

Recovered Strength

Jane x Lisbon

Von Schneeblume

Kapitel 13: Moonlight Serenade

Moonlight Serenade

"This is ridiculous!" Lisbon huffed.

"I'm pretty sure, 'ridiculous' is the last word they wanted this event to be associated with," Cho answered beside her, but she could hear the agreeing grin in his voice.

"Oh, come on, Cho, a masked ball? Those people definitely live in the wrong century."

Cho shrugged. "I guess it's supposed to be romantic."

"Yeah, right," Lisbon replied with a snort, "A hall full of high ups, who butter each other up all through the night – I can't think of anything more romantic."

"You do look great though, Boss."

Lisbon turned to him and smiled softly. "Thank you. You don't look so bad yourself."

"Except for the mask."

She grinned. "You've got it."

They shared a moment of fellow suffering until Rigsby appeared in front of them. Just like Cho he was wearing an expensive looking black suit with a bow tie. However, while his friend wore a blue mask, his own was green.

"This sucks!" he complained. "I already had to dance with Brenda three times!"

"For what it's worth, you looked very harmonious together," Cho dead panned.

"I stepped on her feet...repeatedly." Rigsby bowed his head sheepishly, while his colleagues could barely hide their amusement.

"And yet she wanted to dance with you three times? Oh boy, what's in that

champagne?" Lisbon smirked while looking at the crowd. "Where's VanPelt?"

"I'm here, Boss." Grace stopped next to her, clinging to a glass of said champagne. Her long dress was colored in a deep red, which was even matching her ginger hair. A delicate golden mask was completing her outfit.

"Alright, guys! Go and mix with the other guests. Director Bertram wants us to chit chat with the most important people of California. So smile nicely and try to have some fun. Oh and try not to break any bones." For the last part Lisbon threw a pointed look at Rigsby, who blushed and nodded slowly.

"Yes, Boss." Cho and Grace answered synchronously and with the same smirk on their lips.

With a small grin Lisbon watched her team strolling away and then sighed gravely, when she saw the Chief of the Sac PD walking towards her. She groaned under her breath.

She truly was no fan of excessive and fancy high-up parties.

XxxMoonlight SerenadexxX

If someone had asked her, Lisbon would have firmly denied the fact that she was hiding. A Senior Special Agent of the CBI didn't hide. Especially when currently the greatest danger emanated from dance willing men.

Nevertheless she was in no mood to throw herself back into their arms. She had already done her duty anyway! She had danced with every important man Bertram would have wanted her to – and she had even danced with the CBI director himself. And with Rigsby, even though he had stepped on her feet as well – but she had rather danced with him than with that old unsympathetic ex-politician, who had stared at her décolleté while talking to her.

Lisbon moaned and leaned against the wall next to a heavy red curtain. A pillar in front of her was shielding her at least a little bit from the crowd. Her feet felt like burning – not only because of Rigsby but also because she wasn't used to dance in high heels all night long.

"I could show you a hideout, which is way more effective."

Lisbon almost flinched when a male voice interrupted her musing.

"I'm not hiding," she said automatically and twisted her head, only to find a man in a black tux leaning on the pillar. He wasn't looking at her, but it was obvious that he had addressed her.

"Sure you are. Well, at least you're trying to." He smiled impishly and finally turned to face her. Lisbon held her breath without noticing, when a pair of deep blue eyes met hers and captured her gaze. His blond hair was short and curly, and his face was partly

covered with a mask in black and silver. Even so she could tell that he was her age – perhaps a few years older. And those eyes...they nearly glowed in the shadow of the pillar.

She swallowed and started breathing again. He wasn't Lisbon's preferred type but somehow – she had no idea why – he was tempting. And she had no idea, who the hell he was. Even with them wearing a mask, it was possible to identify people. Unless you simply didn't know them, of course.

"I was just taking a break," she evaded lamely.

He gave her a soft chuckle and stepped closer. "Or fleeing." He made no secret of scrutinizing her and she felt self-conscious all of a sudden, though there was no reason for it. Her strapless dark blue dress was long and adorned with lots of tiny jewels, which were looking like stars in the nighttime sky. Her dark hair fell in soft waves to her shoulders and her blue and silver mask fit her dress perfectly.

"A beautiful woman shouldn't be forced to hide, but I understand. The company hasn't been very thrilling yet."

She raised her eye brows. "And I assume it's getting better now?"

"Of course!" He flashed a sweet but mischievous grin at her and exposed his perfect white teeth.

"That's very self-confident, Mr...?"

"Nice try. May I remind you of the fact that this is a masked ball? Forget about the names."

While Lisbon rolled her eyes, he grabbed two glasses of champagne from a passing waiter and offered her one.

"As I said, I know the perfect place to hide. Are you interested?"

She eyed him skeptically for a second, but finally reached for the glass. "I'm listening."

"I'll tell you if you take me with you. I'm tired of this...masquerade."

Lisbon lifted a single brow at this condition and yet the opportunity of escaping was way too tempting. "Fine. But no funny stuff, I'm carrying a gun."

"I figured that, Agent, even though I wondered where you're hiding it. No gun would fit into that small purse of yours."

"How do you know that I'm an agent?" She looked at him suspiciously, while she purposefully avoided adding something to his suggestion.

He smirked and turned to stroll away.

"Hey, wait!" Lisbon hissed and followed him – without hesitation but with a careful look around to check if anybody was paying attention to them.

XxxMoonlight SerenadexxX

"So this is your perfect hideout?"

"Why, of course! It *is* perfect. No one will find us here."

"Unless someone is looking for, I don't know, some fresh air?" was Lisbon's dry reply.

Her companion shook his head. "They won't look for that here of all places. You didn't know that there is a balcony behind that curtain either, did you?"

She bowed her head and admitted, "I didn't, but that doesn't mean..." Her voice died when he tenderly took her hand and breathed an old-school kiss on its back.

"Just trust me...okay?" he whispered while looking straight into her eyes.

Lisbon could only stare back and nodded slowly. When he finally released both her hand and her look, she needed to take a deep breath. Damn, this man was charming, handsome, hard to resist and pretty aware of it – in one word: dangerous. Very dangerous.

To distract herself from him Lisbon decided to take in her surroundings. They were on a broad balcony with an ornate railing made of stone. The view from it was not only breathtaking but also very romantic. Beneath them was a beautiful English garden, softly lit with lanterns, and over their heads was the nighttime sky with its stars. The house wall next the balcony was covered with deep green ivy and made it look as if had arisen from a Romeo and Juliet movie.

The air was cool but not too cold and from inside they could hear the muted laughter and music, but the red curtain in front of the door was shielding them from prying eyes.

"This is...really nice." Lisbon smiled in wonder and he answered with a proud grin.

"I thought so."

They were silent for a moment, simply watching each other.

Then he suddenly tilted his head and smirked. "Go ahead, I don't mind."

"Excuse me?" Lisbon furrowed her brows in confusion.

"Take your shoes off. You've been probably thinking about it the whole evening. And since we are the only ones out here, by all means, don't let me stop you."

Lisbon was stunned. "How do you know...?"

He shrugged. "You're obviously not comfortable wearing those heels. It wasn't hard to figure out."

"What are you, a psychic?" Lisbon snorted defensively, while feeling a bit awkward in account of getting caught.

"Nah, there's no such thing as psychics. I'm just being observant."

"Okay..." Lisbon hesitated, but then shrugged and placed her champagne on the railing to get rid of her shoes. As soon as her tights covered feet met the cold ground Lisbon sighed in pure relief.

He chuckled and put his glass next to hers. "Better?"

"You've no idea!"

When he laughed out loud at her emphasis, she decided that she liked that warm, slightly vibrating sound – and suddenly she noticed that it had broken the ice between them.

XxxMoonlight SerenadexxX

During the following hour he entertained her with witty anecdotes – she learned that he used to be with carnies – and his simply natural, somewhat old-school gentlemen charm. She didn't know if everything he told her was true, but he made her laugh, so she didn't care. He was a surprising pleasant company and they even developed kind of banter – hard on the edge between teasing and flirting.

Right now she was chuckling at one of his remarks, when he stepped to the balcony door and opened it a crack. Immediately the music became louder and while he strolled back to her, the band just started to play Glenn Miller's *Moonlight Serenade*.

She eyed him curiously as he stopped in front of her and offered his hand.

"Dance with me."

"That's not a question."

He smiled. "No, it isn't."

Lisbon scrutinized him for a few seconds, considering if she was ready to give him so much control.

Finally she reached for his hand – she just couldn't resist. She had already sneaked and hidden out with a foreign man, what harm could be done when she also danced with him?

"Fine, but don't step on my toes." Barefooted as she was, that would hurt without any doubt.

However, he didn't seem to be insecure. "I won't," he even promised, when he gathered her into his arms.

"We will see..." she whispered and to her own surprise she relaxed against him. Her head naturally found a place on his shoulder and while they started swaying, she didn't mind him hugging her closer.

XxxMoonlight SerenadexxX

Time passed by without her noticing. Their dance was slow and neither of them had said a word for awhile, but the silence wasn't awkward or unwelcoming. On the contrary, Lisbon was enjoying herself pretty much.

The wind had become chillier and made her instinctively seeking his warmth. His nearness and even his warm hand on her back effectively kept her from feeling cold. He also smelled very good, she had to admit to herself sheepishly.

She was about to bury her face into the crook of his neck, but with still wearing the mask it was a quite inconvenient task.

When she grumbled, he stated casually, "You can take it off, you know."

"*May I remind you of the fact that this is a masked ball?*" she repeated his earlier words with a smirk in her voice. "Wouldn't that destroy the spell?"

"It was worth a try." He laughed softly into her ear, leaving a small, but pleasant shiver running down her spine. "But I agree with you, of course. We can't have the magic ruined. However, I don't want you to feel uncomfortable."

"So what do you suggest?"

"Hm...ah, I know! Close your eyes."

"What?" She blinked and looked at him.

"Well, we'll close our eyes and *then* take off the masks. I'm sure, we'll manage the swaying without seeing," he explained, obviously proud of his idea.

Lisbon hesitated doubtfully. "But how do I know that you won't cheat and peek as soon as I close my eyes?"

Her partner shrugged. "How do I know that *you* won't cheat, my dear?"

Lisbon gave him an unladylike snort. "I don't cheat!" she said with emphasis.

"See? Neither do I. We simply have to trust each other's honor."

She eyed him suspiciously, while he waited with the patience of a saint.

Finally she nodded slowly. "Okay, but you go first."

"Fine. Close your eyes then." While his were already shut and he reached for his mask, she allowed herself some more seconds before she complied eventually.

She felt him moving until his hands brought her back into his embrace. "Done," he murmured. "Your turn."

Lisbon raised her hands to her mask and tried to untie the ribbons, which were holding it to her face. Unfortunately it wasn't as easy as she had thought.

"Dammit!" she cursed under her breath.

"What's wrong?"

"Uhm, it's somehow entangled with my hair, I can't get it off."

"Wait, let me help you."

"Without looking?" She lifted a brow.

"Oh believe me, I've successfully freed things without looking before."

"I really don't want to know what...things...what..." Lisbon became silent when his hands trailed over her arms upwards to her shoulders and finally to her neck. She bit on her lip to keep herself from shuddering because of the sudden electrifying sensation. Though there wasn't much she could do about the goosebumps, which were dancing over her skin.

He let his fingers carefully wander to her face and along the mask towards the ribbons. It took him a minute till he indeed succeeded in untying them.

"Thanks." She smiled softly, even though he couldn't see it.

"You're welcome..." His whisper suddenly sounded distracted. She would have wondered about that, but right now she was more confused, that he didn't lower his hands after taking off her mask.

Instead she could feel his fingertips tracing her facial features in a very fond and sensual way.

"What...are you doing?" she breathed helplessly, with heart clearly pounding faster all of a sudden.

"I can't see you anymore", was his husky answer. Warm fingers were feeling their way from her temples to her cheeks, then a little further to her nose and down to her

dimples until they finally moved to her lips.

Lisbon swallowed hard.

"That's cheating...Looking with your fingers." Her voice was barely a whisper now, but he heard her nevertheless.

"It's not cheating..." He was touching her lips in a tender caress, but then she could also feel some hot puffs of air joining it. "...But if you're complaining, I can even do this without them."

And with that the fingers slipped back to her cheeks and a pair of warm lips was pressed to hers.

Lisbon inhaled sharply and for a second she instinctively wanted to push him away and kick him to the ground. However, before she could do that, her mind stopped working completely.

XxxMoonlight SerenadexxX

From the moment she relaxed in his arms and opened up for his passionate kiss, she was lost.

His lips were moving against hers in a slow, sensual way that made her toes curl, while his arms were encircling her small frame firmly, but in no way threatening. Starting to feel dizzy and with a sudden weakness in her knees she brought her arms around his neck to get even closer.

When she clawed her fingers into those smooth blond curls, he moaned and angled his head to have an even better access to her lips. Lisbon sighed and it was just then, that his tongue slipped into her mouth curiously. She didn't mind at all, just freely parted her lips even more. The tip of his tongue met her own and started to challenge her with sinful movements to join his game. She gladly accepted it on an instant.

If Lisbon had been able to still think straight, she would have wondered when she had been kissed like that the last time.

Actually, the moment right now could have been a scene from a romantic movie: With soft, slow music playing – an old song with character – the dark sky with thousands of stars and a bright crescent giving some glowing light to a historic balcony. Two glasses of champagne were waiting long forgotten on the railing and right beside it was a couple, tightly embraced, with the woman shivering against her partner because of the chilly air and his hot kisses.

They *made* a beautiful picture, alright, but frankly, Lisbon wasn't giving a damn about her surroundings just now. All she could care about were his demanding lips, his playful tongue and his wandering hands. His fingers were stroking along her spine and towards her sides in repeating circles. Though he wasn't touching any inappropriate territory – being a gentleman to the core – he was leaving inflaming trails on her body,

which were burning through the thin fabric of her dress and making her panting into his mouth.

Simultaneously also his breath became more and more erratic, not just with all the passing seconds and minutes, but also with every single stroke of her fingers through his hair. And he was trembling whenever she was snuggling into him a tiny bit more.

With a raw sound escaping his throat he pressed her against the railing and Lisbon had to break the kiss for a small cry of pleasure. That however brought some clarity back to them and Lisbon coughed in slight embarrassment. When he immediately joined their lips again, she could feel him smiling.

And she simply couldn't help smiling back.

Their passionate kissing slowed down bit by bit and became a soft and loving caress. Lisbon knew – he probably did know either – that this was neither the right place nor time to go any further – even though every nerve of her body was tingling with longing and lust.

There was a little smack audible when they finally parted, only to be mixed with the sound of their fast inhaling.

Their foreheads meeting in a tender touch, they tried to compose themselves.

"I think I should go...for reasons of safety," he whispered, his hot breath caressing the sensitive skin of her face.

"Okay," she managed to reply, but neither of them moved.

"Hm..." He hummed, still clearly enjoying her closeness. "Shouldn't you be asking me whether we will see each other again?"

Lisbon barely shook her head. "That would be way over the top."

"Huh...right. If faith is willing, we'll meet again."

She groaned and commented dryly, "I correct, *that* was way over the top."

He laughed with a low, hoarse voice and slightly pulled away. Lisbon felt his fingers trailing back to her cheeks and then her mask was gently placed on her face again. Carefully he fastened the ribbons around her head.

"Good bye, my dear..." he breathed and before she was able to answer, he pressed his lips fervently on hers for the last time, forcing just another jolt of fluid electricity into her veins.

And then, just like that, he was gone.

Lisbon blinked and stared at the open balcony door, leaning on the railing for support.

What the hell had just happened? She shivered and it was only then that she noticed how cold the air had become. How chilly it truly was without his warm body pressed against hers.

She sighed, still being shaky and breathless, and bowed down for her shoes.

It wasn't very common for her to have a make-out session with a stranger on a balcony, but she couldn't bring herself to regret it. Her body was still humming from the pleasure his kisses and touches had caused. And despite her earlier statement she wondered if she would indeed see him again one day.

XxxMoonlight SerenadexxX

The following morning Lisbon was strolling with Virgil Minelli towards his office.

"So...why am I getting a consultant again?"

"Well...the governor is a huge fan of him and suggested to me, that Mr. Jane would be a great asset to my team." Minelli shrugged apologetically when she gave him a quizzical look. "I'm sorry, Teresa," he added empathetically, "I have complete faith in you, but...you know...if the governor is happy, I'll be happy."

"I understand." She grinned.

Minelli raised his brows meaningfully at her. "You'll lose that urge to laugh soon, Agent, when you understand in what you got yourself into."

"In what *you* got me into, actually," she corrected him dryly.

He shrugged again. "What can I say, I'm the boss."

These words made Lisbon chuckle, but then she smiled softly. "Yes, you are."

He twinkled at her when they arrived at his office. "Anyway, Agent Lisbon meet...Where is he?" Both of them peeked into the room only to find it empty. "Huh, he must have sneaked out."

"Oh great, that's a good start." Lisbon rolled her eyes. "A consultant who hides from me – I wonder how I could have survived without that until now."

"No need for sarcasm, Lisbon." Minelli scratched his chin with a puzzled expression. "Well, we'll take a rain check on the introduction."

Lisbon nodded and stopped herself from replying '*No need to hurry.*' She simply answered "Sure. See you later, Boss" instead and turned to head to her own office.

"A consultant..." she murmured under her breath when she reached it, "how ridiculous."

"Actually I thought that it could be kind of fun."

Lisbon stopped dead in her tracks and even if the familiar male voice hadn't been an indication, she would have recognized him immediately because of the blond curls, which were currently burrowed in the cushions of her office couch.

The not so strange man pushed himself up and walked towards her, gleaming at her with those blue eyes.

"It's a pleasure to *finally* meet you, Agent Lisbon. My name is Patrick Jane and I'm your new consultant." He smiled brightly and shook her hand with a barely noticeable caress of his thumb.

Lisbon felt a blush crawling over her cheeks and the only thing she was able to think was, *'Oh boy, that's going to be interesting.'*

The End