

Chapter 17 Mommy! I caught you!

Jane

She squeaks, "I can't do that. I've already lied to the Alpha once, I'm playing with fire here." ①

"You have to!" I insist. "Please?"

"Alright fine." She grumbles, "But I swear you owe me another perfume line for this."

"Deal." I exclaim, softening my hold to something closer to affection. "Thank you. I love you."

"Yeah, yeah." She mutters good-naturedly, glancing around us and frowning, "Where did the pups go anyway?"

Of course at that moment I look across the room to find them only a handful of meters from their father, making my heart stop beating all together.

Ethan

She's here, and she looks so beautiful I could claim her right here and now. Standing in the center of the room and wearing a tightly-fitted emerald dress, Jane sips a glass of red wine and whispers to her friend Linda. She's pretending not to see me, but I know she's sensed my presence. My wolf has locked in on her like a heat-seeking missile, and I'm so distracted watching her that I almost don't notice the set of triplets to my left.

At first they catch my eye because the same little girl I saw in the restaurant and mistook for Paisley is giggling loudly and happily as she plays with her brothers, but then the boys stop me in my tracks. They look exactly like me. While Paisley and the other girl have Jane's green eyes and beautiful features, the male pups could be my miniatures. Belatedly I realize the only reason Jane would be attending a pre-school open house is if she has children to potentially enroll. Can it be? Is it possible that Paisley wasn't only a twin, but a quadruplet?

Returning my gaze to Jane, I try to make sense of all this. It seems like the more time that passes, the crazier this situation gets. I want to charge over and demand answers from her this moment, but as I watch another wolf approaches her, a handsome nobleman I know to be a single father.

I can tell from the way he's looking at my mate that he has no interest in being friends, and my already agitated wolf goes half -insane with jealousy. Suddenly the need to storm across the room and throw her over my shoulder like a caveman is so great that I'm actually stepping forward, but then Eve begins hanging on my arm and whining in my ear. "Ethan, I don't feel so good." She moans, glancing at Jane. "I think the champagne is making me dizzy."

"If you can't handle your liquor, go sit down."

I shoot her a glare, warning her to cut it out.

When I look back towards Jane, she's gone, and Linda is approaching the children I'm certain belong to me.

"There you are!" She exclaims, loudly enough for me to hear. "I've been looking for you everywhere."

"Why au-" One of the boys begins, only to be cut off.

"Because you should know better than to walk away from your Mommy in such a big crowd." She scolds kindly, "even if these are mostly other parents."

The she-wolf glances over her shoulder, catching me in her sights. "Ah, Alpha, I see we had the same bright idea to bring our pups here."

She steps away from the children and closes the distance between us, turning to keep the still-frolicking bunch in her sights.

"Those are your pups?" I clarify, raising my brow.

"But of course." She laughs, "Who else would they belong to?"

Shrugging I say, "It's curious, you didn't have any photos of them in your office when I visited."

She leans her head towards me, as if taking me into her confidence. "It's hard enough to be taken seriously as a woman in law without advertising my family. I didn't want my bosses to think I'm not fully committed to the firm."

"A reasonable explanation." I agree, "And where are the children's father?"

Linda rolls her eyes, “My ex lives in another territory. Unfortunately he doesn’t see the need to be close to his children.”

A low rumble rolls through my chest, and the woman eyes me nervously. “Have you noticed how similar our daughters look?”

Linda looks around us as if searching for the girls to see if she agrees, but instead of acting surprised to find we have identical pups, she simply furrows her brow. “I’m sorry Alpha, but where is your daughter?”

For the first time I realize that Jane and Linda have pulled my attention away so completely, that I haven’t been paying attention to Paisley. Following Linda’s gaze, I search the crowd around us only to realize that she’s right. Paisley isn’t anywhere to be found.

Jane

I’m immensely grateful for the handsome wolf who approached me with a fresh glass of wine while Linda deals with Ethan. He’s been keeping me occupied so that my stress doesn’t completely bury me, and I can’t remember ever being so thankful that a school event provided adult refreshments for the parents. I desperately need help calming my nerves tonight.

“I’d love to take you for coffee sometime.” The man, who introduced himself as Mark, offers.

“Thank you, that’s very kind, but I’m only going to be in

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town a few months.”

“Then we should go soon!” He suggests, smiling so widely I can’t help but return the expression.

Just then a pair of tiny arms wrap around my thigh, squeezing tightly. I don’t need to look to know it’s one of my pups, I’d recognize their affection anywhere. At first I think it’s Riley, especially when I hear her sweet voice.

“Mommy! I caught you!”