

Keep The Home Fires Burning

by Tanaqui

Jake left his boots on the porch and quietly slipped inside. He shucked his jacket, damp from the storm, as he closed the door behind him. He'd been glad to find the door locked: they'd all had to learn new habits since the bombs, and even though things were getting back to normal, there was still enough lawlessness out on the roads that he worried about Heather's safety when he was away. He just hoped she hadn't been fretting too badly as she'd waited well past the time he'd told her he'd be home from his latest trip for Dale.

Tiptoeing towards the dim glow of the fire and the circle of light from the single lamp that was lit, he saw she'd fallen asleep on the couch that stood to one side of the fire. Her cheek was pillowed on her hand, and her legs were drawn up under an afghan. A book was lying on the floor near her head, its leaves splayed, and he guessed she'd knocked it off the couch when she fell asleep; he knew how much she hated seeing books left like that.

Moving quietly, he picked it up. There was no sign of whatever she might have been using as a bookmark, so he closed the book and put it on the table at the side of the couch, before kneeling in front of the fire and trying to poke some life back into it without making too much noise.

"Hey."

He glanced sideways and saw that she'd opened her eyes and was watching him.

"Hey. Was trying not to wake you."

"S okay. I was waiting for you."

He went back to stirring up the embers and carefully adding more wood, enjoying the way the growing heat was starting to take the chill off his skin where he faced the fire. "Sorry I'm so late. Had a problem with the radiator on the truck on the way back. Had to keep stopping to top it up."

She chuckled. "Dale needs to buy some new trucks. Or get a new mechanic." Looking back at her, he saw she'd propped herself on one elbow, her gaze still intently fixed on him.

"Maybe you should ask him for a job." Satisfied at last with the fire, he half turned and shuffled across on his knees so he could kiss her. She snaked her arm from under the afghan and round his neck to pull him closer. He knew he must be unpleasantly cold, since she was so pleasantly warm, but she didn't seem to mind. He slid his hand to cup the nape of her neck as he savored the kiss, and found her hair was a little damp: he guessed she'd taken a bath before she curled up on the sofa.

She pulled away a little. "Did you eat?"

He nodded. "Grabbed something at a gas station one of the times I stopped." He frowned at her. "Hope you weren't too worried."

She leaned her forehead against his, closing her eyes. "Always," she whispered, her fingertips stroking his hair back from behind his ear..

He wished he didn't have to worry her so much, but he knew she'd only laugh if he suggested he stopped driving for Dale. She worried about him, and he worried about her, but they had to live their lives....

He'd slipped his hand under the collar of the bathrobe she was wearing and his mind was dimly registering that he hadn't met the expected flannel. Pulling away a little, he raked his gaze over her, confirming that, yes, she didn't seem to be wearing anything other than the robe. It had pulled open a little, half revealing the soft swell of her breast. When he lifted his gaze back to meet hers, he saw there was a hungry expression on her face.

She caught his hand, still resting on her shoulder under the robe, and slid it down and across to cover her breast. She licked her lips. "I've missed you."

He rubbed his thumb against her skin, feeling her nipple harden against his palm, and the answering heat flaming inside him. "Me, too."

He moved forward to kiss her again, but she met him halfway, a surprisingly forceful hand on his chest pushing him backwards. He wrapped his arms around her, his hands sliding under her robe that fell open as she crawled off the sofa toward him, while he scrambled backward. A moment later, they were stretched out in front of the fire, the flames heating his left side, while his right was chilled by the cold draft drawn across the room as the fire sent sparks up the chimney. And Heather lying on top of him, warm and passionate in his arms as he kissed her deeply.

The wooden floorboards beneath the rug were hard under his shoulder blades, but he didn't mind as he ran his hands up and down the smooth skin of her back, and his tongue teased hers. She tangled her hands in his hair, resting her forearms on the floor to lift some of her weight from him, while she arched her back and rubbed herself against his hardening erection, a foretaste of how they would move together later when he was inside her.

Dizzy for lack of air, he let his mouth slide away from hers, reaching up to slip her robe down her shoulder a little so he could trail kisses along her bare skin. She nuzzled his neck with her lips for a moment, her breath tickling him, until she pulled away, wriggling her shoulder and muttering, "Hot...."

It took him a moment to get her meaning, and then he understood: the fire—the wood he'd added earlier was now blazing brightly—that was gently warming him through the layers of his T-shirt and hoodie was too fierce on her where she was naked. "Sorry," he murmured, rolling them on to their sides so his body shielded her from the heat.

She shook her head mutely: no need for an apology. "Not as if I've done this before," she pointed out with a slight grin.

"Me either," he confessed, wondering why the hell not, because this was definitely just as sexy—despite the various discomforts—as it looked in the movies.

She chuckled, before moving in for another kiss, wrapping her leg around him as she did so. He automatically slid his hand to caress her thigh in long, slow strokes while they explored each other's mouths again. Fumbling with the zip of his hoodie, she dragged it down, pushing away the cloth so

she could rest her palms against his chest, her hands warm through the cotton of his T-shirt as they went on kissing.

The heat from the fire was starting to get a little uncomfortable even on his back by the time she reached for his belt. Wrapping his arm around her waist, he sat them up, twisting so his back was still to the fire and she was straddling his hips

She cupped his face in her hands and laughed softly. "This is definitely an improvement." Leaning forward to capture his lips with hers, she dropped her hands to undo his belt and pull down the zipper on his jeans. Without breaking this kiss, she lifted her hips so he could wriggle his jeans and underwear down, before she settled back on his bare thighs. Her belly brushing against his freed cock made him groan, and he wrapped his arms around her to pull her tight against him.

He felt one of her hands lift from his shoulder as they kissed, and her lips were suddenly unsure on his, as if she was distracted. He drew back a little, frowning at her. But she only grinned at him and then, with a triumphant "Aha!", pulled her hand out of the pocket of her robe—he realized she'd been groping in the folds of cloth twisted around her—and presented him with a condom.

He laughed as he took the condom from her and tore the packet open. "You really were waiting for me, weren't you?"

"Uh-huh."

He couldn't help cupping her face with his palm and pulling her to him for another kiss, because this was one hell of a thing to come home to. She accepted the kiss for a moment before wriggling away from him a little to give him room to roll the condom on, apparently impatient to have him inside her. As soon as he was ready, her hands were on him, guiding him into her.

She gave a long, contented sigh as she sank down onto him that was almost lost in his own moan as he felt her heat around him. She paused for a moment, her gaze locked with his, and then began to move over him with long, deliberate strokes. He pulled her close again, burying his face in her shoulder, breathing in her scent and giving himself over to how good she made him feel.

For the first few strokes, he could feel her shifting her knees a little, and he guessed she was trying to get comfortable enough to keep going. Then suddenly a shiver ran through her and she let out a little gasp of surprise. He started to pull away but her grip tightening on his shoulders held him where he was as she sank onto him again, and again there was that small gasp. And suddenly he understood, and he held himself still because, God, for all the stuff they'd tried, they'd never managed to work *this* out before....

Hardly daring to breathe, he let her move against him, trying to think the most unexciting thoughts possible, because he was so not going to spoil this for her by not giving her the time she needed. She began moving faster, the gasps turning into small cries of pleasure, and he knew she was close, close... and then she was coming around him, one wave and then another, and he couldn't hold back any more, holding her tightly against him as his own climax hit.

They clung to each other as the glow faded, and then she pulled back and tipped her face up to him. "Thank you. God, thank you." She put up her hand and drew a finger down his cheek.

He dipped his head for a quick kiss. "No, thank you," he murmured against her lips. "That was...." He didn't have the words to express how good it had been.

Reluctantly, he lifted her off him, and got rid of the condom. Then he pulled her back close again, burying his face in her hair. "Maybe I should come back late more often?" he muttered, with a soft chuckle.

She giggled. "Maybe I should ask Dale for a job just so I can sabotage your truck...."

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