

Gold Shining Carrousel

Jane x Lisbon

Von Schneeblume

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Some things were still the same, Jane noticed with a large portion of relief as he glanced at Lisbon, who was sitting on the passenger seat, snuggled into her navy blue coat. She still trusted him – up to a certain point for sure – without even batting an eye.

When he had dragged her away from that boring FBI New Year's Eve Party, she had barely hesitated. She had asked him where they were going, alright, and several times so, but she had followed him nevertheless. Just like always, whenever he had asked her to. However, he was done with taking it for granted. He wouldn't make that mistake again.

If anything, it was time to honor her, to follow *her* wishes.

To make her happy.

He had caused her so much pain over the years and he would do anything to make it up to her, starting right now. New Year was hardly an hour away, but he didn't need an occasion to make these resolutions. It just came in handy.

"Here we are," he said, putting on his own black coat against the cool air, after they finally reached their destination; a little valley far away from any semblance of civilization. Although it wasn't as deserted as one might have guessed. In fact, it was brightly illuminated by blinking letters, lights and displays. The county fair was still painted in all its glory, even though it was already closed for the day; and despite the current lack of visitors, the fairground was still buzzing with life and music as the carnies sat together in small groups, chatting, drinking and even singing with other.

"What are we doing here?" Lisbon asked in wonder while they were passing the first booths. There was no doubt that she had already recognized the people, who eyed them briefly but otherwise kept ignoring the newcomers.

"Just wait and see, Lisbon!" Jane almost rubbed his hands in anticipation and grinned when they were interrupted by Pete, before she could even open her mouth to protest.

Greetings and friendly hugs were exchanged and Jane realized quite satisfied, that Pete and Lisbon had built a solid friendship during his absence. It was reassuring, because even though he didn't plan to leave his partner's side ever again, he knew

now that Lisbon would have a friend to contact if it happened anyway.

"So you finally are here to impress your girl, eh?" Pete teased, leading the way, and gained a smirk from Lisbon.

"Uhm..." For a moment or two Jane actually stumbled over his words. "Nothing of the sort, old friend, I just wanted to show her your new achievement you kept telling me about so proudly."

Pete probably saw right through him, but he bit the bait nevertheless and turned to Lisbon to tell her everything about his new treasure.

Jane, who indeed knew the story already, focused his attention on their surroundings and eventually on the old carrousel they were heading towards.

It was a classic, hardly found on modern fairs anymore, with wooden horses and carriages on two small floors, which were connected by two filigree staircases. Pete and his friends had done great work of restoring the whole carrousel, its golden and colorful details and every single picture on the crown. Furthermore it was covered in hundreds of tiny lights and therefore glistening like a hoard of gold.

"Wow," Lisbon said as they reached it, "It's really beautiful, Pete. You have every right to be proud."

"Thanks. *She's* all yours for tonight." He grinned at her, before he turned to Jane, frowning. "The old lady is very sensitive. If you break her, I'll kill you. Are we clear?"

Jane rolled his eyes, but nodded. "Relax, old man, I got it."

Pete grunted and with another warning glance he disappeared between the booths.

"Come on, Lisbon, you're gonna like it!" With enthusiasm Jane jumped on the carrousel and strolled towards its middle, searching for the switchgear to power it on. Lisbon looked around, but the few people who were nearby, didn't pay much attention to them, so she finally followed him.

"Are you sure that you know what you're doing?" Her skepticism – mixed with hidden excitement – was unmistakable.

"Is that a rhetorical question?" he called back, just when the carrousel started to rotate slowly.

"No?!"

He made no effort of hiding his amusement while he watched her strolling between the wooden figures. He let her walk around and gave her time to get a good look at all the details.

"It is really beautiful," she repeated quietly and traced the convoluted ornaments of a carriage with her fingertips.

Even from afar Jane could see that her mood had changed. She was one of the people, who got that New Year's Eve melancholy, but he could tell that it wasn't all about that.

Following her but still leaving her some space, he waited if she would tell him about it – and to his great surprise she did.

"You know, I just remembered how my mother once took me to a county fair with an old carrousel just like this one. My brothers and I had been fighting over some ridiculous banality; I don't even know what it was anymore. But I had been very upset,

so to comfort me, my mother took me to the fair and coaxed me into riding the carrousel. I didn't tell her, but I was afraid to do it without her – she wasn't very comfortable with rotating things – and she sensed it somehow. Therefore, whenever I went past her, she would wave at me wildly and make silly faces – she didn't even care that the people next to her were staring as if she was crazy – and in the end I was laughing so hard that I almost fell from the carrousel when it stopped. She caught and hugged me, and after I had calmed down, she let me ride the carrousel three more times." Lisbon was chuckling now, even though her eyes had gotten a bit misty.

She looked at Jane and smiled. "I can't believe I forgot that, but it's nice to remember."

Touched about the shared memory, he automatically returned her smile and stepped closer. "The mind is a fascinating thing, Lisbon. If we try, we can remember much more from our past than we might imagine."

"Oh really?" Her expression turned into a teasing one when she moved away, extending the distance between them. "You'd almost think that my mind is too full with the nonsense you've done over the years to remember anything else."

Jane snorted as he kept following her. "Oh come on, I'm not that bad!"

"You're kidding, right?!"

"Not at all! Besides, everything I've ever done happened with my best intentions!"

"Ha! I beg to differ." She reached one of the staircases and climbed it to the second floor. "I still remember all the headaches I had because of you!" She was right, of course, but the seriousness had vanished from their conversation and had left them with some easy banter both of them had missed for so long.

"That was because you worry too much, despite the fact that I've always tried to please you!"

"Now that can't be true! According to that, you've never pulled a stunt simply because you knew it would annoy me, have you?" She bent over the railing right above him and eyed him with a mock glare, daring him to say the truth.

"Well..." With his voice deliberately a smidge too high, Jane tilted his head innocently.

"Maybe once or twice—"

"Ha! Don't make me laugh!"

He ignored her interjection and, while he approached the stairs, he continued, "—But only because I *knew* it'd amuse you someday."

"Yeah right!" she muttered under her breath and moved to the stairs on the other side. "Boy, am I glad that these times are over."

"Who says they're over?" Just when he reached the highest step, Lisbon went down her staircase.

"Well, technically you're not my consultant anymore," was her dry reply, but he noticed the wistful edge in there. "So I don't have to care about your stunts any longer."

It was good in many ways to be her more or less equal partner now. Like that it was easier for her, but he got her melancholy about the fact that he wasn't exclusively hers anymore. He totally understood, because he felt the same.

So when he answered, his voice was quiet and honest for a change, "I wouldn't mind

to be yours, Lisbon."

"My responsibility, you mean?" She glanced at him from the first floor and shyly bit her lip, a solid indication that she had gotten the true meaning behind his words.

He shrugged nonchalantly. "Sure, whatever."

Lisbon cleared her throat and carried on the teasing. "I seriously don't know if I want that..."

"Well, I might be able to convince you..."

The bantering and bickering went on for a bit, while they continued their little dance on the carrousel.

It was only when midnight merely was minutes away that Lisbon finally let him catch up.

She had climbed on one of the wooden horses, in a lady's style, and he couldn't help but smile at the sight. Of course she wouldn't choose a carriage. As the confident and strong woman she was, she would surely take the proverbial reins in her own hands.

With a chuckle on his lips he stopped in front of her, bracing himself with one hand on the horse's croup and the other one on its crest; and he didn't care at all that he was practically framing her. In fact, he was standing so close, that she unconsciously opened her legs a bit to give him more room. Using the chance, he moved even closer, while his grin grew proportionally wider.

There was a light blush on her cheeks when she stared at him quizzically.

"What?" she demanded to know. It was obvious that she didn't know what to make of this, although she didn't seem to mind at all.

"Nothing," was his innocent reply, which earned him a snort, while his eyes were never leaving her.

Jane simply couldn't help it. Finally having her within reach, he had no intention of letting her go anytime soon. The need to look at her, to memorize her, to touch her and breathe her in intensified immensely, now that she was within his direct proximity.

Even though they were separated by many layers of fabric, he was able to feel the warmth of her body and it sent a jolt of bliss through his own. He barely realized how his breath became fitful as his gaze caressed her features. The cold wind was playfully tugging at her chocolate brown hair, the soft waves shining in the golden lights of the carrousel.

He had always thought that gold was the perfect color to bath her in.

It also made her gorgeous, deep green eyes sparkle in the most beautiful way, leaving him incapable of looking away. Then there was that cute little nose, covered in pale freckles, which were inviting him to count them by plenty of tiny kisses.

Talking about parts of her he'd like to kiss, he once had stated the rule not to forget to mention her dimples. *Never* forget those charming dimples!

Her lips, however, were what he desired to kiss most of all. *Oh, those lips!* Beautifully shaped, glistening in an enticing pure red and currently curled into a soft smile. Damn, there was no doubt about how silky and smooth they would feel beneath his own!

Jane almost moaned as his need for his partner washed through his veins and weakened his knees.

"Lisbon..." His voice broke and her eyes widened slightly with surprise – whether it was because of his sudden sincerity or because he had tenderly placed one of his palms on her cheek, he didn't know. It wasn't important anyway. What mattered was that she didn't flinch away; in fact, she even leaned into the contact and sighed in bliss.

Biting his lower lip, Jane closed the distance between them and let their foreheads meet in a gentle touch. His skin tingled wherever it came into contact with hers, and their breaths mixed together, while the air around them became heated in a both literal and figurative way.

"Jane..." Lisbon whispered breathlessly and her hand shivered slightly as she put it above his.

"Hmm?" he hummed near her lips, enjoying that he was able to both taste and feel her gasp.

"It's almost midnight."

It took him a few seconds to come to his senses. "Right!" Reluctantly he retreated – not too far of course, since he wasn't ready to let her go just yet.

"Come on," he said and offered her his hand. She took it without hesitation and allowed him to help her from the horse and turn her around so that she was facing their well-lit surroundings.

"What now?"

"Patience, my dear!" He smirked as he positioned himself behind her. While he grabbed one of the poles to steady them, he was happy to notice that she hadn't let go of his other hand. For a moment or two he pondered over his own courage, before he finally dared to lay their arms around her waist and place their entwined fingers on her belly.

He felt her froze and held his breath, but after a few seconds she relaxed and sunk against him. Jane knew he started to grin like an idiot at that very moment, and while the butterflies went wild in his stomach, he tightened his embrace, fondly pulling her back against his front.

It wasn't long after, that the carnies around them started the countdown from ten to zero – and just when the old year became the new one, the lights around them went off all at once.

"What the...?!" Jane heard Lisbon inhale sharply in surprise and he soothingly hugged her closer.

"Relax...Everything's alright," he promised, giving their eyes time to adjust to the darkness, before he nudged her head with his. "Now look!"

He knew exactly when she followed his look and finally realized what he wanted to show her. The breath got caught in her throat and she stammered weakly, "Oh my God, Jane...That's..."

She gasped for air while she was drinking in the sight of millions of stars shining right above them. Without the blinding lights of big cities or the carnival blurring the view and without a single cloud on the dark sky, the stars were as bright and clearly visible as if being looked for through a telescope.

"I've never seen so many stars before!" Lisbon sighed in wonder, her eyes glowing with excitement when she stretched out her hand. "They seem so unbelievable close;

it's as if I could touch them...!"

Jane, who held her safely against him to keep her from falling from the slowing carrousel, smiled softly and preferred to watch her instead of the breathtaking sky above their heads. Not even millions of stars, he had merely glanced at, were any serious competition to his enchanting Lisbon.

"Do you like it?" he whispered into her ear and was rewarded with a slight shiver taking over the delicate body in his embrace. "I know it's not exactly a firework in the classical sense..."

Lisbon laughed softly and snuggled a bit more into him. "Actually it's kind of the most classical sense of the word ever...And I love it. It's really wonderful, Jane."

While Lisbon was still amazed by the various shades of light dancing beneath their pitch-dark cover, she and her partner were listening to the gleeful exchange of New Year's wishes around them.

"Thanks for sharing this with me, Jane," Lisbon said, her voice low and warm, and Jane was glad to notice that her melancholy was gone. He pressed a kiss on top of her head and answered, "Anytime! Happy New Year, Teresa."

He practically felt the heat of her blush and hid his smile in her hair.

"Happy New Year, Jane."

Happy indeed, Jane thought over the bubbling happiness in his chest as Lisbon placed her second hand on their entwined fingers at her stomach.

They kept standing like this for a while, enjoying their closeness and the never ending *fireworks* in the sky. It was only when Lisbon shivered in his arms that Jane broke the silence.

"Feeling cold, California Girl?" he teased, and when she growled in agreement, he added mischievously, "I could offer you a place in my coat, you know. I don't mind to share."

Lisbon snorted. "I may take you up on that."

"Please! If you dare..."

Without doubt they were equally surprised when she suddenly let go of his hand and turned in his embrace to face him with a glare.

"Well, here I am!" Lisbon raised her chin in challenge, but the gesture was followed by the quick reddening of her cheeks as she realized that she had acted before thinking. Yet she was way too proud to back down.

For a moment Jane was too amazed to react, but then he came back to his roguish self and undid his coat without missing a beat. Grinning like the devil he left her no time to think and pulled her back to him.

An indefinable sound escaped her throat when she bumped into him, bracing herself with her hands flat against his chest. She stood there stiffly, slightly unsure about the situation, until she finally relaxed and leant into warming measure with a content sigh, "Aah, that's nice. Better."

"Oh yeah?" he grunted and tightened the coat around her as far as possible to keep out the sudden cold she had brought with her. She hummed her confirmation and when she wrapped one arm around his torso, Jane decided that it was totally worth it.

Pleased with the world and himself, he nuzzled the soft waves of her hair, when she suddenly raised her head to watch him.

He returned the look and smiled lovingly at her, enjoying it immensely that, after she lost an obvious battle against it, her own lips flicked into the same gesture. The moment was truly perfect and he was sick of containing himself, so he simply gave in to the urge and placed a sweet kiss onto the top of her nose.

Her eyes fluttered shut and he felt her gripping his shirt above his heart. When Lisbon also, probably unconsciously, tilted her head towards him, he didn't need any more encouragement. Another peck on her nose was followed by a long-desired kiss on her magnificently velvet lips. And once tasted, he found himself unable to let them go. With his heart bursting with pure delight he joined their mouths together for good, kissing her as if there were no tomorrow.

He just couldn't stop. Her lips were even softer than he had ever imagined them to be, and she tasted as sweet as the sweetest forbidden fruit in heaven. Also the feeling of holding her in his arms and the knowledge, that he was actually doing what he had desired to do for years, were setting his nerves and all the fibers of both his body and soul on fire.

Soon she was panting into his mouth as he explored hers with his tongue, while he started to feel dizzy himself, becoming all fuzzy through her closeness and the lack of oxygen.

The sensation was overwhelming and in an exciting way unbearable. It was probably for their own good when Jane eventually broke the kiss to gasp for air.

"Jesus...that was supposed to be an innocent and sweet first kiss!" he moaned hoarsely against the corner of her mouth. When he felt her smiling, he couldn't help placing another peck right there.

"I guess I'm just too irresistible..." Her voice merely was an amused and breathless murmur while she buried her face into the crook of his neck.

"That you are indeed, my love, that you are!" He just sounded so sincere – and he did mean that from the bottom of his heart – that it caused another rush of heat on her cheeks.

They lapsed into silence, since Lisbon was flattered enough and Jane pleased to have said what needed to be said. It gave both of them time to take a deep breath and realize what just happened between them. They had been longing to be close, to actually be together for such an extensive period of time that it appeared to be a dream, clinging to each other in a tight hug, frozen for now, like the old carrousel they were standing on, and reveling in the bright panoply of the stars.

"Would you like a cup of hot chocolate on our way home?" Jane asked after awhile, being intent on keeping her near him as long as he could and finally letting her know, how much she really meant to him.

Lisbon nodded in agreement and contently sighed a "Sure..." against his neck.

And all he could think about was how hot chocolate would taste if it was nipped from her precious lips...

Oh, what a sweet way to begin a year.

The End