

Thunder In Our Hearts

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Rating: R / P16

Summary: Follow-up on the season finale 4x24. There is a dam that has to break, one time or another. Almost losing the person that mattered most crashed even the strongest dam.

Disclaimer: Bruno and his team are doing a fabulous job - they just proved that again with the last season finale. So I'm very happy to say that all this belongs to them. I'm just borrowing it for a short while and hope to do the show and the characters justice.

Author's Note: The title is a line borrowed from the song "Running Up That Hill."

The weather had changed from literally one minute to the next.

Earlier, the sun had been shining; a warm and bright day, the usual cheery weather for California. But now - now the world headed for its end. Or so it seemed. Heavy rain and a screeching storm were raging outside; accompanied by never ending lightning and thunder, hammering down on Earth again and again and again.

She felt like she was sitting in a fortress of doom, with nothing else to do than to wait for the inevitable to happen. Whatever this was. She heard the streaks of water that were falling from the sky race against the window panes, knock hard on them as if they tried to break them; she heard the sickening crackle whenever the sound of lightning arrived.

It had been a long time since Teresa Lisbon had felt this uncomfortable during a thunderstorm. When she was a child, she feared them - but like most things in her life, she had learned to fight this fear. Now the rumbling noises and the bright flashes crept into the recesses of her mind where this childhood fear still existed, and Teresa found herself sitting at her desk cowering and with shoulders curled inside, as she watched the never-ending change of darkness and light outside.

The paperwork she hadn't been able to concentrate on anyways was forgotten; she only wanted to get out, home, away from the harsh reality her office and everything connected to it; everything it reminded her of. That it had been a close call again. That she could have lost him today, after he'd just returned after half a year she hadn't seen or heard anything of him.

The thunderstorm seemed to mock her, play with her fears, bring them all out in the open. Luring one uninvolved fear out that would pull all her other usually carefully hidden fears along. It was as if it wanted to her to feel vulnerable, to be crushed by all these sorrows that were weighing on her. As if it wanted to keep her inside the building that held so much pain for her right now.

Yes, she had been incredibly relieved when Patrick Jane had returned. Had finally talked to her again, after so many months, and had confided in her. Whatever this was that existed between them, it had survived, and she was glad about it. To have it back. Have him back.

Even though he was driving her crazy, she knew she needed him. They both needed each other, if they were completely honest - it wasn't any different for him. And she didn't need his mind-reading abilities to see it. These months in solitude, away from his only friends, the only people he trusted and knew he could rely on, had eaten at him. She saw it in his face, his eyes; this hollowness that seemed so much more severe now.

Teresa's gaze fell upon the couch in her office. A couch that hadn't been occupied for several months. Had anyone ever told her that she would once miss his often so annoying company, she probably would have laughed. Denied it. Said she would be happy if she hadn't to put up with him for at least one day. But deep inside she knew that it was a lie. It was strange with these things one got used to, despite their bothersome traits.

The clock on her desk showed 9.24pm. Working beyond her normal hours had been a bad habit before he had vanished - and more often than enough he had teased her about it. She might have growled at him then, nevertheless being grateful that he reminded her, in his very own way, that she needed to take care of herself; get sleep, get some rest, some free time.

Secretly, she waited. Waited for him to appear at her door and quip about her lack of a personal life. And yet she knew he wouldn't come. Not this time, and even though he was so close again now, up in 'his' attic. He had too much to work through right now to take care of her, and by no means would she expect anything else.

Lisbon sighed. If she didn't go home now, she would be in the office the whole night, and as tired in the morning as she was so often of the past six months. So she went through her routine - turned off the lights, took her bag, locked the door, walked the corridor to the lift and called the same, waited... but stopped herself before she could enter the cabin.

The stairs behind her, the ones that led up to the room right under the roof, seemed to watch her with accusing intensity. How could she just leave and not check if he was all right? Wasn't that what she had wanted to do for six long months; rather have him around every day than not at all? Take care of him because it felt like her responsibility after all those years, and even though she hated that her mind brought forth such thoughts?

It was a vicious circle, a debt she paid without knowing what had indebted her to *whatever* in the first place. Maybe her need to see him happy. Maybe the subconscious hope that when his soul was healed he'd leave. And maybe she was just lying to herself, because when all was said and done, she didn't want him to leave; the past months had thrust that truth right into her face.

Sighing, she finally gave in and turned around to head upstairs, leaving the elevator cabin and its doors, closing again with a rumbling noise, behind. She wouldn't find rest anyways before she hadn't spoken to him. Since the earlier madness of events up to this very strange interrogation of Lorelei, they hadn't talked to each other again, but there were things weighing on her that needed to be said. And the veil of the night sometimes seemed to make the speaking of truths easier.

He didn't acknowledge her when she reached the small room at the top of the stairs; he just stood there, next to the table, half turned to the door and half to the window. His back was to his cot that looked used; as if he'd just gotten up and then frozen mid-step.

The lightning was almost blinding, up here in the attic where no trees reached to anymore to break and hinder the brightness from meeting the viewer's eyes. His features were streaked by light with every new flash, and she felt as if they showed what truly lay beneath his façade; a now cracked façade.

She had seen behind it and they both knew it. As much as he claimed that his breakdown was merely a game of emotional shadows, to hide his true purpose, his true goal - between them, it was no secret that Red John had skillfully ripped open a wound that had never healed to begin with. She wasn't fooled so easily by him. Not anymore. And he didn't really believe she was either.

"Hey," she greeted him, a hint of insecurity in her voice. He didn't reply at first; only turned slowly to face her.

"Teresa," was the probably strangest thing she had ever heard from him then. Whatever it was she heard when he spoke her name, it made her uneasy. There was a coldness and distance in it... almost as if someone had stolen his soul. She couldn't help but shiver, but at least managed to hide it well.

"How are you?" A hollow question to her ears; unnecessary, meaningless almost.

"He got away again and a man is dead. He's playing with me."

"We will get him, one day." Jane snorted lightly, but she didn't give the chance to answer. "Red John is merely playing with you, not the other way around. He won't fall for your schemes. But as a team, we're so much stronger than he is, even with his accomplices. We'll find and stop him. Together. You don't need to do this alone again."

"I wasn't alone," was his only response, bitterness leaking through.

"Lorelei?" It wasn't only a statement; it was also a question - one that had been burning on her mind ever since the woman who was one of Red John disciples had implied that Jane had shared an intimate encounter with her.

"A futile and misjudged attempt to escape to where I thought I could once belong. Where I belonged sometime in the past," he summed up, the bitterness now in full flow as he didn't bother to hold it back anymore. Neither did he evade the question, or the revelation behind it, like he would have usually done. Enquiries that went too deep into his private life he wisely ignored; he'd always rather remained a secret. But this woman they had in custody was the one person who he right now felt most betrayed by, and who made him hate himself for his own gullibility and dumbness - and she was the only puzzle piece that could bring him closer to Red John. The only one they had. Even though he'd gladly go this path alone, he had to accept that he needed help. And with Lisbon, the person he trusted most, honesty and openness was the only way; he had understood that much in the past years.

"I was there, you know. The whole time." There was this fraction of a second where she actually wondered what she was offering then. Just her friendship? Or more? And obviously, he had his own understanding of her words.

"You're worth so much more than that."

"You could at least have talked to me."

"I needed to sever all ties, end every contact, to make it believable that I... to make it believable to *him*." She knew he wasn't only talking about them, about her and the team then. He needed to believe it himself. That he had lost it, that he had reached the lowest point. It still didn't make it easier for her; and she refused to not see herself as a part of it.

"Have you ever considered that you're hurting others with your behavior?" she asked quietly, still standing a few steps away from him. Nevertheless she saw the flicker of guilt and sorrow cross his features. Yes, he hurt as well; even though he always pretended that he was better off as a loner, deep inside he needed the team. His friends. Her.

Carefully she took a step closer to him where he still stood, facing her, his expression blank again. But in the light of just another flash she saw the restlessness in his eyes.

"I told you I'm sorry. Sincerely sorry. But I had to do it, Lisbon."

"I know. Now I know. But that doesn't make it any easier to accept what you put us through for half a year. We were lucky to at least know that you were still alive." She shook her head sadly. "I'm your friend, Jane. We're partners. You could have told me. Just me."

"I didn't want to-"

"I was worried sick, you know?!" He flinched when she suddenly shouted at him, and while everyone else might have missed this tiny motion, she noticed it. He was by no means unaffected; he was on edge after all these months alone, his heart and soul raw from all pretended and real depression. "I didn't know what... I was thinking what I'd do if..." This time her headshake was almost furious. She hated that her weakness didn't leave her a chance but to be shown. It wasn't her; not the her she wanted others to see anyways. It was just a part of her, buried and carefully hidden in the one dark corner of her soul.

When she looked up at him, standing merely a footstep away, he returned her gaze steadily. For minutes - or were it hours? Just staring at each other, saying nothing; nothing else. Everything was said. Everything that could be said now. Unveiled emotions played in his eyes; never before had she been able to look deeper. And yet, even though he let her see what he usually kept to himself in that moment, he was still the greatest riddle she had ever encountered.

Or maybe she just tried too hard to understand... maybe she just had to let the answers to whatever questions come to her instead of search for them. Silence settled onto them, only broken by the thunderclaps, and her features softened as she relaxed into acceptance and showed him the same. Relaxed into an easy comprehension, not the desperate quest for a solution of what he was, and took in whatever he allowed her to see. All the emotions. All the-

It was only a movement between flashes. A movement unseen by the all-revealing light that cut through the darkness. One moment they were standing before each other, staring at the other. The next, just when recognition hit her unprepared, had him framing her face with his hands, kiss her passionately, hungrily, and her responding to it with just the slightest delay, but then without hesitation. As if their lives depended on it. And maybe they did.

Instinctively they found his makeshift bed, this cot he spent his sleepless nights and restless day naps on, and laid down on it, never breaking the kiss.

From then on, they knew nothing. Passion consumed them, passion and this deeply rooted fear of losing each other, of losing the one person they relied on so much and they needed even more, although neither of them would ever have really admitted it.

They shed and ripped away their clothes, the progress a haze they would later wonder about, and clung to each other when they finally felt skin on skin. It was all a blur, unclear through the steam of their longing for each other, their happiness to be still alive, to be back at each other's side. They were so much more than just lovers under the disguise of friendship, a disguise even they'd fallen for in all those years. They explored each other in a frenzy, as if they feared that someone, something, could appear at any time and take away what they'd finally found - even if it maybe was only for one night.

Only when he pushed into her and joined them in the most intimate of ways, they stilled. They, the world, time, everything. It was a frozen picture, a universe turned to stone as they stared into each other's eyes, only then realizing what they were doing, what line they had crossed. Both saw their own emotions mirrored; the hunger, the yearning, the pain, the fear, the sorrow, the doubts.

And yet, it didn't matter. Because there was one other emotion that had only once been voiced, and was denied afterwards. Love.

Everything that had marked their encounter before, every evidence of unrestrained lust, was suddenly gone. What was left were gentle movements and tender kisses, a surrender of what was too strong to fight against, of what was overpowering them.

They reached their climax together and, still holding each other, surrendered to yet another power - their physical and emotional exhaustion.

Teresa woke up in the middle of the night; the full moon, having fought its way through the thick clouds, shining into her face. She wasn't surprised to find him awake when she lifted her head from his chest and looked at him. Quietly he returned her gaze, questions in both their eyes, mingling with yet unclear answers. This was too complicated. Too much to work through now.

"I should go home," she whispered. His response was worth more than a thousand words, when he breathed in and out deeply once and then hesitantly loosened the grip of his arm he had locked protectively around her shoulders.

There weren't any words said when she dressed while he remained lying in the cot, watching her almost curiously. She felt his eyes on her, and despite their earlier intimacy it made her uncomfortable. She had to get out, quickly; she wanted to go home and sleep and only think about what had happened between them in the morning. After she had cleared her head.

She knew she should have just left. But there was this question burning inside of her still, a question she knew he had the answer to, although he had refused to give it to her before already.

"Did you mean it?" she so asked, just before she stepped through the door and out of the attic. There was no need for an explanation; doubtlessly he knew very well what she was asking about.

A long silence stretched between them. A silence that told her that she wouldn't get an answer this time either. How could she even have hoped. Resigned, she shook her head. This was just another turn in this game of his.

"Teresa," he called after her, all of a sudden when she had taken another step out of the room, his voice a faint echo against the howling winds that were still twirling around the building. She looked at him then, intensely, but he was focusing on the outside world; he didn't turn and acknowledge her eyes resting on him. Instead, he just offered her one word. One tiny, but so hugely meaningful word. "Yes."

She smiled when she left the attic. It was too soon; too soon to take more than just a testing step onto these new grounds. But at least they'd found them.

And maybe, one day, they would dance on them.

END