

Chapter 74 - Arrested

Jane

"I want my phone call." I hiss, thrashing against the officers dragging me towards the jail's small cells as the investigator watches with a malicious grin.

"Whoever said anything about a phone call?" He drawls.

"We haven't even booked you yet. If you're good you might get a call in the morning, once we've had some time to talk."

"My lawyer will find out anyway!" I growl, "you might have humiliated me by arresting me in front of the cameras, but it will be all over the news by now."

"It was worth it." He answers, "you brought this on yourself, don't go blaming me just because you made bad decisions."

All I can do is pray Linda wasn't so busy setting up my anniversary dinner that she missed the news broadcast. I don't even have the energy to be frustrated she was plotting with the pups anymore, I'm only concerned with my freedom. "I didn't kill anyone." I announce fiercely.

"The evidence begs to differ." The detective grouses, "now are you going to cooperate with us or not?"

"I'm not answering a single question without my lawyer, even if it means I have to stay here overnight." I snap, knowing he was hoping to leverage a confession from me with threats of detaining me.

"Fine." He bites back, pushing me into the hands of a guard, "Book her. We'll see how confident you are after you've met your cellmate."

The guard in question takes my fingerprints and mugshots, then leads me back into a icy block of cells. The cramped spaces are lined with iron bars, and furnished with nothing beyond a concrete slab and a scratchy blanket. I suppose most former Luna's would balk at such conditions, but what these men don't realize is that I've been a prisoner before. Sure, the conditions were luxurious beyond belief – but a gilded cage is still a cage.

I stride straight into the first cell with my head held high, glaring at the guards as they slide the barred door shut behind me. There's another she-wolf in the space with me, and I have to admit she's one of the most intimidating wolves I've ever seen. At least a foot taller than me and boasting no shortage of tattoos, she looks me up and down with the bearing of a ravenous hyena. "What are you in for?" She asked, speaking with a thick accent, "stealing the clothes off a department store



mannequin?"

Glancing down at my designer dress I shrug. "They think I killed the Alpha's mother."

Her eyes widen, some of the aggression pouring off of her receding. "Really?"

"I didn't do it." I huff crossing my arms over my chest, wondering what my pups are doing right now. As much as I hope Linda sees the news, I pray they don't. I'm trying very hard not to think about what all this will mean for them. I never listed a father on their birth certificates, so unless Ethan or Eric pull strings with the courts, the kids will go to an orphanage in the event of my incarceration. Eric's words float into my consciousness again, reminding me how ideal this situation would be for Ethan to gain custody.

"Don't you want to know why I'm here?" My cellmate asks, almost sounding offended.

"Would you tell me if I asked?" I counter, arching my brow.

The corner of the woman's mouth twitched, transforming her harsh features into something much softer. "No, but it's nice to be asked."

At once I realize the investigator had misjudged her as readily as he misjudged me. I bet he took one look at her and decided she was a monster, just like he looked at me

and assumed I would crack under the slightest pressure. "What do you make of that detective?" I ask her. "Biggest prick on the continent?"

"You can say that again." She grumbles in agreement.

My soft heart begins to wonder if she too has children or family she's worried about, and whether anyone is coming to help her. "Do you have a lawyer?"

"No." She bites, "they said they'd assign me one."

"Mine should be here soon." I state, hoping I'm right. "As soon as she's done sorting my bail, I'll have her look at your case."

The she-wolf stares at me, agog. "Why would you do that?"

"Because people don't belong in cages." I sigh, lying back on the stone slab and praying I'll get to sleep in an actual bed tonight, even though I know the chances are slim. I'm still lying there feeling sorry for myself when a thunderous roar breaks the silence. "Where is she?"

Ethan! I think excitedly. I'd been expecting Linda, but there's no mistaking that deep voice. "Alpha -" I hear one of the guards stutter, "your mate is in custody, there's not -"

I hear a snarl and a scuffle, then another rumbling order.

"Take me to her, right now." Ethan commands.

A few moments later the door to the lockup swings open, and Ethan appears, holding the massive guard by the scruff of his neck. The moment his eyes land on me he drops the guard and hastens to my cell. "Jane, are you alright?" He inquires, gripping the bars dividing us with white-knuckled fists.

Moving to stand in front of him, I don't pull away when he reaches through the iron barrier to frame my face in his hands. He looks over me almost as if he thinks I was injured, with all the concern and aggression of

"I'm fine." I whisper, lying through my teeth.

A low growl rumbles in his chest, and he glowers at the guard. "Unlock this cell."

"Sir, I can't do that." The man replies cowering away from Ethan as though he's afraid of an attack.

"Unlock it now," Ethan ordered, putting every ounce of his Alpha authority into his voice, "before I lose my temper." His eyes glow as his wolf rises to the surface, and I can't help the shiver that runs down my spine just being near him when he's so angry.

The guard is no less frightened, and immediately fumbles for his keys.

"Is Linda here?" I ask anxiously, knowing realistically that she's probably home with the pups, but not understanding how else I'm going to get out of here.

"No." Ethan rumbles, scowling at the guard as he unlocks the cell. "I'm going to deal with the investigator myself."

"But Ethan –" I object, terrified that Eric's prediction is coming true right before my eyes. "Unless they drop the charges, I'm going to end up right back here." Glancing over my shoulder, I nod towards my cell mate, "besides, this she-wolf doesn't have a lawyer either."

"You will not end up back here." Ethan vows, pulling me into his arms the moment the bars dividing us disappear. "If they want to say you're in my custody until this is all sorted out they can, but over my dead body will you be convicted for this crime." He looks to the other she-wolf. "As soon as we get home, I'll send Linda back here for your friend. Right now she's babysitting the pups or I would have brought her."

"Thank you, Alpha." The she-wolf says shyly, convincing me she's not half as mean as the investigator believed.

Just then the man in question appears, his face red with fury. "What is the meaning of this?"

"I ought to be asking you the same question." Ethan growls, "I told you Eve was responsible for the murder. I told you not to go anywhere near Jane."

"You did?" I squeak, feeling the swirling cloud of dread looming above me recede a bit.

"Of course." Ethan assures me, studying my shocked

expression with a furrowed brow.

"That's right." The detective grits out. "The Alpha obstructed justice when he told me not to investigate you – and now the whole pack will see just how ethical you are, Blackwell. What do you intend to do in order to walk out of here with her?" The investigator presses, "Bribe me, intimidate me?"

"Don't be ridiculous." Ethan snaps, "I don't have to do anything to you. I'm taking Jane home, and if you try to stop me, I'll just go through you." He slings his arm over my shoulder and leads me forward, moving to tower over the detective. The red little man glared up at Ethan for a moment, prompting another growl from the Alpha. Almost immediately the investigator lowered his gaze in submission, stepping out of the way with his tail tucked between his legs.

"Good boy." Ethan taunted him, making him flush an even deeper shade of scarlet.

As we move past him, I lean into Ethan's protective warmth, even though the idea of being in his custody makes me incredibly nervous. I keep telling myself history isn't repeating itself, otherwise Ethan wouldn't have ordered the investigators to look into Eve and leave me alone. Still, I can't help but think my entire life is hanging in the balance, and after what happened with

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+90 Points at most

the pups, Ethan has every reason to steal my freedom again.



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