Recovered Strength
Jane x Lisbon

Von Schneeblume

Kapitel 14: Before the Hunt Came to an End

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The attic was almost dark, only lit by a small touch of the setting sun.

Yet the two people standing closely in front of each other couldn't care less. The darkness even fitted the moment, surrounding them in a comforting and protecting embrace.

They were staring at each other - both well aware of the fact that the end was near. The end of a decade-long hunt. There was no doubt that it would be over soon. Very soon. However, neither of them was able to tell how the end would look like. If they would succeed. What they would lose.

Lisbon sighed deeply and blinked. Buried deep inside she felt a nearly unbearable longing radiating to every fiber of her body, her heart and her mind. Fear, worry and love were fighting a ruthless battle under her surface.

She had never felt as raw and vulnerable as she did now while she was standing in front of her consultant.

Her looks were caressing the curves of his face, tracing every line to memorize all of them, before she let them return to his currently green gleaming eyes.

"Can you tell me that everything is going to be fine?" Her voice wavered slightly and she cleared her throat quickly to cover the slip. A waste of effort.

Jane watched her intently, not answering right away. He took his time to savor her sight, to drink it in. The dusty air of the attic was thick with tension and unspoken feelings.

"No."

She nodded. That was the answer she had expected. It hurt nevertheless. The pain felt like a knife cutting through her gut. And when he briefly closed his eyes, she knew

that he felt it too.

"Jane..." She whispered his name, not trusting her voice anymore, and waited for him to look at her again. Holding the intimate eye contact she lifted her hands around her neck and unclasped her golden chain. They were already standing close and yet she took one step closer. So much closer. Almost, but not quite touching him, though she could already feel the warmth of his body. When she raised her head, she tasted his breath on her tongue. Her mouth went dry and she swallowed, then nervously moistened her lips. For a second she forgot what she wanted to do.

He was waiting, patently, curious even, with a hint of amusement that vanished as fast as it had appeared.

Lisbon inhaled deeply, trying to clear her head, and then, as if in slow motion, she brought her hands around his neck and re-clasped the chain. Her fingertips lingered on his warm skin longer than necessary; the temptation to touch it and bury her fingers into his golden curls was way too strong. On impulse she stretched her fingers, her nails slightly scratching the back of his neck, until she finally got hold of his hair. She caught her breath and when he did a sharp intake of his own, she almost missed the shiver he couldn't suppress. When he placed his hands on her hips and she was able to feel his hot palms through the thin fabric of her blouse, she couldn't help shuddering on her own.

Neither of them dared to move. For a long time.

Only when the tension became all but painful Lisbon broke the moment by lowering her head and her hands. Yet she refused to step back – and he obviously didn't mind.

"You know that I don't believe in God" he said softly and carefully touched the cross, which was hanging around *his* neck now. While eyeing the pendant his expression was a mixture of wonder, pain and pure affection for the woman in front of him.

"Yes, I know." She waited once more until his gaze was back on her and added quietly, "But I do."

Jane gave her a small, sad smile and reached for her hand to entwine his fingers with hers. There was so much he wanted to tell her but couldn't. He also knew that there were similar things *she* longed to say. Or to do.

He saw her swallowing hard and her eyes were large and watery, but apart from that nothing gave away that she was afraid. Afraid of what the near future would bring. Afraid of losing the man she loved. Or losing anyone else she cared about, for that matter.

Beside the fear, however, the light green eyes of hers also promised endless strength to fight for those people. She was afraid, yes, but she was nowhere near the point where the panic would paralyze her. She would fight. No matter what.

And even though he knew about her character, her strength and her love the

realization of what that truly meant hit him with full force just now.

A raw sound escaped from his throat, and all of a sudden she was buried in his arms, her small frame pressed against him. His hands grasped the back of her blouse, holding her as close as possible, while he almost violently crushed his lips against hers.

Lisbon moaned, completely caught off guard, and helplessly sunk into him when he took the chance to enter her mouth with his tongue. After the initial moment of shock she clung to his vest and started to kiss him back. With all the passion she could afford. With all the passion she had stifled during the past several years.

Their lips parted with a smack, only to meet again. The contact was a bit softer, tender this time and yet still passionate. Lisbon sighed and opened her mouth again to invite him in, to let him plunder it in a mind-blowing deep kiss.

It was only when both of them felt dizzy through the lack of air that Lisbon slowly let go of his lips. Even though she didn't want to, and if his groan was anything to go by, Jane didn't want to either.

"I shouldn't have done this but I..." he whispered out of breath and leaned his forehead against hers, "I needed to...you know, just in case I wouldn't get the chance again."

She nodded, her eyes closed, panting just like he was. "I know."

A few moments of nearly-silence passed, before Lisbon slowly freed herself from his embrace and brought some distance between them.

"I...uhm...should go home." She looked at him with a hint of unease in her expression.

Jane gave her an absent-minded nod and ran his fingers through his hair.

"You want to come...?" she added after a short pause, her voice low and careful.

When he glanced at her with his eyes shattered by pain, Lisbon felt her heart breaking.

"I'm sorry, Lisbon, but I can't."

She managed to give him an encouraging smile that couldn't quite hide the disappointment. "It's okay, I understand." She reached for his hand and squeezed it soothingly.

"Good night, Jane. See you...tomorrow."

"Yeah. Tomorrow." With her heart heavy as stone she turned away and left the attic, while he watched her go.

He couldn't be with her, no matter how much he wanted to. How much it hurt to let

her go. He needed a clear head. He needed to prepare himself for tomorrow when the hunt would finally come to an end. He needed...

"Lisbon, wait!"

Her. All he needed right now was her.

Because no one knew what tomorrow would bring.

The End