

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 150

Jane

I've never met a King before.

I'm not sure what I expected – a fancy throne? An old man in a crown and fur-lined cape? A golden scepter? King Aimon doesn't fulfill any of these expectations. Instead I find a middle-aged man in simple clothing, seated in a private parlor in the Palace's East Wing. The pups and I are herded inside by his guards, but I stop in the doorway, not wanting to move any closer to our captor.

The room is set up as if a tea party is about to be held, with a steaming china kettle and an array of snacks on silver trays. Normally I would have my hands full having to hold the pups back from all the cakes and sweets, but they're all cowering safely behind me, not trusting this strange situation.

The King rises to his feet as the door closes behind us. "Well I can certainly see why you turned my feckless son's head." Aimon says by way of greeting. The words aren't a compliment – he says them entirely without feeling or emotion, and his face is an expressionless mask. "I'm pleased to meet you at last, Jane."

"You'll forgive me if I don't return the sentiment." I bite, keeping my pups huddled behind my legs.

"Anita tells me you put up quite the fight trying to rescue your little ones." For the first time a note of approval enters his voice. "I hope she didn't rough you up too badly."

I want to tell him that Ethan will kill him either way, but I keep my mouth shut. We have to play this smart. I need to figure out what he's planning, and I have to make him believe we won't try to escape. It will be so much harder to get away if he's let on to our intentions.

"What does it matter?" I question, wishing I could have this conversation without the pups present, but unwilling to let them out of my sight. "We both know that any you ransom you try to collect on us will only be for show – so our condition is irrelevant."

"What makes you say that?" The king questions shrewdly.

"Because you don't need money." I declare, gesturing to our luxurious surroundings. "The only ways you stand to gain here are politically."

He nods, "Eric always said you were clever:"

"You must have a low opinion of women's intelligence if you think figuring out the painfully obvious shows intelligence." I proclaim bitterly.

Now Aimon does smile, he cheeks splitting into a terrifying leer. "If I didn't know better, I'd never believe you were an omega. It's a shame Ethan robbed you of being Luna for so many years."

"Pitting me against my mate won't work either." I inform him icily. "We've moved beyond the troubles in our past"

"I'm just trying to make conversation" Aimon shrugs, sweeping his arms to the couches and tea service. "Won't you sit down? You all must be hungry."

"Why don't you just tell me what you want and be done with it?" I counter. I'm worried about getting food into my pups, but I don't trust this man enough to eat or drink anything he gives us.

"You're giving me what I want just by being here."

Aimon states coolly.

"Leverage against Ethan?" I guess, wishing we'd arrived later. Maybe if he'd invited us to dinner instead of tea, there would be some knives about. "To what end? To steal his pack, expand your empire?"

Aimon nods again, "As I said- clever:"

"And what is to become of us when you achieve your aims?" I inquire, nodding towards my babies.

"Well that would depend" Aimon muses, watching me closely.

"On what?" I prompt him.

"Why, on you of course." He chuckles. "I should think that would be obvious."

I only glare, still searching the peripheries of my vision for some sort of weapon, or any implement that might aid in our escape. When I don't respond, Aimon continues, "I had one heir worthy of taking over my throne when I die, but as you know I outlived him. My second heir seemed hopeless, but I gave him the opportunity to prove himself, and he turned out to a traitor twice over:"

"Where is Eric?" I wonder aloud, thinking of Linda.

"He's dealing with the consequences of his treachery." Aimon announces bleakly. "The point is that once your dear Ethan is out of the way, I'll finally have the empire I desire, but I won't have anyone to pass it down to."

I glance nervously at Parker and Ryder, painfully aware of the threat they pose to Aimon as Ethan's heirs.

Why is Aimon even telling me this? What does this have to do with me? Suddenly the thoughts click in my brain, surely he's not suggesting what I think he is?

There, I can tell you've worked it out." Aimon grins. "You've already proven yourself capable of bearing an Alpha's pups, and I admit that of the various women in my orbit -I find your spirit refreshing" He rises from his chair, coming towards us. "Not to mention, your smell.." He breathes in deeply, his eyes beginning to glow. "I've always heard about omegas' entrancing scents, but I've never had the pleasure of experiencing one for myself:"

"And you think I would agree to be your brood mare?" I scoff.

"You must know your kind are incredibly hard to come by – and your current litter is proof of why Alphas and omegas are fated thus. I'm sure I'll never meet another omega again, and I'm not so foolish as to pass up a golden opportunity. Don't worry though – it's only until you birth me a healthy son" He shrugs, "Then you and your girls would be free to leave."

"My girls," I repeat hoarsely, even though this is no surprise. "What of Ryder and Parker?"

Aimon gives me an exasperated look, "do you really want me to say it in front of them?"

My maternal instincts roar to life as my wolfstruggles to be let out. A feral snarl rips out of my chest, and I surge forward. "I'll tell you this much, if you lay a hand on a single hair on their heads, I will do everything in my power to destroy you. Not only will I not agree to your sickplan, but I will make your life absolutely miserable."

"Come now, Jane." Aimon encourages. "Be reasonable – you don't have many options here. You can save some of your children, or none at all. Is that what you want?"

The ground beneath my feet feels as though it's crumbling right out from under me. This can't be real, it can't actually be happening. It's too awful. "What about exile?" I suggest desperately.

Aimon simply snorts. "You know as well as I do that exile is only a temporary solution. How many times throughout history has a fallen or exiled heir waged war to reclaim their birthright or enact vengeance?"

The room is spinning now, and despite my prayers for this all to be a dream, I know it isn't. As horrible as this situation is, I know worse things happen to good people all the time. I've never been one of those shifters who fearlessly dives into danger, convinced the worst can't happen to me. I've always been painfully aware of my own mortality, of the world's cruel realities. For a moment I forget Ethan, I forget my own happiness – faced with the very real threat against my pups, their precious lives become the only things that matter in my world.

"Let them go." I plead, my voice shaking. "Let them go, and I'll agree to stay with you. I'll do anything you want- just let them go."

Aimon c***s his head to the side studying me closely. You can't fool me into lowering my guards and giving you the chance to escape Jane."

That's not what I'm doing." I tell him sincerely. "I would die for my pups, and if you're telling me I have to choose between their lives and my own -I choose them."

Aimon's sharp eyes bore into me, and I think he realizes I'm telling the truth. He steps closer still, and poor Paisley whimpers behind me. I wish I could comfort her, I wish I could turn around and run out of here with all four of them.

"Mommy, don't do its!" Riley whispers behind me.

"Hush baby" I scold gently, my voice thick with emotion as I look back to Aimon. "Well?" King Aimon chuckles, a hollow, humorless sound.

He begins circling us as he speaks, his inner predator responding to my palpable fear. "Poor little Luna. Don't you see, it's not a choice between you and them. I have you all, and I'm going to do what I like with you and your precious pups." He stops before me, so close that I can smell his aftershave. "But you will do what I want and without complaint, otherwise I'll make things worse for your girls. If I were you, I'd make your remaining time with the boys last – they only get to live as long as Ethan does."

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