

Bird Without A Song

By Scribblesinink

It was nearly midnight before Jake finally managed to extricate himself from the curious friends and townspeople who'd gathered at Bailey's to hear his story and head on home. The house was dark and quiet, but he didn't need light. He'd grown up here, after all, and it wasn't the first time he'd snuck his way in barefoot, while a winter without electricity had taught him well how to get around without stubbing his toes.

He crept upstairs, and, much to his pleasure, discovered the water was still running in the bathroom. The stream that jetted from the shower head wasn't as powerful as he'd have liked, but it was hot. Having lived in borrowed fatigues for over two days, he wasn't about to complain.

Dressed in nothing but a towel, he scooted across the hallway and dashed into his room—it might be summer but the air was still cool on his naked, damp skin—only to find Emily dozing in his bed. He felt a stab of guilt; he'd promised her he'd get home soon, and she must've waited up for him.

She woke at the soft *click* as he quietly shut the door; in the glow of the moonlight that fell in through the window, he could see her blinking sleepily. He reached for the light switch.

"Please, leave it." She kept her voice low as she threw back the covers. She was dressed for bed, in panties and an oversized, worn T-shirt—one of his, he realized after a moment, catching a glimpse of the faded print for some rock concert he'd gone to in Denver a long time ago. A part of him wondered why his mother hadn't thrown out those old shirts while he'd been gone.

"What time is it?" She padded over, scrubbing at her eyes and hiding a yawn behind her hand.

"Past midnight." He glanced at the bed longingly, trying and failing to suppress a yawn of his own. Emily uttered a small chuckle and he grimaced ruefully.

She touched his wrist lightly. "Where've you been? I've been waiting...."

"Bailey's. Sorry. Couldn't get away...."

She smiled slightly. "S alright." She raised herself on her toes to kiss him. "I missed you, is all."

She leaned in for another, deeper kiss, twining her fingers in the damp hair at his neck to balance herself. He could feel the heat of her body through her shirt as she pressed herself against him.

He pulled his head back a little so her kiss landed on the corner of his mouth. "Em, I'm—"

"Shh...." She put a finger against his lips, her other hand resting on his chest, right over his heart. "I know. You don't have to do anything. Just let me...."

With gentle pressure, she guided him to the bed and nudged him to lie back. He was too tired to protest; a part of him expected to fall asleep the instant his head touched the pillow. And his eyes did flutter shut. But then Emily started to lay a trail of butterfly kisses from his jaw down his throat and across his chest, and he started fully awake again.

"I missed you," she repeated in a murmur against his stomach. Her breath was warm against his naked skin and he shivered involuntarily. Her nimble fingers started tugging at the towel tied around his hips, and he moaned when her hand slipped underneath its folds. He had to admit that, despite five years' apart, she remembered him well. She knew just how to touch him for greatest effect, and what drove him crazy with need .

Even so, he tangled a hand in her long hair, pushing himself up on an elbow. "Em...."

Her eyes glittered in the dim light as she scanned his face. She gave a quick nod, smiling, and he fell back against the pillow. It was always so much easier to just give in to Emily than to try and fight her. He groaned, hips bucking of their own accord as her warm mouth closed over him. She chuckled, and he could feel the vibration of her laugh. She lifted her gaze up to meet his again. "That's my Jake." There was triumph in her tone.

She sat up, shimmying out of her panties and prepared to straddle him. He stopped her with a hand on her knee. "Em...?" He gestured at the nightstand.

She hesitated, leaning forward to nip at his jaw, right below his ear. "You know, I was thinking, maybe we could—."

"What?" He twisted his head so he could stare at her. "No... It's not...."

She heaved a sigh and sat back up, reaching for the box in the drawer. "Okay." She sounded a little hurt. "If that's what you want."

Jake wanted to deny it, wanted try and explain to her that now just wasn't the right time, but he quickly discovered the lie simply refused to leave his lips. And a moment later, Emily had found a condom and rolled it on, and he was moaning again as she sank down

slowly, his hands settling on her hips to guide her.

She started to rock. Too worn out to exert much control, Jake came a moment later. Emily remained motionless for a long second, before she lifted herself off with a small sigh of disappointment, got rid of the condom, and snuggled up against him.

"Sorry," he murmured, stroking her hair absently. She traced her fingers along his jaw, pads catching on the stubble that he hadn't bothered to shave.

"It's okay. I know you're tired. Just sleep now."

He nestled deeper into the mattress, Em's weight heavy against his flank. But as he drifted off to sleep, he mused that his fatigue was only a part of the problem. In a moment of clarity, such as sometimes happens between wakefulness and sleep, he knew: he simply didn't love Emily the way he should. Not any more....

Disclaimer: this story is based on the Junction Entertainment/Fixed Mark Productions/CBS Paramount Television series *Jericho*. It was written for entertainment only; the author does not profit from it nor was any infringement of copyright intended. Please do not redistribute elsewhere without the author's consent.