once already." The detective reminds me.

"That isn't accurate, for more than one reason. As far as I'm concerned those early reports were fraudulent." Ethan rumbled, "A cruel scheme engineered by the woman you should actually be looking for right now - Eve."

"Alpha, whether or not those reports were valid, it's a well known fact that Eve doesn't have a wolf - whoever killed your mother did." The man argued, "the very fact that Jane lives here is further proof, because Eve no longer has keys. Whoever did this had access to the penthouse."

"My mother loved Eve, even with the new locks we put on the doors after I kicked Eve out, she might have invited Eve in. Eve is very manipulative and my mother

believed she owed her her life, no matter what happened with Paisley.” Ethan had been thinking about this more than he’d like to admit. His mind had been terribly preoccupied with discovering exactly what happened that night. “And I’m not sure I believe Eve doesn’t have a wolf either, that was probably just an excuse to move in here”

The detective was getting more frustrated with the Alpha every moment. The man seemed determined to refute every bit of evidence his team had found. “Fine, then tell me this – Why did Jane lie about where she was that night?”

“What?” Ethan blinked.

“Her alibi for that evening didn’t hold up. She was supposed to be having a business dinner, but when we verified it, her colleague said they never had any such plans and he hadn’t seen her since that afternoon.” The investigator shared. “All in all, we have more than enough evidence to arrest her, I’ve already got the prosecutor preparing a warrant.”

Ethan grimaced. He had to admit the situation sounded very bad, but he’d fallen for one of Eve’s scheme’s to discredit Jane once already. He couldn’t fail her again, not when he knew in his heart that Jane was innocent. “If you arrest Jane, I will have your badge.” Ethan growled,

making the detective flinch. "Eve tried to kill my daughter, she set up my mate years ago and I warned you someone would get hurt. As far as I'm concerned, my mother's death is on your hands. If you'd done your job and brought Eve in, this never would have happened."

"But Alpha, the evidence -"

"Is circumstantial at best." He interrupted, jabbing a furious finger back towards the apartment. "So help me, I don't care if the people want to call me corrupt or challenge me for control, you will not lay a hand on the she-wolf in there."

It took a moment for the detective to submit, glaring at the Alpha and slowly tucking his tail between his legs.

"Yes sir." The man slunk off with his tail between his legs, and Ethan counted to ten before he allowed himself to re-enter the apartment.

Once inside, he found Jane getting the pups settled with a puzzle. She looked up when he entered, scanning the empty doorway behind him. "Is he...?"

"He's gone." Ethan informed her, pulling her down the hall into his bedroom. He shut the door behind him.

"Where were you the night my mother died, Jane?"

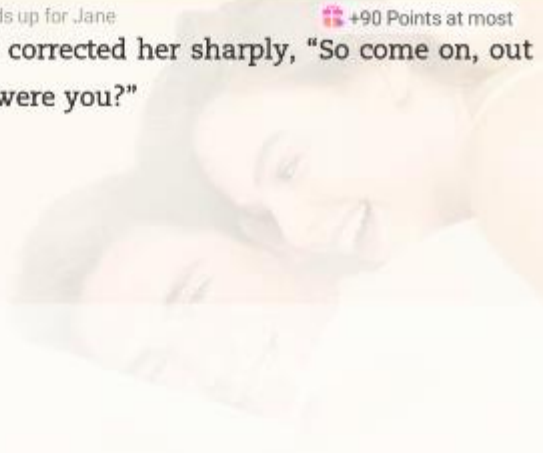
"A business dinner, I told you." She stammered, shifting nervously from foot to foot.

"No you weren't. The police tried to verify your alibi and

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couldn't." Ethan corrected her sharply, "So come on, out with it – where were you?"



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