

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

Chapter 190

3rd Person

Paisley huddled behind Riley, Ryder and Parker, a deep frown tugging on her young features.

When the pups woke from their nap, they initially jumped out of bed to rush out and see their parents, but the sounds of tense voices stopped them short.

Indulging their Goddess-given talents for eavesdropping, the pups listened as Ethan insulted Jane and confirmed he didn't want to be a father. Of course, Paisley knew the truth behind these lies. She knew her father was pushing away Jane and his children for their own good, but her siblings did not.

I don't unders'and." Parker whispered, looking thunderstruck. "Mommy said it was her 'cision to leave Daddy."

Why is he being so mean?" Riley whimpered in reply.

Paisley kept her mouth tightly shut. She might know her father's motivations, but she didn't find it any easier to hear him speak that way than her brothers and sister did. Ethan had explained he had to pretend to be mean, but it was one thing to know that, and another to hear it happen with her own ears. It was too confusing. Questions swirled through her mind, every bit as urgent as the ones Riley, Ryder and Parker were asking. Could a person really make up such horrible things? Could they inflict so much pain and still be nice- as nice as her Daddy? Or was the niceness the lie? Was it possible for cruelty to ever be the right thing to do?

Why didn't Mommy tell us?" Ryder inquired, his voice very small.

Cuz she didn't want us to feel bad." Paisley supplied gravely, feeling a lump in her throat.

They'd all been so angry at Jane, they'd made it so hard on her. "She was trying to pwotect us.

Dr. Nora was right." Parker mused miserably, referring to their therapist. How many times had she told them that Jane was doing what she believed was best for them, that she loved them and wanted them to be happy, but grown up things are complicated.

Before they could say any more, the bedroom door swung open, and then Ethan was there, looking down at them. They turned their faces up to their father, wearing identical glares. Ethan's expression was carefully blank, as if he'd been preparing for this – as if he'd schooled himself not to react when the time came to reveal himself as a villain. Behind him, Jane's eyes were wide, her hand clasped over her mouth. Her green eyes were shining with tears, and her free hand was pressed to her belly, as if she would protect her unborn child from this.

What have you done?" She demanded at his back, looking frantically back and forth between him and her babies. When she saw the looks on their faces, she wasn't sure whether she wanted to attack Ethan or weep. Jane had been through so much effort, struggle and heartache trying to prevent this exact scenario. She'd never wanted the pups to know he didn't want them – never. She truly thought she could kill Ethan for this, she hated him for hurting her pups this way.

This was going to happen eventually, Jane." Ethan answered resignedly.

It didn't have to!" Jane exploded, tears streaming down her cheeks. They're too little, Ethan! This is going to affect them for the rest of their lives, don't you understand that!"

As soon as Jane started crying, the pups pushed past Ethan and ran to her side, wrapping their arms tightly around her. "Don't cry, Mommy." Riley begged.

It's okay, we're okay." Parker added, pulling Jane down so that they could cuddle her properly, climbing into her arms and pressing soft k!sses to her tear-stained face.

"Mommy you taste salty." Ryder informed her, knowing it would make her laugh. So she did, hiccupping a chuckle and trying to slow the deluge of her sadness.

Only Paisley stayed behind, looking up at her father with all her mixed up emotions and questions written on her sweet face.

Ethan studied her, letting his expressions become tender. He mouthed, it's okay, and nodded in the direction of Jane, encouraging her to go comfort her with her siblings.

Paisley shook her head. She was so confused over his cruelty, he – who had never even raised his voice at her; who was always calm, always kind, even when he was angry; who had always been her fiercest protector. Even so, she could sense how badly it was hurting him too. She didn't want to leave him all alone. He might not be crying on the outside, but she could practically hear his wolf's internal howls of agony. So Paisley ignored his instructions, instead she stepped forward and wrapped herself around both his legs.

I still love you, Daddy." She whispered, pressing her cheek to his thigh, closing her eyes and squeezing with all her might. As soon as her warm little body connected with his, something broke in Ethan, and suddenly he was fighting back tears too.

Paisley felt the shift in his mood, her sharp intuition detecting the change in his energy. See, she wanted to say, mean Daddies need cuddles too. Instead she simply held on tighter, pouring all her love out through her arms, and hoping Ethan could feel it, even if he couldn't return it right now.

Ever since the pups overheard Ethan and Jane arguing, the Penthouse had been a tense and prickly place to live. Everyone walked around as if on eggshells, always waiting for the other shoe to drop.

As the days passed, Jane felt more and more confident about taking the pups home in the new year. With the exception of Paisley, the children were refusing to speak to their father, and all the playful energy which had filled the house before was gone.

Jane was still devastated that her pups knew the truth about Ethan, but she couldn't turn back time and she knew they couldn't undo the damage. When they returned to the Dark Moon pack she would take them to Dr. Nora to immediately begin working through this newest trauma, and with any luck she could make them feel so loved and wanted that they would never feel abandoned. She was also excited to think she had a new friend at home, and was eager to introduce the pups to Devon.

Jane spent all morning New Years Eve looking forward to their date, eager to get herself and the pups out of the house, as well as to catch up with her friend. She caught herself wondering about Devon, her mind wandering to the beta over and over throughout the day. She was even thinking about him as she went through her emails, so preoccupied wondering what he'd been up to all these years that she almost missed a welcome email from the Dark Moon Academy.

She froze when she saw it, believing she must be misreading the subject line. The Dark Moon Academy was the most exclusive private school in the territory. In fact, it was so elite that the institution didn't even accept applications students had to be invited to attend, and only the children of the most powerful members of the pack were ever accepted. Jane never dreamed her pups would be considered – first because they would take up four spots in the same year, and second because though she was wealthy, she had never become involved in pack politics. She was too afraid of being connected back to Ethan, so she'd kept to herself, working hard to make her business succeed but never accumulating the kind of power or influence as the people who sent their children to the Academy.

She opened the email, still convinced it was some sort of mistake. However the first line, clearly reading: Congratulations, the Dark Moon Academy is pleased to invite your pups, Ryder, Riley, Parker and Paisley Blackwell to attend kindergarten at our institution in the New Year! We are also pleased to offer your children a full scholarship for the duration of their study.

Jane gaped at the screen, even as excitement bubbled up inside of her. Just then, Ethan walked into the room. "Ethan, I just got an acceptance email from the Dark Moon Academy for the pups!" She exclaimed, forgetting herself and beaming at him.

He stopped dead in his tracks, trying to remember the last time Jane smiled at him that way. However, rather than showing his joy to see her so happy, he gave her a nonplussed look, "Is that supposed to mean something to me?"

"Ethan, it's the best school in the territory, maybe on the continent. People dream of sending their children there but no one ever gets in!" She explained, getting more and more excited with every word. I don't understand how this happened! I mean, you... you didn't put in a call or anything... did you?"

Ethan rolled his eyes. "Jane, your true identity was revealed months ago, everyone knows you were the Nightfang Luna now – they know the pups are mine, I'm sure that's all it is." He lied. In fact, he had put in several calls to the Academy making sure that the school board made room for his pups at the institution. After all, they'd assumed his children would be schooled in the Nightfang territory, but they were thrilled when they found out this wasn't the case. The headmaster had taken some convincing about the scholarship lie – because Ethan was paying for their tuition out of his own pocket, but in the end he'd agreed to the scheme.

Jane wasn't listening, she was on her feet celebrating – jumping up and down. As Ethan watched, fighting back a smile, Jane paused to scoop up the pups pet bunny, Mr. Fluff when he hopped into the room. She raised the bunny up to look into his face.

"Can you believe it, Mr. Fluff? My little geniuses are going to the best school in the world!"

Then she started singing, twirling the bunny around as if he was her dance partner."This is amazing!

This is amazing!"

Ethan watched, feeling more and more confident with his plan. This was going to work, he thought, relief washing over him. I can make her happy again, I can give them all the life they deserve... He stepped out of the room before Jane could see him smile. This is going to work.

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