

~ No Guarantees ~

by Greek Warrior (Joan)

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Disclaimer: None needed, my characters.

Sex: Implied between two people of the same sex, but nothing graphic this time.

Thanks to Wendy for beta reading.

You can send comments to XWPScribe@aol.com

I learned a lot from my parents, things I should do, things I shouldn't do. My mom was a schoolteacher until she had to take early retirement. She taught fifth grade. She explained that one of the reasons she wanted to teach was because she wanted a family, wanted to be able to be home with her kids in the summer, and not have to send them off to someone else to take care of. From her I learned sacrifice and commitment.

My dad was a police officer. From him I learned caring and responsibility. He retired after 32 years on the force, all of them as a patrol officer. He said that being a detective was fine for some, but he knew that a cop on the street was where he could help the most people.

I think dad was horribly disappointed when my brother, older by two years, showed no interest in following in his and his father's footsteps. Looking back, I now realize my mom's relief at Nolan's announcement that he wanted to go to the university, not become a cop.

I now also know that the terrible argument mom and dad had been about me; when I came home the summer after high school graduation and told them I had joined the police force.

Dad was as proud as he could be. Mom, though, was a totally different story.

I realize now that was when she started pulling away emotionally, from dad and I. It took me several years to figure out it was from fear. All the years she had worried about the visit that would tell her dad had been hurt or worse, killed. Now she had to go through it with her daughter, and she just couldn't cope.

I made a promise to myself then, that when I fell in love, I would make it different for my partner. She wouldn't have to go through the same fear my mom went through all those years.

I laugh at myself now. How very arrogant I was, just a few short years ago.

I met Emma when I was 28, after ten years on the force. She was very stubborn, took me weeks to talk her into going out with me.

Her parents owned a jewelry store where a shoplifter had been caught. It wasn't one of those expensive chain stores; this one sold custom-made pieces. I found out later, Emma designed and made most of them.

I had received the call and headed for the store to find a young woman, sitting pretty as you please, on the back of a teenage boy, sprawled in the middle of the floor.

She was mad as a wet hen, to borrow one of my dad's sayings, and he looked like he was about to cry. It was all I could do not to laugh. After I questioned the boy, I did very carefully explain to her that she was very lucky the kid was only trying to steal a birthday present for his girlfriend and wasn't a deranged lunatic that might have had a gun or knife.

I think I fell in love with her that very day, which is funny cause I never believed in love at first sight. Now lust at first sight, yeah, but I always thought love was something that took time and nurturing.

But, oh lord, when she stood up, green eyes ablaze with anger, I was completely gone, hook, line and sinker, head over heels in love.

It was several months of dating before I worked up enough courage to ask her if she would spend the rest of her life with me and she accepted.

A friend asked us if we were going to have a marriage ceremony, we told them no. We did plan on registering the same sex partnership legally, but to me the traditional marriage ceremony was degrading to the woman and wouldn't have had one even if the law said we could. The idea of the father handing over the bride to the groom like she was some sort of inferior creature to be taken care of is bad enough. And then the whole, love, honor and obey thing...what a crock. I know its just symbolism now, or mostly, but I've been unfortunate enough in my line of work to come across men who believe that marriage makes a woman his property. Granted most don't feel that way, but even one should be enough to make people rethink the whole context of the ceremony.

Fortunately for me, Emma felt the same way.

I remember the months of planning that went into my brothers wedding. Mom actually came out of her mental hibernation to help Jasmine, my brother's wife to be, plan the thing. She only had her father, her mother having died a few years ago.

It was really a scary process. It took them two weeks to decide on an invitation. I couldn't believe it, it took Jasmine and Nolan less time to decide to get married than it took the three of them to agree on a piece of paper.

Then there's the wedding dress, three thousand dollars on a dress that would be worn once. What a waste. I considered myself lucky I wouldn't be going through that.

I was also lucky that my parents were basically okay with me being a lesbian. The only dissent came from my brother. It wasn't that he was homophobic; he said he just couldn't understand it. His exact words were; how could a woman not want a man.

I didn't try to explain it to him. I just told him he was thinking with the wrong head.

My sister in law to be and I were not chummy and would never become good friends. It was out of courtesy that she asked me to be in the wedding. We were both happy that I turned her down.

So, when Emma and I agreed to spend our lives together, we were both thankful that there would be no elaborate wedding to go through.

Now remember when I said I was so arrogant to think that I wouldn't put my love through the fear and anxiety that my mom went through? Well, I'm an idiot, plain and simple.

In the twelve years that I've been on the force, I'd had to pull my weapon twice. I'd never shot anyone, hell, I'd never had to even shoot at anyone. No one had ever shot at me. The only time I'd been hurt was when I was chasing a suspect and cut my leg on a fence I climbed over.

So, my life is going along great, right? I'd never given Emma a reason to worry, right? Wrong.

I got home three weeks ago on a Friday night, I normally work days, but I'd filled in for a friend whose wife had minor surgery, to find Emma in tears.

Let me tell you, it scared the crap outta me.

After cradling her in my arms and rocking her gently for what seemed like forever. She was finally able to tell me what had upset her.

She had come in from the store; she still worked with her parents, changed clothes and turned on the news. The local news, that reported that a police officer had been killed in the line of duty and they couldn't release the name pending notification of family.

Now that's all well and good for the family of the fallen officer, but what about the family of the hundreds of other officers on the force, that are on pins and needles wondering if there is gonna be a knock on their door? Of course one phone call from me could have remedied this, but I was so sure I'd made certain she would never have to worry about me, I'd gone back to the station and signed out before I went home.

I could have kicked myself for making her wait an extra half hour before she knew I was okay. I apologized over and over, promising it would never happen again.

That night and into the next morning, we made love again and again. Sometimes it was slow and gentle, other times it was fast and frantic, like it might be the last. Little did I know.

When I came home from my normal Saturday shift, Emma's car was gone. Not unusual, she often worked on her designs at the store or filled in on her off hours for her parents on special occasions.

It wasn't until I went into the kitchen to fix something to munch on that I found the letter.

My dearest McKenna,

First of all, know that I love you and there will never be anybody else. But I can't stand the thought of you possibly dying each time you leave house. I thought I could live with my fear, but it's killing me a little more each day. I would never ask you to quit the force. I know that being a police officer is who you are and that it means everything to you and I'd never take that away from you.

I guess this may seem stupid since I'm losing you in my leaving. But I've left you alive and healthy and I will always be able to remember you this way. And in leaving now, my last memory of you won't be a knock on the door telling me you've been killed. I know I'm being a coward but I can't live that way anymore. I'm so sorry, my love.

Emma

I'm not sure how long I sat on the kitchen floor, which was where I ended up when my legs would no longer hold me, but night had fallen and it was dark in the house. I knew I had been crying because my shirt was wet from my tears.

The first thing I had to do was talk to Emma. I was devastated, but I was also angry that she had left without talking to me...just assuming that I loved my work more than her.

I needed to explain a few things to her. First, being a cop was 'what' I was not 'who' I was. Second, it did not mean everything to me, she did.

I got cleaned up and headed over to her parent's house. Her car wasn't in the driveway, but theirs was. I found out Emma had left town. Not permanently, but she was spending a few weeks with friends. They were very sympathetic and understanding, but still wouldn't tell me where she went, per Emma's instructions.

A lot happened in the three weeks since Emma has been gone. I quit my job and discovered that being an ex-cop with a very good record was enough to get a decent job as assistant security chief at the Metropolitan Museum, which I really like. And I found out that I am incredibly miserable and lonely without Emma.

So, here I am sitting outside her parent's house. I know she's there; her car is in the drive. I don't know why, but I'm nervous. I've had to wipe my sweaty palms on my jeans several times already and I've haven't even gotten out of the car.

Walking up the front walk, I realize that there are no guarantees, but I can be assured that all the changes I've made in the last three weeks are for the better. Now, I just have to convince Emma of that. Wish me luck.

The End

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