

# The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 198

Jane

Watching Ethan drive away with Paisley just about destroyed me. When she answered my question, informing us all that she did indeed want to stay with her father, I tried to hide how badly it hurt me. I think I did an admirable job covering my emotions, until of course Parker, Ryder and Riley threw a collective fit. We'd only just gotten them calmed down when Ethan announced it was time to go, and then Paisley was sobbing and clinging to me and the other pups. It seems that however certain she felt about her decision, actually saying goodbye was another matter entirely.

Finally Ethan scooped her up and carried her away, apparently deciding that if he waited until we were all done crying – they would never be able to leave. So I watched my youngest, precious daughter disappear into the distance, until Ethan's car finally passed over the horizon and vanished from sight. Getting my remaining pups back into the car to complete our own journey had been easy after that, and their dramatic protests had drained energy so well that they quickly fell asleep.

"What do I do now?" I ask Devon, glancing into the back seat of the car to ensure the other pups are still out cold.

"You put one foot in front of the other." He answers, reaching over to squeeze my hand. "And you keep doing that until you no longer have to think about it. One day soon you'll be running at top speed, and this will all be a bad memory."

"I did that once before" I remind him. "But in my experience bad memories don't always stay in the past."

"That's true." He acknowledges, glancing at me meaningfully, at the small hand still cradled in his.

"But things that were negative at one time of your life can be positive in another. And if you live in constant fear of your past then you'll always be a slave to it. You don't want to live that way, Jane.

And you don't want that for your pups either."

"Can I ask you something?" I press, my curiosity about the years we spent apart growing.

"Of course." He agrees easily.

"How did you move on when you left the Nightfang pack?" I inquire, trying to picture what it had been like for him. Granted, I left too, but I'd never been able to move on because of Paisley. I left a piece of my heart behind, and now... well now I'm doing it again. I suppose I'll never be truly whole again, but that doesn't mean I can't try.

"You mean move on from my old life, or move on from you?" Devon clarifies, watching me out of the corner of his eye while he navigates the winding roads.

"Both."I reply, trying not to feel too guilty. I still can't believe he left because of me.

"Well, moving on from my old life was difficult, but I took it one day at a time, and eventually enough time passed and I found enough happiness in my new pack that I stopped missing my old life. I think I'll always be nostalgic for the nightfang pack, but I left when I was so young that I didn't really figure out who I was until later. You on the other hand... I'm not sure I ever actually got over you, Janey."

"So all that stuff you were saying about not being a slave to your past?" I question, the corner of my mouth twitching up.

"Hey, just because I can't take my own advice, doesn't mean it's not good." He chuckles warmly.

"Fair enough." I laugh, dragging my fingers through my hair.

We're quiet then, the wintery landscape speeding by the windows growing cold and more bleak the further north we travel. Dead grass and barren trees are gradually replaced by snow banks and evergreens, and I wonder if I'm doomed to be like Devon. I can leave the NightFang pack behind, I can come to terms with being away from Paisley, but can I ever get over Ethan? Can I ever truly move on, or am I doomed to pine for him for the rest of my life? Is he the last man I'll ever love, the last man who will ever touch me? Is the r0mantic part of my life already over – before I've even reached 30?

Suddenly I can see the girl I once was, the teenager who fell in love with a man well above her station and somehow found the bravery to marry him. She would be ashamed of me for thinking this way, for letting a man steal her strength and break her spirit. I think of my daughters too, of the example I want to set for them not as a woman who falls down and is too afraid to get back up again, but as a woman who is stronger for her Scars, and has the courage to live, not just survive.

"I don't want to be ruled by my past." I tell Devon, still staring thoughtfully out the windows. "I've been letting my pain control me for too long, I've let Ethan twist and contort me into someone I don't recognize.. and I'm not going to do it anymore. I want to find a way to be happy."

"There's the Jane I know." Devon smiles over at me, a look of pride filling his eyes. "I've been waiting for her to turn up."

"I think I keep forgetting that just because things are good for a while, or bad for a while – it doesn't mean they're going to stay that way. Nothing lasts forever. You have to work for the life you want, every single day. And I don't know how to do that yet, I don't know where to find that endurance." I confess.

Devon nods, as if he not only understands what I mean, but feels it too. "Then I'll help you."

When we get home, the pups run upstairs, and I'm struck by how different this is from the last time we returned from the Nightfang pack. Now instead of tantrums and tears, my children are thrilled to see our familiar apartment. They tear through the front door, immediately letting Mr. Fluff out of his travel carrier and giving him a tour of his new home. That's one detail that slipped my mind when we said goodbye to Paisley, I didn't even consider the bunny until they were long gone. I have to call Ethan about getting Paisley another pet. I wonder if it's even occurred to her yet that choosing Ethan meant leaving the fuzzball behind.

Devon graciously carts our luggage inside, complimenting the cozy space where I raised my babies. It is comforting to be back here, in this place that's filled with so many memories of their young lives. It still doesn't feel right without Paisley, but as long as my children are happy, I can make our lives here as full and bright as they were before Ethan came along and ruined everything again. I deposit a huge pile of mail on the table recalling the exasperated look our doorman gave me when we entered the building. He'd shoved the stack into my hands before I had a chance to look at it, but now I notice there's a thick envelope from my bank.

Finding a letter opener, I slice it open and extract the papers within, expecting some dull notifications about policy changes or account maintenance. Instead, my jaw drops to the floor.

"Oh my god." I exclaim, scanning the letter.

"What's wrong?" Devon inquires coming to my side.

"This says my mortgage was paid off – in full." I share, showing him the documents. "It has to be a mistake, I had fifteen years left on the payment plan." It's true that I could have paid it off early, if I wanted to drain my personal savings account.

However I'd never felt secure enough to take such a risk. It was more important to me to have money in the bank in case of emergencies, than to throw millions of dollars at an apartment we might not even stay in.

"It's addressed to you, Jane." Devon confirms. "And it lists this address and apartment number as the property. You might not have paid off the mortgage, but someone did."

"How is that possible?" I question, completely baffled. "I mean I know a few people wealthy enough – Ethan included. But the only ones with both the money and the generosity to do something like this would be Eric and Linda. And even then this is way overboard!"

"You should call them and find out." Devon suggests, his brow furrowing. "I'm surprised the bank didn't list a payee."

I've already moved on to the next letter, out of habit more than anything else. However the second letter is as shocking as the first. It's a notification claiming I've won a contest I'm certain I never entered. You won! The bold text reads,

Congratulations, your vouchers for a year of free spa visits are inside.

"What on earth is happening?" I mutter in astonishment. I mean, I suppose this is something that I might have randomly entered a lottery for and forgotten about, or perhaps a raggle from some corporate event, but I certainly didn't put any effort into entering a contest like this.

Devon looks over my shoulder, reading the notice with raised brows. "Wow. It looks like your luck is finally turning around, Janey."

The next letter is even stranger, a confirmation from a prepaid cleaning service promising to arrive every Friday for the foreseeable future and clean my house from top to bottom. My heart is beginning to race, and I'm wondering if this is some sort of wonderful dream. No more mortgage, spa visits, people to clean my house for me- it's like Christmas has come all over again and Santa decided to spoil me absolutely rotten. "Am I hallucinating?"

Devon shakes his head, "I promise this is real."

I giggle, I actually giggle like a school girl and jump up and down, calling out to the pups. "Kids, get your Coats! We're going out to celebrate!"

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