

Different

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Rating: P14 / T

Contents: *This morning I woke up with this feeling...* - short story; prompt by boutondor on LJ.

Disclaimer: This masterpiece of a TV show, *The Mentalist*, unfortunately wasn't my idea. The lucky man who has every right to pat himself on the shoulder is Bruno Heller, as the show belongs to him, Paramount Television and CBS.

The lyrics are from "I think I love you" by David Cassidy.

Author's Note: This was originally supposed to be way more romantic, as boutondor had asked for, but I think it worked better with this ending. Still think it is romantic nevertheless ;) The prompt was a romantic Jane/Lisbon story with and around the lyrics (only the excerpt) you can find in the story.

Many years they had waited for this moment. In the beginning it had only been him, their consultant Patrick Jane, waiting. But at some point, sooner or later, they all had joined him. Following him in his quest, subconsciously maybe, but also voluntarily and willing.

Because, in the end, they all had wanted to catch the serial killer. His enemy, his nemesis, had become theirs.

They would never have expected it to be this unspectacular. Well, it hadn't been, hadn't been at all back when it was happening and when they didn't yet know the outcome, but looking back, it was almost disappointing. To some extent.

They met, no, found Red John right under their nose - living in one of the most expensive lofts in Sacramento. He was wealthy, leading a good and expensive lifestyle, just like Jane had all those years before.

The neighbors knew him, though weren't exactly friends with him - he was known as very arrogant, thinking of himself as something better. But despite him not being very popular, it also wasn't that people disliked him. He rather simply didn't interest or concern them.

Getting into the loft was easy, almost too easy. The fact that Red John seemed to be at home was even more suspicious. But the chance to finally catch the man made them ignore that. So they went in, weapons drawn, ready to do whatever needed to be done.

And that was the part that hadn't been "unspectacular".

Lisbon had told Jane to stay back, because he didn't have a weapon and would be an easy target. She should have known better than to expect that Jane would wait outside while the team dealt with the killer who had slaughtered his family.

He came in. And out of nowhere was met by five daggers that injured him seriously, shot by a mechanism they later learned had been remote-controlled. They hadn't seen Red John until then, but now that Jane was lying on the ground, fighting for his life that was streaming from his body in form of his blood, the killer appeared, was suddenly there, dressed completely in white - apart from his deep red gloves. And - the red eyes.

Guns ready, Rigsby and Cho approached him, but they never had a chance to react when Red John shot another dagger from his sleeve and slit his own throat.

Re-thinking everything that had happened, they only much later realized how careless they'd been to not make sure there weren't any other daggers or similar dangers waiting. But right in that moment, they all had only one thought, one they shared with the same amount of anxiety and fear - Jane mustn't die.

The paramedics said the wounds were fatal - but Patrick Jane proved to be a fighter. He fought for his life and he won. After his recovery, a long rehab followed - and Lisbon found herself taking care of him. Even moving into his house, the one in Sacramento he had bought when Hightower had forbidden him to stay in the CBI HQ overnight. She found herself furnishing it, as it was empty like his other house, and with every week, every day bringing more of her personal things into his home. After three months, her own apartment was almost empty, and she didn't know anymore how exactly it looked. Or had once looked, for that matter.

Another one and a half month later, Jane resumed his work for the CBI, again consultant for Lisbon's team. It was then that he sold his house in Malibu, his last reminder of what Red John had done to his family, and Lisbon gave up her apartment. They were moving in together properly - as friends who had gotten so used to each other's presence that they no longer wanted to spend too much time away from each other.

And then, one morning, Teresa woke up in her bed in Patrick's house that now was their house, and knew something was different. It surprised her that she noticed it, as so many things in the past months had been different; but somehow, only now, as her mind was forming a sum of all the differences, she understood the impact.

It was a feeling she didn't dare to name. A feeling as old as time and space and humanity and maybe even older. It was what people feared and longed for, what they needed; that sometimes healed them and sometimes destroyed them. It was what she hadn't expected, hadn't counted on to come to her.

She loved him.

*This morning I woke up with this feeling
I didn't know how to deal with it so I just decided to myself
I'd hide it to myself and never talk about it
And did not go and shout it out when you walked into the room
I think I love you*

He had sneaked his way into her heart, and now she had to admit to herself that she had fallen in love with the man who had joined her team so many years ago only to avenge the murder his family.

This Patrick Jane had been then. A man living for the vengeance he was seeking only. A man who helped her team to solve cases with an ease that was sometimes almost annoying. A man against whom so many complaints had been filed because of his unusual methods that she could fill a whole library with them.

A man who chose her as his only confident and told her secrets, dark secrets, no one else knew. A man she found a confident herself in. A man she learned to trust, even though she tried to tell herself - and him - that he wasn't trustworthy. A man who proved to be the most reliable person in her life, not when it was about the job, but about her as a human being.

A man who became her friend.

A man who put her life over his deepest wishes and desires, who gave up more than one chance to find the murderer of his family and fulfill his quest for the sake of her life. A man who stood beside her, who shadowed her and made her feel safe, who was always there to catch her when she fell. A man who once had been a nuisance, but slowly became an irreplaceable constant in her life.

The man she, at some point, had fallen in love with.

Everything suddenly had changed. The evening before, they'd been watching a movie together and shared a good bottle of wine. The evening before, they'd talked and laughed as friends - and nothing more.

But now, she woke up and her heart beat with another rhythm.

And somehow, it felt right. Being in love with this man felt right. It was strange and unusual and new and... still. It was right.

She wouldn't go and tell him. She wouldn't go and tell Grace, who'd become a good friend as well. Neither would she cry for a love unfulfilled.

No. She would simply be happy with that feeling.

And when Patrick knocked on her bedroom door this morning, peeked inside and wished her a good morning with a wonderfully carefree smile on his face, she simply smiled back and greeted him, too.

So many things had changed. Her whole life over the course of those months, those years. Her heart. Her feelings. And yet, as long as he was with her, nothing was ever going to change. Instead, her life would remain as it was.

The closest thing to perfect she could imagine.

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