

One Night Only

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Rating: P14 / K+

Contents: One weekend in a castle; one woman in a fairytale-like world; one chance to forget who she is and what her responsibilities are. One night only to love.

Disclaimer: Nothing mine; only play a bit with them, but promise to give them back in one piece to their rightful owners as soon as I'm done. Can't take away dear Bruno Heller's toys, can I? ;)

AN: That proves it; I'm bad when it comes to conflicts. I wanted this to be a bit more angsty... but here we go with the fluff. Almost fairytale fluff with some good amount OOC-ness. Sorry. Blame it on the music I'm listening to at the moment - the records of "Celtic Woman". And that I'm in a far too good mood recently
laughs

This story is for paper frog. Guess she knows why. Love, if you like it, then please let me hear a happy *quak* ;)

Had she been still the little girl from almost thirty years ago, she certainly would have claimed the building she drove up to that Friday noon to be a castle from a fairytale. And that she was a princess coming home to a prince awaiting her return yearningly. And although she was by no means a little girl with little girl's dreams anymore, she still couldn't help but think of the building in the distance as exactly what her fantasy saw it as.

At first, Teresa Lisbon hadn't been that happy about the invitation. The annual CBI ball was an event mostly of political meaning, with men and women of the most acclaimed positions within the Bureau and all belonging instances. Of course there were also local politicians and representatives of the judicative. Having the highest success rate of solving and closing cases in Sacramento, possibly in whole California, Lisbon and her team had been practically forced to attend the ball. And as much as Teresa hated such events; knowing the place the reception was held, complaining and refusing had never crossed her mind.

Because what looked like a castle outside, was a modern high class hotel with a huge wellness area inside. And who was she to let that chance slip? That was also the reason why she had accepted the offer to arrive already at Friday, while the ball would be on Saturday evening. She would spend a wonderful weekend with lots of fun and relaxing, and a bit of fulfilling her duty.

After checking in and for just a moment feeling like a teenage girl when she looked around in her room - one of the best rooms for one of the best agents, paid by the Bureau - she then for the rest of the day claimed one of the hot tubs, swam a few rounds in the pool, and received a massage that gave her a hard time holding back pleased and certainly sooner or later a bit embarrassing moans and groans and sighs.

Saturday evening came far too soon for Lisbon's taste; it wasn't exactly that she had been looking forward to dressing up and being nice to people who wanted to tell her how to do her work, while they themselves had never set a foot into the field, or it at least had been a long time since they had been out in the field.

She had spent weekend's first day with sleeping in, lost in a far too comfortable, king-sized bed that actually made her feel like a princess, taking a long shower and going down to have breakfast. Perfect coffee, warm croissants and fresh fruits had made her morning and encouraged her to take a walk. It was a warm and sunny day in early May, and she had almost forgotten time when she had wandered around, lost in thought.

When she returned to the hotel, most of the other guests who were invited to attend the ball had arrived, and she soon found out that the rooms in her hallway were taken by the rest of her team. To her left and her right

she found Patrick Jane and Kimball Cho, and next to Cho were first Grace Van Pelt and at the end of the hallway Wayne Rigsby. She greeted them all before she went to her own room to get ready for the evening, knowing that she would have enough time to talk to them later.

She was rather surprised when she found Jane, dressed in a smoking and looking gorgeous, waiting outside her door when she opened it over an hour later to leave for the ball. She didn't know, but also didn't ask how long he had already been waiting, as she was a little late for the set beginning time of the event; the black and silver gown was not exactly the attire she normally wore, or was used to get into on her own for that matter.

The consultant offered her an arm when they walked down the hallway, and she let her hand rest around his elbow. She hadn't expected to be accompanied by him the whole evening; to be honest, she hadn't expected anything at all, apart from the usual - exchanging a few words with important people who thanked and praised her and her team for their work, and giving a little speech with as few words as possible. She had been prepared for the last, thankfully; she hated giving speeches, but this time it had been easy, as she had had help from her retired boss, Virgil Minelli, for whom she, in return, had organized an invitation to the ball, knowing that he would like to meet some of the people he'd grown close to in the years he'd been working for the Bureau again.

Patrick Jane had been like a shadow; always close to her, like silent support and encouragement, as he knew that she didn't like events like this one. And at some point she had to admit that there was no one else than him she would have wanted to be with this evening. Even when the official part of the ball was finally over, he didn't leave her side. They laughed, they shared some stories over dinner, they danced; they had a wonderful time and Lisbon almost forgot that this was an official occasion. He was a gentleman, and though she had known before that he could be like this if he wanted to; to be the one to be treated with so much attention and charm was a nice new experience.

It was around half an hour past midnight when the first guests started to retreat to their rooms. Lisbon, too, felt a slight tiredness possessing her, and after another half an hour decided to call it a night.

This time it didn't surprise her when she found Jane joining her as she left the ball room. He brought her to her room and said goodnight, waiting for her to go in and close the door, before she heard him walk away and enter his own room. It left Lisbon a bit confused, as only now she realized that the man who normally guaranteed a few stepped-on feet and embarrassed coughs when he talked to people with his usual bluntness had been perfectly polite the whole evening. Maybe she would ask him about it when they were back at work. Or maybe she would just accept it as it was. It was, after all, a nice change not to have to apologize for him and his behavior.

Struggling out of her gown - it seemed it was even harder to get out of it than to get into it - she let a hot shower calm her mind, still occupied with all the impressions of the ball, and the conversations she had, and slipped into her nightgown - one of dark green satin, held only by thin straps and hugging her body down to her knees. It had been provided by the hotel, as well as the wrapper that was made of the same material and color.

She sighed at the feeling of the soft, velvety sheet caressing her skin, and sank down into the pillow, closing her eyes. But despite her tiredness, sleep refused to come to her. She turned from one side to another, listened to some soothing music from her mp3-player, even counted sheep, but in the end, she was even more awake than before. The moon shone brightly into the room, and she considered closing the curtains, hoping that the darkness would tell her mind and body that it was time to rest, but then she never slept with the curtains closed; she loved the moon shining into her room, and she loved the sun waking her in the morning.

After endless minutes of contemplating, she gave in to her insomnia and got up. Maybe walking around and some fresh air would help. The dark-haired woman threw over the wrapper and then stepped onto the balcony.

Silver moonlight was illuminating the landscape; a wide meadow surrounding the hotel and ending in a forest. Somewhere at the edge of the forest animals moved, some deers maybe, rabbits even, though she doubted she would be able to see them. Far away from the city and its lights, out here the sky seemed to be flooded with stars.

This was not only a fairytale castle; this was another, a fairytale world. The stars looked like little diamonds, strewn upon the black velvet of the firmament, sparkling and twinkling. The light wind moved the faraway tree tops slightly, made them dance to an unknown rhythm. Now and then a bird twittered, or a grasshopper chirped. Although the world seemed to be asleep, only watched over by the moon, there was hustle and bustle all around her.

"Seems like I'm not the only sleepless one tonight," a soft voice, coming from her left, suddenly startled her. Even if she hadn't known who was in the room next to her; that voice she would have recognized anywhere and every time.

"One would think that here, in this wonderful hotel, without any loud neighbors and traffic or other occasional noise, I should be granted a perfect night's sleep, and yet... I mean, I was last night. But maybe I'm too used to the noise to sleep without it for more than one night." Lisbon sighed and inhaled the clear air of the countryside deeply. Perhaps this one time, the old wife's tale that fresh air was tiring would prove itself true. It had never worked for her before.

"Or maybe it's because of the irresistible man in the room next to yours," he suggested flirtatiously.

"Oh please, you know very well that Cho is nothing more than a colleague to me." There was a tiny moment of silence before they both laughed quietly. "Look at us," Lisbon continued when they'd calmed down again, "there are luxurious beds in even more luxurious rooms awaiting us, and we stand here in our..." She trailed off when she finally looked at him and realized that he wasn't wearing, as she for some reason had assumed, dark green pajamas, but instead turquoise ones, although they were strongly hinting at a more bluish tone.

"What?"

"Are those yours? I mean, did you bring them from home?" It took him a moment to understand her gesture, indicating that she was talking about his nightwear.

"No, they were provided by the hotel. Why?"

"Just wondering. I thought all nightwear would have the same color as mine."

"I rather think they have the color of the rooms. At least my room has the same color as my pajamas. And Cho's room and pajamas was orange-red, as far as I could see when I visited him this afternoon."

"Really? The rooms all have different colors?"

"Seems so. And you obviously got the one that matches your eye color perfectly, judging by your night gown," Jane smiled and Lisbon could have sworn that he winked at her.

"So... since we're both plagued by insomnia - do you mind if I take a look at your room?" He didn't answer, but instead simply opened his of the separating doors between their balconies. All rooms on one floor were connected not only by the inner hallway, but also the balcony. Build around the complete floor, the single balconies belonging to each room were separated by two doors made of blind glass; one was only able to enter the next part of the balcony if both doors were opened, one from each of the two rooms' guests.

The door on Lisbon's side was as quickly opened as his, and the woman returned her colleague's smile when she stepped onto his balcony. He even bowed gallantly when she entered his hotel room, making her giggle.

"It's beautiful. It looks like... the ocean. You're... living in the ocean," she commented after taking everything in.

"That's what they call a room with ocean view," Jane joked. While she was looking around, he had remained standing at the balcony door, but now he started walking towards his boss. "You know, somehow you don't fit in here." He grinned cheekily at her questioning expression. "Your green outfit," he explained and tugged slightly at her sleeve.

"You think? Well, I like the combination of turquoise-blue and dark green. I think they're perfect together," Lisbon gave back. Only when the words had left her mouth, she realized their double meaning. And the man beside her obviously had recognized it as well, as his voice suddenly became very low and somehow... seductive.

"So do I." She stood very still when she felt the heat that radiated from his body warming her back.

"But... you just said-"

"Sometimes you show me very effectively how wrong I can be." With this, he gently laid his hands on her shoulders and turned her around. And as soon as she was facing him, he captured her lips and kissed her, lightly at first, softly, before he almost torturing slow deepened the kiss. Soon she found herself responding, falling into his embrace, drowning in the sensation of his touches.

When Teresa awoke the next morning, it took her a few moments to recognize her surroundings. And the pillow her head was resting on. Snuggled against one certain Patrick Jane who still seemed to sleep soundly - to her surprise - she had her head lying right over his heart, the strong, rhythmic beat of it trying to lull her still sleepy mind back into the land of dreams.

But rationality and sense were stronger in the end, and carefully she detached herself from the wonderfully warm and comforting embrace she was lying in, as Patrick had his one arm holding her close, while the fingers of his other were laced with hers, the bundle of hands resting on his stomach.

She did her best to not disturb him, and slowly she got up. Just when she was about to leave the bed, a hand grabbed hers again, and she heard his voice, raspy from sleep.

"Teresa," was all he said; then he waited for her to look at him. Lisbon sighed inaudible and closed her eyes for a second, before she turned around and smiled gently at him.

"Good morning," she spoke softly, and let her thumb caress his hand.

There was a strange feeling inside her. It wasn't that she regretted the night with him; quite the contrary, had it been one of the most wonderful nights she had ever experienced. Still, she also knew they probably shouldn't have done it. It only made things complicated. They were well aware of the attraction, the feelings they'd been harboring for a while now, always hesitant to act on them, because they didn't want to destroy what they had. Now they'd crossed this border. And they had to deal with it. She knew that as well. Yet her first reaction had been to flee.

She didn't doubt that Patrick saw the emotions written all over her face. The contentedness, the fear, the tiny bit of regret that was there nevertheless. But so was the affection she felt for the man with the blue eyes who mirrored her expression. And thoughts, possibly.

"Come here," he suddenly whispered after long moments of only looking at each other, and gently pulled her back. She came willingly, crawling to him on the oversized bed, and into his arms. He caressed her arm and back when he continued quietly, "Teresa, I... it is important to me that you know that..." He was talking almost carefully, as if he was the bringer of bad news. And maybe he was. Just like she had to be. And she felt the strong urge to tell him what was on her mind *before* they sealed their inevitable parting.

"No regrets," she so interrupted him, and earned herself a questioning "Huh?" from him that made her smile for a moment. "I don't regret what happened last night, but..." Now it was his turn to interrupt her.

"We shouldn't repeat it." A clear statement; although she could have sworn there was a hint of sadness in his voice.

"Yes," she simply agreed.

"You think we can go like nothing has happened?" he tried to assure himself.

"No, but that's not what I want. Do you?"

"We're both not ready for... this," he made a gesture, indicating that he meant them both, lying in bed together. It couldn't be like this, not now, and not in near future. Maybe someday, but for now, friendship was more important than everything else. They knew what they had, and even if it didn't look like that through an observer's eye, they were probably the closest they had to a family, and to confidants. And they certainly shared the deepest they would ever experience of a friendship. "But that doesn't mean I want to forget what has happened. We should keep the memory and not forget and maybe..." He trailed off, but they both knew very well how the sentence ended.

Maybe, one day, they would repeat that night. Maybe, one day, they would make a habit of it. And maybe, one day, they would share a lot more than one night only.

"Let's get ready for breakfast and then... return to reality," Teresa said while she pressed herself a bit closer to Patrick, whom she felt nod; then he moved them so she came to lie beneath him. He stole one last gentle, yet passionate kiss, filled with love and longing equally, before he released her for good.

Whatever "for good" meant in their case.

There were many definitions of *forever*.

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