

Recovered Strength

Jane x Lisbon

Von Schneeblume

Kapitel 1: RS ~ Arrival

A/N: My beta reader and I had some technical problems, but everything is fine now. So thank you, 0YinANDYang0, you saved me!

Chapter one – Arrival

"It's the end of the world, isn't it?" Rigsby said when he jumped out of the old rusty truck and looked around.

"You're sure we're still on same planet?" Cho commented dryly and started to unload the luggage.

"Come on, guys, it's not that bad." Lisbon tried to motivate her team but didn't sound convinced either.

"Nice try, Lisbon."

"Jane, shut up." She took the keys and thanked the old farmer who had picked them up from airport. Jim Alliston gave her a toothless smile, tapped his hat and vanished somewhere towards the stables.

"So, Boss..." It was Rigsby again, who was still looking at the countryside in front of him, "Where exactly are we?"

"To be honest, I've no idea."

"I would check some maps but I don't have any reception." Grace waved her mobile phone through the air with not much success.

"We probably should drive to the town tomorrow and find out. It should be located just a few miles away." Lisbon picked up her bag and went to the farm house. A lot of plants had climbed the old wood over the years and its white color was more a dirty grey now. It wasn't big at all and a little bit crooked, but it had a cute porch with two inviting couches on it. It really wasn't that bad after all. Despite its old age it looked

cozy somehow.

"Well, that looks promising," Risgby murmured under his breath. It was unusual for him to be the grumbling one, but who could blame him for it? He had to leave his son and his girlfriend behind again after he had been pronounced dead just a few days before. Nobody possibly could take offense at him wanting to be somewhere else – not to mention that he wasn't the only one. Neither he nor his colleagues were pretty happy about their forced vacations.

"Come on, Cowboy," Grace clapped him on his shoulder and smiled softly to cheer him up before she went past him to follow Lisbon into the house. "Maybe it's getting better on the inside."

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It wasn't exactly better but it was clean and tidy; the fittings looked rustic and comfortable.

"Let's see..." Lisbon said, "We have four bedrooms and one living room. I guess two of us could share a bedroom and-"

"That won't be necessary, Lisbon, I don't need one. I'm used to sleeping on a couch, so I'll just stay in the living room."

Lisbon glanced at Jane, "You're sure?" After he nodded she continued, "Well, it's settled then. Get your stuff in your rooms, guys. Jane, you can take your luggage to my room if you want. We'll meet back down here later."

Because they weren't at work now, Lisbon actually wasn't in charge anymore, but there was a silent agreement between the colleagues of SCU: It wasn't necessary to change something that worked as it was. So no one contradicted and they followed her orders as usual.

Lisbon went upstairs first and entered her room. It was small and barely lit due to window size. The room only had a bed, a bedside table, an armchair and a wardrobe, but it was enough for a few weeks.

With a sigh she dropped her bag on the bed and stepped to the window. Alliston's farm was on a hill so she could overlook the whole valley through cracked glass. The scenery consisted of meadows and fields in light and dark green shades with some paths between them. It was a nice view, though she would have preferred the view across the roofs of Sacramento.

She was just turning away when Jane's voice made her jump. "Already regretting your decision to come here?"

"Jesus, Jane!" Lisbon gasped for air as she faced him without looking him in the eyes, "Don't do that! And it wasn't *my* decision."

"But you could have prevented it," he pointed out softly.

"It was an official order." She automatically felt the urge to defend herself. Lisbon cursed herself for it because she should know better than letting Jane provoke her.

"Anyway," she said when she went past him, "I guess the wardrobe is big enough for both of us, so you can put your stuff in one half."

He was about to say something when Grace entered with a knock.

"Boss?"

"What's up, Grace?" Even though she tried to hide her relief Lisbon was sure that Jane was able to see right through her. She could feel his burning gaze in her back. Or maybe she was just paranoid.

"Mr. Alliston allowed us to take his horses whenever we want. So...-I was wondering if you'd like to come with me for a ride. I totally would understand if you want to unpack or relax first. Or if you want to postpone it or..."

"Give me ten minutes, Grace, and I'll join you," Lisbon interrupted the rookie who smiled in surprise and disappeared with a cheerful response. "Great! See you then, Boss!"

Lisbon turned to her consultant, "Would you excuse me, Jane? I really need to change for that trip."

Even if she wasn't directly looking at him she could still feel his staring.

After a pause he answered quietly, "Of course. But we probably should talk about why you're avoiding me." With these words he left, missing her sulkily murmured "I'm not avoiding anybody."

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Although it had been awhile since Lisbon had ridden a horse, she and Grace had a nice time during their ride through meadows and fields. They didn't talk much but both of them enjoyed the quiet and also each other's company. It was somehow relaxing – slow and steady. At the same time it was a good opportunity to get to know a bit of the area.

When they returned over an hour later they noticed with pleasure that Rigsby and Cho already made dinner for all of them. On the contrary it wasn't a surprise to find Jane on the couch in the living room, taking a nap.

"You coming, Jane?" Lisbon asked when she peeked in, "We'll eat in a few minutes."

He blinked and then sat up. He got a glimpse of her while she was heading to the bathroom, and called her back.

"Lisbon?"

"Yeah?" She took a step backward so that he got a full look of her. Jane was scrutinizing her closely which she commented with a wary frown, "What?"

He just smiled. Lisbon's blouse and jeans were sandy and dusty, her cheeks glinted rosy-tinted and her long black curls looked like a cute wild mess. She was beautiful undoubtedly.

"Just checking to see if you had a nice trip."

Lisbon raised her brow. "You can tell that by looking at me?"

"Sure." He grinned.

She rolled her eyes. "'Sure.' Why am I asking anyway?"

Jane stood up and stepped next to her. "I've no idea, my dear." He twinkled and picked some hay straws from her hair, holding her gaze nevertheless. Lisbon felt herself blushing without knowing why, so she turned quickly to get out of his spell.

"I need to scrub up," she murmured and vanished into the bathroom. Jane watched her as she left and then joined his colleagues in the kitchen.

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Lisbon stood in the small bathroom and watched herself in the mirror. The red shimmer on her cheeks didn't have anything to do with her ride anymore.

"What the hell is wrong with you?" she asked her reflection with a low voice. She'd been acting strange around Jane lately, but she couldn't help it. Since he returned – no, since he had disappeared six months ago – her feelings had turned upside down. Right now she felt happy and sad at the same time – and she was at loose ends with it.

"And what the hell is wrong with Jane?" she added tiredly. Since they had left Sacramento his teasing had been different – she couldn't pinpoint how yet – but for a change, she had no energy left to deal with his intentions. She was exhausted.

The past six months had made her lose strength. She had been worrying nonstop. She'd hardly slept. On top of that, her heart had almost burst from pain. And that pain was still there.

It felt like the shock he had caused when he had left – and when he had returned and told her the truth, followed by his stupid, failed plan – that shock was still paralyzing both her body and her soul.

Lisbon splashed some cold water in her face to clear her head. She couldn't think about it right now. They would know otherwise. They knew the whole time, but they

rarely said something, because she wouldn't have wanted that.

And he would know. But she couldn't cast it on him. She needed to handle it herself. She was able to handle her feelings, as confusing as they were. She just needed a little bit more time – and distance from Patrick Jane, who had turned out to be her greatest weakness.

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