

relationship. Since then, Jill and Brock remained friends in a purely platonic relationship. Platonic, that is, for Jill. Brock still had hopes of getting her back in his bed.

“Where were you last night, Jill? I tried calling you for hours. I left like five messages!”

Jill turned and looked at her answering machine on the end table; sure enough, the light was blinking. “I didn’t check them when I got in, Brock. It was late.”

“Lieutenant, we’ll need to arrange to have your car...” Moore was talking as he walked out of her bedroom. He stopped as he saw Brock standing there, gaping at him. Moore still didn’t have his shoes on and his tie was around his neck, but not tied.

Jill picked up where he left off. “That won’t be a problem, Captain. I’m sure Brock will give me a lift to Annandale...” she turned to face Brock, “or Maryann will, if you’re busy,” she referred to another friend at the office.

“What’s going on here?” Brock asked curtly, recognizing the Captain. “Then again, maybe I don’t want to know,” he corrected himself.

Jill spoke up before Moore did. “Captain Moore had an accident last night, and I happened to be in the vicinity. So I took him to Bethesda and I brought him back here since we only had two hours to sleep.”

OWEN'S SONG

“And he slept... where?” Brock asked.

“In the bed, of course,” Jill replied caustically. She didn’t like that Brock was being so protective. She wasn’t his property and he had no right to question her.

“And you slept...?”

Jill made a quick decision. Captain Moore wouldn’t want anyone to know they’d slept in the same bed, she was sure. So she turned and looked at the sofa, still covered in a sheet and the pillow on top. “Where does it look like I slept?” She didn’t lie... exactly; she just let him draw his own conclusion, wrong as it was.

“Oh. Okay,” Brock backed down. “Well, I just worried about you when you didn’t call me back.”

“Everything’s fine, Brock. I’ll talk to you later.” He nodded and left. Jill turned around to find Captain Moore still standing in the doorway of the bedroom. “Are you all right, Sir?”

“Does he do that a lot? Barge in on you like that?”

Jill sighed. “Sometimes.”

“Well, thank you for not telling him where you slept last night, Lieutenant.”

He started to turn back into the bedroom when Jill said, “You shared my bed last night, Sir. Don’t you think you could call me Jill?”

He shook his head. “I don’t think that would be a good idea.”

“Sir, I know I was the prosecuting attorney last year in that ludicrous case against you... imagine anyone charging you with conduct unbecoming,” she shook her head. “But I didn’t want to be. I asked to be released from it...”

“That’s not it, Lieutenant,” he said. “I know you asked to be released. The Admiral told me you did.”

“I’m sorry, Captain. I didn’t mean to...”

“My wife’s only been gone for just over 10 months, Lieutenant. The fact that I ended up pulling you into my arms in bed last night... that I responded to your closeness physically...” he shook his head in dismay. “I can’t understand that. I loved Joyce for so long... to have held another woman...”

Jill’s heart sank. He knew what happened. She had so hoped that he wouldn’t remember. “Sir, I’m sure you were only thinking of your wife. Not me.”

“That’s true,” he replied and turned around. “Just like I was thinking of her last night,” he held up his hands. Jill’s eyes held an unspoken question, so he answered. “Yesterday was our wedding anniversary. It would have been 26 years.”

OWEN'S SONG

Jill understood now. His anniversary. The first one since her death. No wonder he'd been in such a state last night. She didn't know what to do. So she walked up to him and lifted his chin. "You do have beautiful eyes," she whispered gently. "So blue. So piercing."

He pulled her to him and held her so tightly she could hardly breathe. Within a few seconds, she felt his body shaking with sobs. She wrapped her arms around him and held him, rubbing his back and cooing to him, "It's all right. Go ahead and cry. You need this. You need to let it out."