

Recovered Strength

Jane x Lisbon

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Kapitel 5: RS ~ Distance

Chapter five – Distance

It was late at night when Lisbon and her team returned to their farm house. The change of scenery had done them good.

Relaxed and cheerful, they met again in the living room after changing their clothes into more casual ones – except for Jane, who only doffed his jacket and rolled up his shirt sleeves.

It was past midnight, but nobody was in the mood to go sleeping already. Between candles, with some beer and a deck of cards they made themselves comfortable on armchairs and Jane's couch.

Even though Lisbon really enjoyed their game, she had some trouble to concentrate. She had tried to avoid sitting next to Jane on the couch, but he had tricked her. So now and then his leg brushed hers and sometimes his bare arm met her skin.

Whenever Jane touched her ever so accidentally, she felt soft shivers of pleasure flickering through her body, and it distracted her for a trice. Apart from that it drove her crazy.

After a while she was tired of it, really, because she knew, he was doing it on purpose. She moved away abruptly and ignored the quizzical look of Cho, who was sitting next to her.

Lisbon felt Jane's gaze on her, but she still couldn't bring herself to return it.

Only when Jane got up, excused himself and went upstairs, Lisbon lifted her look and let it follow his back.

Suddenly she felt sore again.

"Boss?" Only Cho was directly looking at her, but she could see the worried expression also on her other colleagues' faces.

Lisbon shook her head and pointed to the waiting cards, "Who is next with shuffling?"

xxx

Not even an hour later, all of them were barely awake and suppressing their yawns. Lisbon was the first to call it a night and after a quick side-trip to the bathroom she went upstairs.

When she arrived on the dark landing, she wondered where Jane was. He hadn't returned yet, although some time had passed by.

Suddenly she felt the irrational fear that he could have left on the sly again. Was it possible that they hadn't noticed?

A sharp pain cut through her gut and she clenched her fist. He wouldn't have, would he?

Pure relief washed through her body when she opened her door and found him on her bed.

It was ridiculous. Where should he go to anyway? They didn't even know where exactly they were.

Lisbon let go of the breath she had been holding. Silently she stepped closer and was amazed to find him sleeping. He lay full-length on her covers, with his arms hugging her pillow and his face buried in it. He was actually sleeping. That was new.

For a few minutes she stood beside her bed, simply watching him, since she wasn't sure what to do next.

Waking him up simply wasn't an option. She knew he barely slept properly, even though he lay on couches most of the time.

So she decided that the easiest solution was to swap sleeping-place for one night. She would take his couch in the living room as soon as her team went sleeping, too.

Satisfied with this possibility she took a blanket from her armchair and pulled it carefully over Jane's frame, anxious not to disturb him. When she tugged the fabric under his chin, her gaze got caught on his face. For a change it was quite relaxed. There was no pain, no slyness and no mischievousness on it.

Lisbon's expression softened as she watched him. She allowed herself a brief moment of weakness, allowed love and longing to scratch the surface. She lifted her hand and let her fingertips trace over his jaw-line, up to his blond curls. Fondly she stroked some of them out of his face. They still were a bit too long. A remnant of his six-month plan.

The memory was painful, but she ignored it for now. It was her attraction's turn, even

if the unsaid 'I missed you' was still spooking through the room.

After putting the armchair close to the bed, at the level with Jane's head, she curled up in the rough cushions.

Just for a few minutes. She wanted to watch him just a few more minutes. To convince herself that he was actually there.

And with her mind full of yearning, fondness, and worry she drifted off finally.

xxx

In the early morning, with the first rays of the dawn, Lisbon awoke with her back aching. She blinked in confusion and found herself sunk down in her armchair, wrapped into the blanket.

The bed right in front of her was empty.

Had it been just a dream?

When she crawled drowsily onto her bed and buried her face in her pillow to at least try to get a little bit more sleep, she could actually smell Jane's cologne.

A smile grew on her lips as her eyes fell shut once again.

xxx

Lisbon was annoyed.

To be honest, she was angry with herself. Because Jane had been right, of course.

She indeed tried to avoid him, especially during the days after their first pub night.

She had to gain back her control before she was able to face him again. Another slip-out like back then was really redundant.

Needless to say that he still tried to confront her, to catch her alone nonetheless, but she was a smart person, too. She was capable of tricking *him* from time to time.

Besides, he was obviously containing himself for now, she could tell.

Lisbon was sure that it was just the calm before the storm – and that irritated her even more.

As if that wouldn't be enough though, it was now teeming down every single day.

Because of the weather Jane was compelled to stay inside, he could go for a walk less and less often and that meant that it was even harder to avoid him. (Besides, a bored Jane was never a good sign.)

To make matters worse, Grace and Lisbon might indeed still have their daily rides, but they needed to shorten them occasionally, as it wasn't that fun to ride through rain and hail.

The unsteady weather mixed with the lack of reasonable activity caused an irritable mood in Lisbon's team in general. They fell into a boring daily routine. Town didn't offer much variety either.

So whenever it wasn't pouring down, they used the opportunity to get out of the house immediately.

However, these few hours hardly lifted the mood.

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"Thank you for keeping me company again." Grace smiled when they were leaving Alliston's farm on their horses on a cloudy Wednesday morning.

"No problem." Lisbon returned the gesture. "It's always a nice change."

They rode in silence for awhile until Grace started carefully with a sidelong glance to her boss, "And it's also an opportunity to escape Jane, isn't it?"

Lisbon gave her a dirty look and was tempted to deny it harshly. However, it wasn't her colleague's fault anyway and she wasn't that unfair to take it out on her.

So she changed subject and speed instead. "Want to gallop a little?"

Before Grace could express her agreement Lisbon already urged her dark brown mare to speed up.

Neither the redhead nor her sorrel needed much more to follow her example.

Nevertheless, Grace dared to bring the subject up again later – but more subtle this time.

"Boss, do you think that we will catch Red John some day? Or rather that we will catch him without anybody else getting hurt or...killed?"

Lisbon blinked and hesitated, not sure if she could allow herself and Grace the thought which was currently crossing her mind. Besides, remembering Bosco and Wainwright caused a sharp pain in her chest.

"To be honest, I don't know." When her fellow awkwardly remained silent, she continued, "You know, sometimes it seems that we actually have a real chance to get to him, that we really are a step closer. And then something like the desert disaster happened; and we have to realize that we're still standing just where we had begun years ago."

She huffed with frustration.

"Did it ever occur to you to resign this case?"

"No." This time Lisbon didn't hesitate. "Red John killed many innocent people, he killed Jane's family, and he caused the deaths of Bosco, his colleagues and even Wainwright's. If I ever get the chance to bring him to justice I will take it."

Grace agreed with a nod, a fierce expression on her face. She had her own bone to pick with the killer. For a moment the two women shared disgust, before Grace let her tension fade away.

"However, Boss, aren't you afraid, that Jane will pull you into destruction with him some day?"

"Grace..." Lisbon warned but when her colleague shrugged apologetically she couldn't force herself into ire anymore.

Therefore she remained silent.

Grace felt sorry for her, especially since she had sensed her boss' suffering during the past six months, so she tried to comfort her.

"You know, Wayne, Cho and I are going to stand behind you, no matter what. Even if we're still mad at Jane, you can count on us, whatever decision you make."

Lisbon glanced at her enthusiastic friend and couldn't help smiling.

"Thanks." Then she frowned, "Wait, you guys are still mad at him?"

"Of course we are."

"Uh, you don't have to be."

"Yes, we do!"

Lisbon sighed. "Look, I know he disappointed you, too, and you're still worried about me, but I also know that you like him. It's okay to forgive him, Grace."

With doubt but somehow relieved Grace muttered opaque words under her breath.

To lighten the mood Lisbon grinned, "I know, sometimes it's quite hard to forgive Patrick Jane."

However, the redhead stayed serious and looked straight into her eyes.

"Did you forgive him?"

"Yes..." This single word didn't even sound convincing in her own ears, so she could watch Grace lifting her brow.

"Why are you avoiding him then?"

Once again Lisbon stayed silent, but since her frustrated expression spoke volumes, Grace changed the subject once more.

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If they had been hoping for better weather, they were bitterly disappointed. It just stayed like it was; cloudy, rainy and thundery. That hardly helped to lift the mood, so it was kind of sad but understandable that Lisbon and her team were looking forward to town's own pub night on Friday evening.

Lisbon even had been asked out by Sammy whom she had met during her town trips every now and then. She realized that she really liked him and it flattered her, that he was interested in her despite his younger age.

So she was truly looking forward to an evening of lightness and a bit fun.

Especially since she could feel Jane's burning gaze on her whenever they were in the same room. Lisbon might have been very successful in avoiding him lately, but she could almost feel his increasing dissatisfaction physically. (It was even worse since he had learned about her 'date' with the bartender.)

That was just another good reason to get as much people and space as possible between them, at least for one night.

She really should have known that this plan would backfire eventually.

TBC