

## The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 170

If I thought I was angry before, it's nothing compared to what I feel now.

I've known maternal rage plenty of times since bringing the pups into the world, not the least of which was when Anita stole them from us and Aimon threatened their lives. Still, this mistreatment feels worse – because it's not coming from some dark foe, but from the person who is supposed to love and protect them most – second only to me.

The more I think about it, the more I believe that the betrayal of a parent is the worst transgression a pup can suffer, and I hate Ethan for abandoning our children. I want to storm back to the NightFang territory and beat him bloody – and the idea is so tempting I have to remind myself I have responsibilities here.

I'm trying to get back into the swing of things at work, and I'm terribly behind on my La Louve duties. Not to mention that I'm devoting the weekends to trying to win over my heartbroken pups. They've barely spoken to me since I stopped them from going to the North Pole, and I'm continuously amazed at how determined their young minds can be. A trip to the Nightfang territory might make them come around, my wolf suggests.

But what if Ethan rejects me the same way he rejected me? I think anxiously, I won't let him hurt them.

He won't. My stubborn wolf insists. He loves them too much.

I thought he loved me too once, remember? I respond bitterly. And he didn't seem to love them so much when he abandoned us. He certainly didn't seem loving on the phone. He didn't even care that they were in pain, that they were taking risks to reunite with him.

That's different. He's angry with you, not them.

They're his pups, the boys are his heirs. My wolf begs.

Then why is he doing this? He can forsake me, I don't care how cruel he is to me – but not the pups.

Not my babies. I crying still, despite my promise to myself. It can't be helped, my hormones roiling on top of this fresh pain.

Then take them back. She insists. You'll suffer, but this can't continue. The pups need him. Besides, if you keep this up then eventually they'll figure out they've been abandoned, if you can make him take them back then at least you can save them from ever finding out. You can convince him to let them stay, even if you have to go back to being his pet. Their happiness is worth any price. My wolf continues, and part of me wonders if she's just angling to be near him again. She's always been much weaker willed than I am when it comes to staying away from our chosen mate. Of course, she knows my thoughts perfectly, and adds, They're miserable without Ethan. This isn't about you.

All at once, I realize my wolf is right. This isn't about me – not my pride or my hurt feelings. It's not even about my broken heart. It's about my pups.

They need their father – now that they've met him, I'm simply not enough for them anymore. It was fine when Daddy was just some abstract idea, but now that they know what it's like to have two loving parents, one won't do. Besides, I'm carrying another child now, and I don't want to repeat history. I don't want to let this child grow up without a father too.

When I lost Ethan the first time, I didn't have the ability to fight for us – Petra and Eve stole that from me, but I can fight this time. Not for myself of course, it's clear that there's nothing left to salvage in our relationship. But I can fight for my children I will always fight for my children. I would be letting them down if I didn't at least try to make Ethan uphold his commitment to the kids.

We have to go back.

The next morning I wake the pups first thing, wondering if I've lost my mind. Is it going to confuse them too much to be going back and forth this way?

Am I making a mistake with this gamble? If I could go face Ethan on my own first and shield them from his fury, I would. However I have a strong suspicion that their presence is the only thing that will convince him to rethink his decision. Besides, I was already afraid to take my eyes off the pups after the Southern Isles, and now that they've attempted a trek to the North Pole, there's no way I'm going to risk leaving them behind.

Mommy why are we up so early? Riley complains, giving me a sullen pout. The sun isn't even awake yet."

I know baby, but I thought you'd want to know what I've decided." I answer, trying to smile.

All four eye me suspiciously, no doubt thinking that my last decision was a terrible one and feeling skeptical of my reasoning skills. What 'cision?"

Parker inquires. I don't like your 'cisions."

Do I know my pups? I think, resisting the urge to shake my head.

You'll like this one." I promise, deciding to spit out the words before I can change my mind. I'm taking you to see Daddy."

It speaks volumes that they don't immediately jump up with glee. Instead they continue watching me with those same uncertain expressions, as if they aren't sure they can trust me. That breaks my heart just a little more. My babies have always trusted me with everything – my word, my advice, my safety.

"But you said we couldn't see him – you said we couldn't talk to him." Paisley objects.

I sigh, absolutely hating this. Not only do they not trust me, but I'm giving them nothing but instability at the time they need stability most. They haven't yet recovered from their ordeal, and if it wasn't for their unhappiness, I would never waffle this way.

I'm sure that fact is only making it harder to believe and confide in me. "I know." I confirm, "But I was wrong. I want you all to be happy, and you clearly aren't. I'm sorry about all of this – truly. I feel terrible.

My only relief is that the pups look somewhat chagrined to hear I feel badly. Their little faces fall slightly and they exchange guilty glances – they might be angry with me, but there must still be some hope. I'm still their mother, and no child likes seeing their mother sad or hurt. "We're really gonna see Daddy?" Ryder asks, as if he can't believe his ears.

"Yes angel, as soon as you all are ready to go, we'll get in the car and go back to the NightFang territory." I share.

Still they don't move. "Are we gonna stay? Paisley murmurs, looking up at me hopefully.

Yeah, is it just a visit, or forever?" Riley asks, wrapping one plump arm around her sister's shoulders.

Oh Goddess, I don't know how to answer that. I'd like to think Ethan and I can find a way to reach some sort of peace agreement and share the pups, but I don't know if this is actually possible. There's a very real chance he'll kick us to the curb at first sight, or throw me out and keep the pups for himself. I know it's not going to be easy, and I'm counting on his love for our children to save our future.

I honestly don't know." I answer gravely, deciding that the truth is better than more lies or misleading information.

Why not?" Parker demands, looking flabbergasted that I don't have such an important answer.

Because Daddy and I need to talk things over. We have to come to an agreement." I explain.

You didn't need an agreement when you stole us." Riley counters bitterly.

I didn't steal you. I'm your Mommy, you belong with me." I state simply, praying for patience. "And

I am sorry for bringing you here instead of letting you go home with Daddy, but sometimes even the best laid plans can go awry. Do you know what that means?"

No." Ryder admits, frowning.

"It means that often we try to do the right thing, which is good and important," I qualify, telling myself that this is as good a time as any to sneak in a lesson for my clever munchkins. but no matter how hard we try or how pure our heart is, things we didn't plan, and never expected end up happening instead. And sometimes you can be trying to do the right thing, and accidentally hurt someone along the way."

The pups are still looking confused, but they slowly nod. "Okay, Mommy. We believes you."

Thank you." I breathe honestly. 'Now let's go, we need to get on the road."

The drive to the Nightfang territory takes all day and all night, but we don't stop except for food and bathroom breaks. By midmorning the following day we're outside of the Penthouse. I'm practically hyperventilating on the elevator ride up to the top floor, but the pups are practically climbing the walls they're so eager to see their father.

We knock on the door, and soon I hear measured footsteps approaching. It doesn't sound like Ethan's usual walking gate, and at first I think someone else must be coming to answer our knock. Of course a moment later the door swings open, and I realize my guess is incorrect.

Ethan.

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