

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

Chapter 172

Jane

I flinch as Ethan's harsh words slam into me. For half a second there, I actually hoped things might not be as bad as I was expecting. He seemed so thrilled to see the pups I even wondered if I hadn't somehow concocted this narrative about our separation in my head. But no, the moment the pups went down for a nap the warm, loving father disappeared.

He's been replaced by the same heartless bastard who rejected me so brutally, who betrayed every promise he made me on our journey.

You know what I'm doing here." I rasp a moment later, hating how badly it hurts to be in the same room with him. The Ethan I fell in love with hardly ever kept me out of arm's reach when we were together. His hands were always on me if I was near, and I always felt safe to reach for him too.

The worst part is that he smells and looks as good as ever, and my pregnancy hormones are pulling me towards him like a magnet. My inner omega is responding to his anger and dominance as ever, urging me to submit even though I have to be strong right now. I have to fight for my pups. "The children need you. I was wrong before – when I wanted to take them from you. I realize what a mistake that was."

I told you never to contact me again." He snarls, positively vibrating with rage. "And so you choose to turn up on my doorstep instead?"

"Are you even listening to me?" I cry, trying to keep my voice low to avoid waking the pups. "Ethan the pups are devastated. They're traumatized and they miss you like crazy. I know you want to punish me, but please don't punish them too. They're innocent – they don't deserve this."

I'm listening, Jane." Ethan bites back. "And would you like to know what I hear?"

He's prowling towards me again, circling me like the predator he is and making my spine tremble with unease. I've rarely seen this kind of feral energy from him – and certainly never directed at me. The closest he ever came to being so aggressive with me was after Eve and Petra's plot, but then it was all anger and betrayal. This feels different somehow – wilder, almost unhinged. "Please – I begin, feeling truly afraid of my mate for the first time.

I hear a pathetic little omega who thought she could get away with disrespecting and humiliating an Alpha who should never have even given her the time of day. I hear a spoiled schemer who finally got exactly what she deserves and still refuses to take responsibility for her actions. I'm not doing this to the pups, Jane. You did this to the pups." He hisses, his powerful hands balled into white knuckled fists.

I know!" I cry, trying with all my might not to fall to pieces in front of him. "I know this is my fault, and I'm sorry! I take responsibility – I lied, I faked my death, I planned on stealing Paisley from you!" I hiccup, feeling a breakdown looming very near now.

So much for my vow not to let him get to me, or shed any more tears over him. I'm on the verge of sobbing – but I don't care. I don't have any dignity left, there's no place for pride when it comes to protecting one's children. But I can't just stand by and watch them suffer, Ethan! I'll do anything you want, just please don't reject them too, I know you love them."

So what, you want to make me the bad guy?" He rumbles. You want me to take them back knowing full well I can't possibly take you to0, so that they'll hate me instead of you?"

No!" I answer desperately. "I just don't want them to hurt anymore. I want them to be safe, not taking wild risks to get back to you! It has nothing to do with me. They can hate me if they need to, as long as they're happy."

"So you would leave them all?" Ethan demands.

You would turn your back on them and walk away for good?"

The suggestions slices through me like the sharpest knife. I can't leave them, I immediately think. They need me! However the more I consider the question, the more I wonder if it's true. Ethan's right, they're hurting right now because of me. I don't think he's being fair about me deserving this punishment, but if I'd never started a relationship with him again, if I'd listened to my instincts and never let them get to know their father, they wouldn't be so heartbroken now.

They never would have been kidnapped, they never would have learned how terrible the world can be. Maybe they really would be better off without me. After all, I can't protect them. My pathetic fight with Anita proved that, just like her scheme proved they'll forever be targets. If it has to be one parent or the other, they'd certainly be more secure and better provided for with their father.

Ethan is watching me closely, and I know he's reading every thought as it runs through my head.

His lip curls in absolute disgust, and I don't even get a chance to answer him before he gives me a look that makes it clear exactly how vile he finds me.

You would, wouldn't you? What kind of mother would even contemplate such a thing?" He accuses.

The more time I spend with you, the more selfish I realize you are – do you even want them? Are you just trying to pawn them off on me so you can start over with someone new?"

Oh Goddess, I can't win. I'm a liar and a traitor for taking them from him, and I'm a monster for considering giving them back. "I'm just trying to help them!" I practically shout. Tears streaming down my cheeks. I don't know what to do anymore.

Just tell me what you want – just tell me what to do!»

I sink down onto the floor, literally on my knees begging now. I cover my face in my hands, sobbing and rocking back and forth.

"Stop that!" Ethan orders viciously, sounding even angrier now. "I can't stand to see your weakness.

Don't you have any backbone at all?"

Of a sudden, I'm reminded of the first time he stood over me this way – that fateful day I learned I was destined to become his pleasure slave. As the memory flashes in my mind's eye, I recall my wolf's advice before we set out – her words about going back to being Ethan's toy.

I feel a sick sort of fascination with the idea. That would certainly be a punishment I deserve, and it would let me stay here with my pups. When we reunited Ethan insisted degrading me had never been his intention, but now I'm sure he was lying. I have no doubt my demotion to omega slave was well calculated and thought out – not just some miscommunicated house arrest. It would certainly suit his sadistic streak, and the pups wouldn't have to know. They could have us both, and Ethan could punish me in the way he clearly loves most.

Not to mention it would let you be close to him. My wolf adds slyly. I feel absolutely sick to my stomach when I realize what I'm considering. How broken and fucked up does a person have to be to think this way? To consider shackling themselves to a monster?

It would be for the pups, but that's not the full story and I know it. My wolf still loves Ethan, the way she always has. She'd let him do anything to her as long as she got to be near him. That's not the example I want to set for my daughters, and I'm so ashamed of myself for that secret desire. Why did I have to be born an omega? Why can't I be as strong and powerful as I convinced people I was when I was pretending to be Elise Carrington?

Before I can think better of it, I look up at him through red rimmed eyes. "I'll do anything." I say again, licking my lips and gulping in a deep breath of air. "I'll pay any price."

Ethan narrows his eyes, squatting down and snatching my chin between his thumb and forefinger, forcing me to look up at him. I'm sure he's onto me, he senses the direction of my thoughts, but if my station wasn't already low enough, he's not going to just decide on it himself.

He's going to make me say it. He's going to make me ask him for it. What are you suggesting?"

"I'm saying..." I almost can't get the words out.

I'm saying I'll be your slave again." I whisper, knowing I've officially reached rock bottom. "Take the pups back, let me stay with them, but punish me however you like. Make me your pleasure slave or chain me in a dungeon... whatever you want. Just take us back."

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