

Close

Rating: PG

Summary: It was a war. And they were standing right at the front line. The two of them; her and him. As if there was no one else. Post 5x22 Red John's Rules; Jane/Lisbon, implied romance.

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A/N: This seems to become a habit, me writing a post-ep/missing scene for the season finales... and actually I didn't even want to write something. Until my muse interfered. As usual.

The silence was deafening. Oppressing.

Deadly.

Heavily the previous moments weighed on them, so much more than the past years ever could have. All of a sudden, this had nothing to do with the slow search for a serial killer anymore. This had just become a wild chase. A race against time, an enemy that carried the guilt for the death of so many on its shoulders. It was the fight against something they felt they couldn't possibly control, as much as they wanted and needed to.

It was a war.

And they were standing right at the front line. The two of them; her and him. As if there was no one else. And perhaps there wasn't.

He was staring out of the window and she, she was staring at him; eyes empty, lost somewhere between the past, the present, and a future they didn't dare to think about. Their expressions matched; pain prominent in them, shock, and this cruel notion of helplessness. They had no idea what would happen next - except that people were going to die. And for once the thought alone was more sickening than working homicides on a daily basis for more than a decade ever had been.

"I'm going to kill again. Often. Until you catch me... or I catch you."

The man standing only a few feet away from her had turned to stone. He didn't move, didn't blink, didn't even seem to breathe. His jaw was set; there was so much tension in his body that she feared she'd hear muscles snap and bones break, giving in under the strain, at any moment.

His hunt for the murderer of his family had always kept him going; and she had followed, worry being her constant companion on their way, worry about him and about how long he'd be able to continue like this. They had come so close. He had come so close. He had fought and pushed past every obstacle, and she had often wondered how he did it. But determination and thirst for revenge obviously were more powerful a fuel than anything else, especially when this fuel became an addiction.

But what when it became clear that a previous incentive could turn out to be one's downfall? This was the game of two players who were too good, too clever, too unpredictable; and if never before, by now she knew with all certainty that because of what they had too much of, in the end they would both lose. Because the stakes would be raised until was nothing was left that could still serve as a price in the end, for neither of them. Not even their own lives.

And this prospect scared her like nothing else.

When she rose slowly from her chair, he didn't react; she doubted he would have even if she had left. She didn't, though. She stepped up behind him and laid a gentle hand on his shoulder; willing to say anything, anything at all,

that would help. But she couldn't think of *anything*. Words were what had just shaken, even shattered both their worlds. No spoken consolation could sooth a pain caused by an equally voiced psychological warfare.

So when he finally turned around to face her, revealing to her the broken spirit, crushed once again where it never had been whole to begin with, behind the wall of tenacity and confidence, she didn't have to give another thought what she knew he needed as desperately as she did - and wrapped her arms around him, pulling him close.

It came to her that this was the first time she ever initiated a hug between them; until now she had mostly tried to avoid too-close contact. At first, all those years back, because she resented him; later because she feared that being this close would only make it harder for her. Harder to deal with her feelings.

But right then and there, when she clung to him for so many reasons she would never be able to name and he, after some initial hesitation, returned the embrace just as fiercely, his arms so tight around her that she almost feared he'd crush her, all the reasons that once had existed, and maybe still existed, didn't matter. They just needed to know that they had each other. They needed to know they were in this together, that they could rely on each other, and this moment, like nothing else, told them they could.

"Teresa," he whispered into her hair after a while, and she felt herself trembling at his use of her first name. "I'm sorry for interrupting you earlier. I want you to know that--"

"It's all right." She knew where this was heading. And she knew that it was now for her to stop him before truths could be spoken aloud. Truths that mustn't be brought out in the open yet. Even if it wasn't all right. Even if she wasn't okay. Even if she wanted to talk about it.

But things were never true and real as long as they weren't said; and maybe they also didn't hurt as much then. That's what she had always tried to tell and teach herself. There were two hearts beating in her chest - one wanting nothing more than to get it out in the open, the other understanding that it would just pose a distraction they couldn't afford now, no matter where it would lead. Or not lead.

Her feelings, *their* feelings suddenly seemed so unimportant in the reality of what they were facing, even though they also still were so important. So many things were left unsaid because people thought it wasn't the right time, the right place. So many things were regretted because they'd never been talked about until there was no more time left, no more chances remaining.

Earlier she had thought that she couldn't go on like this anymore. Earlier, when their world hadn't yet been torn apart, she only could think about what had been brought out in the open that was not supposed to ever see the light of day, but some cruel fate had decided to make known. Now it was just another split second of unimportance in the face of a devil challenging them - and everything they loved.

She sensed that he wanted to say more, wanted to give her a chance; *them* a chance. But he didn't. All he did was to pull back slowly to look at her, and frame her face with gently caressing hands - allowing her to read in his eyes what he was unable to say. And right there in his right eye she found a lonely tear waiting to be shed; just as she felt the same salty drop resting in her left one. They were a match; two parts to complete each other, in every way and every sense. Somewhere inside they were both suffering from what they couldn't have; had to keep themselves from having. One more and one less maybe, but both felt that additional weight, and saw it in each other's eyes.

He pressed a kiss to her forehead then, lingering for one eternity and more, until she felt the lonely tear from his eye meet her skin; mingle with her own carriers of emotional agony. She didn't want to cry; she was not one for crying, never had been. Life had taught her to be tough. Life had taught her that showing weakness never brought sympathy, only pity; and gave people an impression that one was prey rather than predator.

Just then and there, in that old, dusty attic atop the building that had become their destiny, it was different though. This was a moment between hours; a glimpse of time standing still to allow them to collect strength, wherever it

may come from. It was all they could have; a moment of quiet, a moment of surrendering to pain and sorrow and the mourning for what was denied to them, as well as fearing what lay before them.

For the moment, they wouldn't cross lines and tell truths, because time didn't yet allow them to. They would savor what they had now; and tomorrow, they'd get back to the battlefield to fight for lives unknown and futures untold, and for what they could never bear to lose.

Each other.

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