

Chapter 79 - Eve Returns

Ethan

The truth is that I am acting a little bit. I was telling the truth when I said that I would wait until Jane is ready, and I'm more certain than ever that she will get there one day in the not so distant future. Still, it does sting to have her turn away from me after everything we shared last night.

I went to sleep thinking that we made a huge leap forward. My heart was so full as I drifted off, but maybe my optimism was just the wine talking. By the time Jane woke this morning I realized things would not be resolved so easily, and I don't know why I'm surprised. Nothing is ever easy with my girl, nor would I want it to be – but only a crazy man wouldn't be disappointed to have to wait for such an incredible mate.

After breakfast I pack Jane into the car and drive back to the city, keeping one eye on her to make sure she isn't about to be sick again. We pull up to the apartment building just before noon, and I'm mildly pleased to see the mob of reporters who have been camping outside our front door the last few weeks has reduced to about half of its former size.

I tuck Jane close as I push through the crowd, and I can't help but notice she doesn't pull away until we get off the elevator on the top floor. However my amusement fades when we're greeted by our babysitter, Sadie, who looks ready to read us the riot act. "You know if you keep changing your plans to include overnights halfway through a job, I'm going to start charging you extra."

"I'm so sorry, Sadie." Jane professes, pulling double their agreed-upon price from her wallet. "It won't happen again."

"Mommy! Daddy!" The pups come running to greet us, tumbling into my open arms as Jane shows Sadie to the door.

"Ethan?" I hear her call my name, but I'm too busy saying hello to the precious bundles of love in front of me, all of whom are eager to share every detail of their night with us.

"An' then Sadie made mac n' cheese, and we watch-ed a movie." Riley explains.

"We even had bwoonies!" Ryder adds.

"Ethan!" Jane's voice is so sharp that I forcibly drag my attention from the pups, turning around to face my mate. As soon as I do, I don't need her to explain any further. The reason for her tense tone and anxious call is beyond obvious: Eve is standing in the doorway with a wide

smile on her long face.

"Jane, take the pups to their room." I order, automatically entering Alpha mode. I'm not sure if Jane wanted to stay or not, but the power in my order was too strong for her to refuse. She quickly wrangles the pups down the hallway, leaving me to face our enemy alone. "What the hell are you doing here?" I demand.

"Ethan, come now - you don't seem happy to see me at all." Eve sneers, wearing a preposterous pout.

"How dare you show your face here after you killed my mother." I hiss, resisting the impulse to rip her head from her scrawny shoulders.

"Ethan, I would never harm Petra." Eve insists, actually bringing tears to her eyes. "She was a dear friend and my closest ally. I was heartbroken when I heard the news."

"Just like you were heartbroken about Paisley?" I demand, "just like you were heartbroken about Jane?"

"She's poisoning you against me." Eve argues, sniffing. "After all those years I stood by your side, Jane is making you believe the worst of me."

"You've done that all on your own, Eve." I can't believe I fell for your tricks for so long, but now that I know the truth I'm not going to rest until you're behind bars."

"For what?" Eve questions me slyly, "all the evidence in Petra's murder points to Jane. Don't ask me why, I guess

she finally decided to finish the job she started years ago. But either way they don't have anything to charge me with."

"Are you forgetting everything you did to Paisley?" I inquire fiercely, seriously considering acting on my violent fantasies now that she's reminding me of all her crimes. "I know you're the one who poisoned her, and while I might not be able to prove that, I can prove that you neglected and endangered her."

Eve throws her head back and sighs dramatically. "Honestly all that fuss over a little accident and a few harsh words, it could have happened to anyone!" She insists.

I can sense Jane sneaking up behind me, though she's quiet as a mouse. When I glance over my shoulder at her, she freezes with a guilty expression on her beautiful face. "Jane, call the investigators." I instruct, needing her away from Eve and wanting backup as soon as possible.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you." Eve cautions, seeming to temporarily drop her innocent act. "Who knows what other incriminating evidence I might have up my sleeve."

"Are you threatening my mate?" I growl, stepping towards the infuriating she-wolf.

"Ex-mate!" Jane calls, dialing her phone.

"Not now, Janey!" I scold, glaring at Eve. "You never

answered me. What are you doing here? What more could you possibly want from my family?"

"I came to wish you my condolences." Eve lies, doing her best to seem earnest, "I don't want anything from you, I only wanted to tell you I'm here for you, and to see if you needed anything."

"She's lying." Jane interjects, covering the phone with her hand as the 911 operator asks what her emergency is. Returning her attention to the call, she continues. "Yes, I'd like to report a crazed psychopath on the loose - at the Alpha's penthouse. That's right - please come quickly."

Eve is rolling her eyes, "Haven't you learned by now Jane, you can't make me take the fall for your own crimes, justice is always on the side of the innocent."

Putting down the phone, Jane prowls forward, her wolf glowing in her eyes. "You are the most twisted, sick, foul she-wolf I have ever encountered." She declares. "And the only reason you're still standing now is because I refuse to play into your hands. Clearly you want one or both of us to attack you, but it's not going to happen." She hisses, "you're not going to get to play the victim this time you hag."

"Ethan, are you really going to let her talk to me that way?" Eve moans pathetically.

"Yes." I confirm, sliding my arm around Jane's slender

waist, "actually I find it rather delightful."

"Aw," Jane smiles up at me, "Really?"

"Of course." I chuckle, resisting the urge to kiss her pert little nose.

"Oh Goddess, don't tell me you two are together now."

Eve sneers, making a series of gagging noises.

"We're not." Jane snaps back, visibly bristling.

Chuckling deeply, I add, "yet."

Eve leans forward, wrinkling her nose as she scents us.

"I can already smell him on you." She points out, "I knew it! I knew you didn't just come back for that brat, Paisley."

"Watch what you say about my daughter." Jane snarls, all protective, maternal rage.

"Why? You didn't care about her enough to keep her."

Eve taunts, "not that I blame you - I'd be ashamed if I birthed a worthless runt too."

For all Jane's strong words about not playing into Eve's hands, this comment clearly pushes her over the edge.

She lunges forward with claws outstretched. I nab her around the middle before she can get very far, lifting her feet off the ground even as she kicks and claws at my hold, fighting tooth and nail to reach Eve. "Easy there, feisty pants."

"Ethan, let me go!" Jane cries, squirming ferociously.

"The last thing we need when the police arrive is for you to be standing over her body." I advise, tightening my grip on her the more desperate she becomes. Jane is as light as a feather, but a mother's instincts are a powerful thing, and she's strong beyond her usual ability right now. "It would be worth it!" Jane insists, trying to pry my arms off of her.

Even as she says it, the elevator dings, and then a troop of police officers are moving towards the penthouse, scanning the area for threats. Thankfully the detective on my mother's case isn't here, so the lead officer looks to me for direction.

"Arrest her." I order, nodding towards Eve and tucking Jane behind me just in case they get the wrong idea.

The men and women instantly obey, moving towards the she-wolf with cuffs drawn. "Eve Mechant, you're under arrest," The nearest officer announces. "You have the right -"

"No -wait!" Eve cries, holding up her palms defensively. "You can't, I'm pregnant." She announces frantically, shooting me a pleading look, "I'm pregnant." She repeats, more somber now, "with your baby, Ethan."