

The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 226

Jane

Four Months Later

Ethan ushers the pups into my hospital room with a finger pressed to his lips. "Quietly now, Mommy's very tired."

I'd gone into labor in the early hours of the morning, and the experience couldn't have been more different than it had been with the quadruplets. Instead of suffering through the first contractions alone and afraid, I'd had my mate by my side, rubbing my back and crooning sympathetically as I gritted my teeth against the pain. After a few hours of pacing and fruitlessly trying to find a comfortable position, my water broke and we left for the hospital, leaving the pups with a sitter.

I made it through fifteen hours of labor before caving and asking for an epidural, taking Ethan's encouragement to save my strength for pushing when the time came. He never left my side the entire time, only stepping out of the room a couple of times to check in on the pups at my request. I couldn't have asked for a better birthing partner -he lavished me with praise and marveled at my strength, not batting an eye when I turned the blame on him for doing this to me. Instead he nodded and agreed that he was a scoundrel for finding me so irresistible and breeding me this way. When I was past the point of words there were only kisses and purrs, and when I wanted to give up, certain I couldn't continue any longer, he believed in me for the both of us and got me through the worst of it.

After 27 hours of labor I finally brought our precious pup into the world. Ethan cut the cord and cried tears of joy as he handed me our son. I wept my hellos to my newest angel, laying him on my chest and feeling the pure love, exhaustion and reverence for the miracle of life wash over me. For a while Ethan and I simply cooed over our crying newborn, counting his fingers and toes and telling him how happy we were that he was finally with us. We decided to call him Paxton, and I sniffled when the nurses took him to get cleaned up, already missing him.

After moving into our VIP suite, Paxton quickly latched to my breast and began feeding, and I passed out from pure exhaustion, trusting Ethan to watch over our son while I slept. I woke a little while later to find Paxton dozing in his little "rolling cot and Ethan lying next to me in bed, watching me even though he'd been awake for as long as had.

"What are you doing?" I yawned, trying not to feel the pain radiating through my wrecked body.

He grinned and brushed the hair back from my face. "Just admiring my mate." He answered tenderly. "You were so incredible Janey.. I didn't know what it was like." He confessed, sounding as though he feels guilty for missing the birth of first pups even though he hadn't known they existed. "I mean, you hear about birth and see it in the movies and stuff, but it's so much more traumatic than I realized. I'm just in awe of you."

"I couldn't have done it without you, Ethan." I expressed, feeling the truth of this in my bones. I had a c-section with the quads because of Paisley's heart, so this birth was a first for me too.

"Of course you could." Ethan corrected me. "

Because you did. I didn't do anything and I've never felt more helpless in my life." He admitted, pausing to kiss me, to nuzzle his nose against my own as he stared deeply into my eyes. "But you – you're a warrior."

"I love you so much." I professed, returning his kisses with a few of my own. "And trust me when I tell you what a difference it made to have you here"

"I love you too." Ethan replied, turning his head towards the crib. "Our son is very lucky to have you for a mother."

"And you as a father." I reminded him, resisting the urge to ask him to bring me the baby. I wanted him in my arms so badly, but I knew better than to wake him when he was sleeping so peacefully. I'd made that mistake more than once in my early days with the quads. "Have you told the pups they have a brother?"

"I called them a little while ago." He confirmed, beaming as he continued. "They cheered so loud I thought they were going to wake you. The sitter is going to bring them down in a little while for a visit."

I returned his grin and nodded my approval, cuddling closer to the big Alpha. He purred and caressed my hair as I fell back asleep, and when I woke again to the sound of Paxton's hungry cries, he shared that the pups had arrived and were waiting to see me. While I retrieved the baby to nurse Ethan went to gather our quads, and I welled with happy tears, unsure about whether I was more excited about simply holding my new son"again, or to introduce him to his brothers and sisters.

In the end I just cried for the joy of it all. Our lives were finally as they should be. The pack hadn't taken kindly to the news that Ethan rejected Nina so soon after announcing her as his fated mate, but they got over it when we announced that we had another baby on the way. It also hadn't been easy to repair our own relationship, for me to convince Ethan to stop punishing himself while also working through my own hurt over his deception and rejection, but we got through it. It helped that our family was whole for the first time everyone together, safe and healthy:

Besides, we both made so many mistakes and we've been through so much together. There could never be anyone else for either of us, and I wouldn't have it any other way. If it weren't for all our struggles, we would never have ended up where we are now – and this is the only place I ever want to be. My heart is full to bursting, and as much as I wish I could go back in time and tell my younger self to hang in there and have faith in my mate, I know this journey led me to Paxton, and I wouldn't trade him for the world.

Of course when Ethan and the pups walk in to find no sobbing my eyes out, they all panic. "Baby.

"what is it?" Ethan asks, rushing to my side.

"I-I-I'm happy." I manage to blubber, my vision completely blurred. Still, I can just make out four tiny blobs gathering around my bed, and Riley's beloved voice sighing, "Uh-oh. I think Mommy's lost it."

Ethan and I both laugh, and I reach for the blob in question with my free arm, encouraging her to climb onto the bed with me. The others all follow as Ethan explains, "Mommy hasn't lost it, she's just been through a lot and she's a little hormonal."

"What's hormonal?" Parker inquires, cocking his head to the side as he studies the bundle at my breast. Paxton doesn't seem to have any idea that he's now surrounded by curious pups, his eyes are closed and his tiny hand kneads my breast as he suckles for milk, completely occupied with the task at hand.

"It means I have a lot of emotions and I can't really control them." I explain, wiping my eyes and trying to catch my breath.

"Mommy you already were that way." Paisley informs me with a giggle.

"Growing babies is very hard work." Ethan shares, cupping her head in his palm affectionately. "And "giving birth is the hardest part, so the emotions are most powerful right now."

"Can we stop talking and meet the baby, already?"

Ryder asks, clearly exasperated that we're taking so long.

"Of course." I hiccup a laugh and sit up a little so they can get a better look at the baby. "Pups, this is your brother, Paxton."

The quads ooh and ahh as they scoot closer, eager to study the strange creature in my arms. "He looks funny." Riley assesses, "I thought babies were s'posed to be cute."

"Yeah he's all wrinkly, like a baby raisin," Parker adds.

"New babies are always that way." I tell them. "And I think he's beautiful, just like I thought you were when you looked this way."

"He's so tiny." Paisley observes in obvious awe, reaching a tentative hand towards him and looking to me for permission. I nod encouragingly, and Paisley strokes a single plump finger over his cheek. "Oh and he's so soft!"

"Ooh, let me feel, let me feel!" The others clamor.

"Gently now, one at a time." Ethan instructs, Mommy and Paxton are both a little fragile right now." The pups take his words to heart, carefully taking their turns and reverently stroking the baby's cheek.

"He doesn't seem to care that we're here." Ryder remarks uncertainly.

"He's just hungry, I'm sure he's thrilled to meet you," I say, amazed at how thrilling it is to simply watch my babies admire their new sibling.

"You know what?" Paisley asks, looking at the others. "I think he's the best baby brother in the whole world."

Ethan and I beam as the others agree. "I'll protect him his whole life long." Parker vows.

"And I'll teach him about all the best pranks." Riley decides.

"I'll make sure he always listens to his heart." Paisley promises.

"And I'll make sure he's clever and loyal." Ryder adds at last.

I've got new tears in my eyes, and Ethan wraps his arm around me, gazing down at our beautiful family with utter adoration. "And we'll love each and every one of you with all of our hearts – no matter what."

"And each other." I add in a whisper, smiling up at my mate.

"And each other." Ethan amends, kissing me deeply. "Always."

The End