

Recovered Strength

Jane x Lisbon

Von Schneebelume

Kapitel 22: Do you mind if I stay?

This is for *yousmaysayimadreamer97*, who sent me a request on tumblr.

Do you mind if I stay?

This case has been a bitch from the very beginning, Lisbon reflects. Abducted girls and a bunch of heavily armed men led by a sly psychopath. Not a good combination, especially when you add a reckless FBI consultant to it.

She rubs her face and tries not to hyperventilate. Maybe she should ask a nurse to give her some sedative while she waits. It sounds appealing, but of course she won't do so. Her head already is filled with a blur of memories and visions of worst fears coming true. She doesn't need drugs fogging her mind as well.

Right now she can't even tell what happened after hell had broken loose. She remembers running right into a trap with Cho close behind her. And how she relieved she was that she had ordered Jane to stay in the car.

She should have known better.

When she was standing there, her weapon drawn and with Cho's back against her own, she felt almost calm, even though they were surrounded by men with guns pointed at their heads. It seemed like a hopeless situation, because they were extremely outnumbered, but with Cho having her back, she felt a silver lining of hope.

Until two musclemen brought in a certain blond consultant whose indignant yelp she would recognize everywhere. The world stopped spinning right there and then. A sudden panic hit her like a punch in the stomach. They pushed him towards his colleagues and as soon as he was close, Lisbon shifted without thinking to shield his body with hers, just when Cho did the same on his other side.

It is an instinct they have perfected over the years. Protect to one without a gun – and without any instinct of self-preservation, obviously. Jane tried to talk them out of it, and in this very moment Lisbon wanted to kill him herself.

The next thing she knew was that everything started falling apart. Their backup must have arrived, because their opponents went wild all of the sudden. Flying bullets and raged shouts filled the air and chaos overran them. Then, the world slowed down again, everything happened all at once and in terrifying slow motion. The man, she was about to face, pointed his gun at her and due to the lack of escape possibilities she knew she literally had to take the shot. She knew it would hurt, but it would also give her the chance to knock him off.

He pulled the trigger, and suddenly, through all the din, she heard a horrified voice.
"LISBON!"

A figure that usually isn't fast at all brushed past her, just when the gunshot echoed through the air. She smelled the familiar cologne right before a warm body crushed into her and pulled her down to the ground, burying her underneath.

"Jane! No!" someone screamed, and now she realizes that it was her. She tried to free herself, whereas she clutched his cramped form against her chest at the same time. She called for Cho several times and only stopped when her former second in command appeared in her blurred vision.

Lisbon is pretty sure, he kept talking to her urgently, but all she remembers is a lot of blood on her hands, seeping through Jane's shirt at his waist, and the groans of pain from the man himself.

She doubts she will ever be able to forget how it feels to hold an injured, bleeding Jane in her arms. Or the feeling of her heart breaking into way too many pieces out of sheer fear for the most important person in her life.

"Agent Lisbon?" A gentle voice pulls Lisbon out of her memories. Somehow she's ended up in this cold hospital waiting room, God only knows how, and a quick glance to a wall clock tells her that she's been out for a while.

"Yes?" The adrenalin is back with full force and makes her jump to her feet. She turns her attention to the doctor, who smiles reassuringly.

"You're here for Mr. Jane, I take it?"

"I am. How is he?" Out of the corner of her eye Lisbon sees Cho hurrying towards them, but she can't focus on him now.

"He's fine," the doctor says. "Maybe a bit dizzy from the blood loss and the pain medication, but otherwise he's been lucky. It was just a somewhat unfavorable grazing shot, but in the end it looked far worse than it actually is. We will keep him overnight though, just to be sure."

Lisbon feels a shock of relief, which almost knocks her down, and she nearly misses Cho's supporting shoulder against hers.

"Can I see him?" She's desperate, needs to see for herself that Jane is okay.

"Sure, I'll take you to him."

"Thank you. What about you, Cho?"

He looks at her and squeezes her elbow quickly but affectionately. "Nah, I'll catch up

later. I need to go back to the HQ. Tell Jane I'll kick his ass if he ever does something like this again." It makes her smile a bit. He's angry and worried, because Jane put his life at risk – a feeling she shares passionately – but she can tell that he's also glad about her being unscathed.

"I will. Thanks, Kimball," she replies softly. Cho nods and leaves after giving her one last scrutinizing look.

xxx

It turns out that physical punishment from Cho is no longer necessary.

"Ouch!" Jane whines and rubs his shoulder, which received a punch from Lisbon as soon as she entered his hospital room. "What was that for?!"

"You scared the hell out of me!" She punches him again.

"Ouch! Stop hitting me, woman!"

"You're such a baby."

"I just got shot, you know?!" He has the nerve to pout. Lisbon growls.

"Yeah, I do! I was there, remember?!" Still fuming, but secretly being exceedingly relieved, she sits down on his bed. "It was your own fault. How could you jump in front of a buzzing bullet?"

"You were about to let him shoot you!" He glares at her accusingly.

"It was a calculated risk! I knew what I was doing."

"That seems a bit like a double standard to me..."

Lisbon sighs, averts her eyes and rubs her temple, feeling worn-out and defeated all of a sudden. "I'm not getting into a cop-consultant-discussion with you, Jane." And before he can object, she adds, "I'm just... This could have ended far worse and I'm glad that it didn't."

It's quiet for moment and she wishes she could shake off the feeling of gloom, until a warm hand moves over hers to cover it gently. She looks up and meets his eyes.

"I'm not sorry for protecting you, Lisbon... But I am sorry that I scared you." When she doesn't respond, he emphasizes, "I really am."

When she still doesn't react, he starts to pull away, but just then she stops him by turning her hand and letting their palms meet in a soft touch.

"I believe you," she admits. "But..." She takes a deep breath and her fingers curl around his wrist as if she tries to hold on to him unconsciously. "You left me behind so many times, Jane. For a moment or two I thought that this time it would be forever." The pain in her voice isn't hidden well enough for Jane and he cringes.

"Sorry..."

"Just don't do it again." She glances down at their hands, where his fingertips are brushing over her pulse point. It tickles her skin, causes her to bite her lip.

"I can't give you such a promise, Lisbon, not if it's the only way to save you." He sounds sincere, and also a bit woozy. He blinks as he tries to stay focused. "However, I don't want to leave your side ever again. Not if I can't help it. Do you...mind if I stay? With

you?" There is a vulnerability in his gaze that hasn't been there before. Seeing his pain, of both physical and mental nature, makes something inside her chest crack and painfully tugs at her heart. Unfortunately it gets mixed with an ache of her own.

Lisbon pulls her hand out of his hold – she tries not to feel bereft while doing so – and wants to sound cold, but it's the hurting that is audible in her voice. "That was never my decision to make, Jane." She never wanted him to go. Not for a trip to Las Vegas, not on that beach and not after he killed Red John.

"I know... but it is now."

Now that his hand is free he lifts it and cups her cheek. Lisbon almost flinches at the unexpected touch and looks at him with wide eyes. His palm is warm and comforting on her skin and she is struck by the sudden thought that she must look awful – with her hair tousled from tearing, lines of worry on her face and dried blood on her clothes. Yet his gaze is intense and so full of open affection as if he couldn't care less. He probably doesn't care at all.

"So...do you mind if I stay?" he asks again, effectively distracting her from her appearance.

"Are you asking me to stay in my life?" Her heart almost leaps into her throat and her mouth becomes dry.

"Yes. And while we're on it – forever would be preferable."

"As what?" she whispers, her heartbeat too loud in her own ears, a blush painting her skin. While never breaking their eye contact, she can't help it and presses her cheek into his hand, enjoying how he moves it caressingly along her features.

"What do you think..." His reply is also just a whisper. Under different circumstances she would have scolded him, because, honestly, *how* is she supposed to know? However, the way he lets his thumb trace her upper lip hardly leaves any room for doubt.

It's more a reflex when she nervously wets her parted lips with her tongue – and the contact it makes with his fingertip is not all intentioned. Both Jane and Lisbon freeze, gazing.

Seconds tick away until Lisbon feels him trembling. She covers the back of his hand with her palm, presses a chaste, but lingering kiss on his own and finally lowers their automatically entwining fingers.

"You should get some rest, brave man," she says fondly.

He tries to fight a yawn and fails. "You haven't answered yet," he complains like a sleepily child. "I'm not going to fall asleep without an answer."

She rolls her eyes and bends down to kiss his temple, savoring the stalling before she whispers into his ear. "What do you think?"

"Now you're just being mean." He is pouting again and she smiles widely.

"How is your wound? Does it hurt?"

"Only when I laugh. Ouch! And when you push against it!"

"Does this hurt?"
"Yes."
"And here?"
"Yes! Stop poking, woman!"
"What about this part...?"
"Woah! Seriously, stop it! You don't want to go down *that* road right now!"
"Oh I don't know... If we stay together, I'll need something to keep me occupied..."

The End