



Graphic by [Steph](#)

Rating: PG-13 for implied sexual situations

Classification: vignette, romance (H/M)

Spoilers: slight one for "A Tangled Webb"

Disclaimer: Why, TPTB, I'm not misappropriating your characters. After all, *your* characters would never be in this situation, now would they? Hmm? Okay, just in case - I'm not making money from this. Promise.

Author's Notes: For a story this low on the emotional complexity scale, who needs author's notes?

0847 EST
Mac's Apartment
Georgetown

Her internal clock woke her up without informing her of its reason for doing so. Rather impolite for a Saturday morning, she decided. Nevertheless, she was awake, and probably not likely to doze off again, either.

Sarah Mackenzie rolled onto her side, careful not to disturb the arm that lay across her waist, and watched the owner of said arm while he slept. After two weeks, she still couldn't quite get over the fact that he was here with her, sharing her life and yes, her bed. She'd known that very first night that she was ruined for good; never again would she be able to sleep peacefully without his presence.

And Harm had relaxed into the routine so endearingly. At first, he'd tossed and turned, and she'd gotten the impression that such restlessness was standard practice for him. Within two or three nights, though, he'd begun to draw her close and simply drop off to sleep, with no restless motion whatsoever. He fully admitted that he'd never slept so well in all his life, and as a result, they'd taken every opportunity available to sleep in longer than usual.

Therefore, it was unsurprising that he was currently dead to the world, hair mussed and mouth slightly ajar. Unable to hold back a grin, Mac leaned in to kiss his bare shoulder, then his cheek. Predictably, she received no response. However, she was wide awake and getting hungry, so she slipped out of bed and padded out into the kitchen.

After retrieving the newspaper from outside her door and fixing herself a bowl of cereal, she settled into a corner of the couch to contemplate their new relationship. Even

using the word “their” was still a novelty. She and Harm. Together. The simple comfort she’d always hoped they’d share, and the burning passion she’d hardly dared to dream about. It was, for lack of a better word, perfect.

Before she could get too caught up in how much she was loving life, a knock at the door drew her attention. At a quarter to nine on a Saturday morning, who in the world would be knocking on her door?

Mac closed the bedroom door and checked to make sure her pajamas were correctly buttoned before stepping up to the peephole. On the other side, Harriet stood patiently, one hand resting on her very pregnant belly.

Mac froze. She and Harm hadn’t exactly been advertising their relationship to the JAG crew yet; actually, they’d been covering their tracks pretty effectively, for fear of any awkwardness in the office. But they’d all have to find out sooner or later, and she wasn’t about to leave her friend standing in the hallway until she figured out a plan of attack.

“Harriet,” she greeted brightly, pulling the door open. “Is everything okay?”

“Morning,” the blonde woman replied with an apologetic smile. “I’m sorry I’m a little early, but I had to get out of the house before A.J. woke up and started pestering me for a dog again. He seems to think he’d like a dog more than a little brother or sister.” Then she noticed Mac’s attire and blinked. “Oh, shoot, I’m completely barging in on you.”

“No, it’s fine. Come in.” Mac waved her in and shut the door behind her, mind racing. “Were we supposed to go to the spa today? I thought it was next weekend.”

“The nineteenth - that’s today. They called me yesterday to confirm. Did something come up? I’m sure we can reschedule - ”

“No - no, we’re going. If anyone deserves a massage today, it’s you.” Mac forced herself not to let her eyes stray toward the bedroom. “It’s just ... I ...”

But Harriet had noticed the pair of men’s shoes sitting by the closet, and her hand flew to her mouth as she put two and two together. “Oh, God, I’m so sorry. I didn’t realize you had ... company.”

Mac shrugged self-consciously. “Believe me, I can understand why that wouldn’t be the first thought to cross your mind. It’s okay. He’s still asleep.”

Harriet lowered her voice, her blue eyes alight with curiosity. “So there’s a new guy? How long now?”

“About two weeks.”

If the younger woman had any opinion regarding that length of time, she didn’t show it. “And it’s going well?”

Mac allowed her satisfaction to shine through. “Very well.”

“If you don’t mind me asking, where’d you find him? I mean, do I know him?”

Here goes nothing. Feeling just a little mischievous, Mac reached over to grab the white Navy uniform blouse that was draped over the back of her chair. She tilted the shoulder boards so that Harriet could see the three stripes and the JAG insignia, then turned the shirt so that the morning sunlight glinted off the gold wings over the ribbons.

Harriet's eyes grew to saucers, and she fumbled for words. Mac took the opportunity to excuse herself for a moment and ducked back into her bedroom, kneeling down beside the bed to kiss Harm's temple.

"Harm," she said quietly into his ear. The result was an unintelligible mumble from her partner and lover, as he shifted to wrap his arms more securely around the pillow. "Harm, Harriet's here."

That did it. One eye opened, and upon seeing that she wasn't kidding, the other followed suit. "Say what?" he replied, in a voice that was adorably rough. "Everything okay?"

"Yeah, fine. Except I kinda forgot that I had plans with her today. Don't worry about anything - I just wanted to make sure you knew she was here, in case you got it into your head to wander out of the room in nothing but those boxers."

"You don't think she'd like these?"

Apparently he was awake enough to goof around. "Sure I do, but I'm not sharing you." She ran a hand through his hair, tousling it further, and stood up. "Seriously, Harm. Don't worry about it. Maybe this wasn't quite the way we planned to go public, but it'll be okay."

"Mac." All the joking vanished from his tone. "Do I look particularly worried?"

She gazed at him intently, and found nothing but contentment in his ever-changing eyes. A slow smile spread across her features. "Okay," she said softly. "Harriet and I will probably leave in half an hour or so, and I'll be back mid-afternoon. Come out and say hi before we go."

She quickly ditched her pajamas in favor of a shirt and jeans, figuring that she could always grab a shower at the spa. When she returned to the living room, Harriet was sitting on the couch, her eyes shining with questions.

"I can't believe this happened and nobody knew about it! So for the past two weeks, every time you two disappeared into each other's offices - "

"Absolutely not!" A flush crept up Mac's cheeks. "The office is the office. If we can't keep things professional there, we'll be sunk before we even get started. I promise, no drama at JAG. At least, no more than usual."

A giggle escaped Harriet's lips, and she clapped a hand over her mouth to stifle it. "I'm sorry. I'm just so damn excited for you. I mean, this is one of those things that all of us have wondered about at one time or another, and now that it's finally happened ..."

"It's okay. I'm kinda excited about it, too." Mac swallowed her grin. "Listen, we weren't planning on keeping everyone in the dark forever. It's just that with work being the way it is, we wanted to make sure we had our footing before subjecting ourselves to that kind of microscope. You understand, right?"

"Oh, of course I do. Does this mean I'm the first one to know? Besides the two of you, of course?"

"I guess it does. For right now, how about you don't tell anyone besides Bud? We'll talk to the admiral this week, I guess, and we'll just go from there."

"Sure thing. My lips are sealed." Then a wicked gleam appeared in her eye, one that Mac would've sworn Harriet was incapable of. "I'm probably going to get struck by lightning for asking this, but what's it like?"

"It?" She figured she should probably attempt to be demure about this subject, but what the hell? Honesty was good, too. "Everything I hoped and then some," she replied, trying not to sound smug.

Harriet squealed and quickly buried her face in a couch cushion. From the other room, they heard the sound of the shower starting. "He's not bothered by me being here, is he?"

"Nah. I just told him to put some clothes on before he came out to say hi."

"Good move. I don't think I'd ever be able to look at him the same way again if I'd seen him *that* far out of uniform. But speaking of which, how are you going to stand it? When he gets up to give a closing argument, aren't you afraid you're going to end up picturing him ...?"

Mac shrugged, quirking an eyebrow. "Well, it's not like I've never done that before. Now I just have a reference."

Harriet's mouth formed a perfect O, and she tossed the cushion at her friend. Just then, the phone rang, and Mac composed herself enough to answer it. "Hello?"

"Mac, hi," Sturgis said. "I'm sorry to bug you this early on a weekend, but I was hoping you could help me track down Harm."

Oh, great. Sturgis, too? Aloud, Mac asked, "Um, you can't find him?"

"He said he didn't have any plans this weekend, but I tried calling his place last night to ask a question about the Willingsley appeal, and he never called back. No one's answering there this morning, either, and his cell phone just goes right to voice mail. Now, I'm well aware that he's a big boy and doesn't need his friends checking up on him, but he doesn't usually go incommunicado overnight, so I figured I'd just check with you."

"Because he and I have some sort of secret communication device?"

"Come on, Mac, I'm just asking."

Harriet was studying her fingernails, trying to look like she wasn't listening, but a hint of an impish smile gave her away. Mac rolled her eyes. *Okay, let's just have some fun with this.* Forcing the note of humor out of her voice, she asked, "Sturgis, did it occur to you that he might have, ah, spent the night somewhere else?"

Their friend's voice sobered immediately, and she imagined she could hear his brow furrowing. "Mac, you don't really think he does that kind of thing, do you?"

“What kind of thing?”

“The one-night stand kind of thing. You know him better than that.”

Mac bit down on her lip to keep from grinning. This was mean, considering how wonderful Sturgis had been to her after she'd confessed her feelings for Harm so long ago. But the opportunity was just too good to pass up. “I didn't say it was a one-night stand. For all we know, he might have a new girlfriend. It's not out of the realm of possibility, is it?”

“No way,” Sturgis asserted. “We'd know about it.”

“Would we?” By this time, Harriet was practically smothering herself in the couch to keep from giggling aloud. Mac turned away from her on the chance that it could become contagious. “You have to admit, he's been pretty cheerful lately.”

“There has been an unusual lack of arguing in the office this week,” he admitted. “But it takes two to tango, as they say ...”

She could hear the exact moment when it hit him.

“Why, Sarah Mackenzie, you sly thing! Put him on.”

“Sturgis - ”

“Put him on the phone! That man needs both a hearty handshake and a smack upside the head.”

Mac gave up and laughed. “You think those could wait a little while? He's in the shower.”

The response was a theatrical sigh. “Oh, all right. I do need to talk to him about Willingsley, but it can wait. Rest assured, though, that I *will* get every detail of what transpired between the two of you ...”

“Are you sure you want *every* detail, Commander?”

“Oh, good Lord. I can already hear my dad coming to wash my mouth out with soap. Enjoy your weekend, and tell Harm to give me a call this afternoon.”

“Will do.” Mac hung up and threw the cushion back in Harriet's direction. “You were not helpful in that little endeavor, you know that?”

“Was I supposed to be helpful?” Harriet asked innocently.

Mac shook her head as she located Harm's cell phone and turned it back on. The message indicator was flashing, probably because of Sturgis's earlier calls. “See if I ever take you out for a massage again ...”

Mac's bathroom was rather nice. He'd decided this on morning five of their relationship, after the first night they'd spent at her apartment. He hadn't brought an overnight bag with him that time: it would've seemed presumptuous, somehow. So he'd used her shampoo and soap and ended up smelling like something from Victoria's Secret. And the funny part was that he hadn't even minded, because it smelled like her. That was the point at which he realized in full that he was no-holds-barred, head-over-heels, *stupid* in love with Sarah Mackenzie.

Of course, since then, he'd learned to keep his sea bag around. Harm tossed his razor back into his bag and pulled on a T-shirt, wondering how Harriet had reacted to the new piece of gossip. Somehow he couldn't work up the energy to be worried about the news getting out. In a way, it would be a relief to have the revelation over and done with. They could get all the questions out of the way and just be a couple like any other. Well, maybe not like any other.

And if he was honest with himself, he was a little disappointed that Mac had had to wake him with a warning about Harriet, because he'd had aspirations of waking Mac up in a slightly different way. Why did she always have to wake up first, anyway? He'd managed to knock her internal clock out of whack a couple of times already, which had delighted him to no end, but it never lasted for long.

Harm put his bag back in its now-customary place in the corner and opened the bedroom door. "Is this the part where I'm supposed to do the walk of shame?" he asked the two women good-naturedly.

Harriet beamed up at him. "Morning, sir."

"Harriet, since you're currently in possession of more knowledge about my love life than my mother, I'd just as soon not hear the word 'sir' come out of your mouth again today." He leaned down to give her a hug. "I'm sure Mac's already covered this, but we're sorry we didn't tell you sooner."

"She has, and it's fine. I totally understand."

"I need some coffee, I think - can I get you some tea or anything?"

"Thanks, but we're on our way out the door in a few." As he wandered into the kitchen, Harriet turned to Mac. "He's at home in your kitchen now?"

"I heard that," he called back.

"Sorry. It's just so cute."

"Cute, huh?"

No sooner had he started the coffeemaker than another ring sounded. Mac grabbed two cell phones off the end table and studied them. "It's yours."

Harm crossed the apartment quickly and took the correct phone from her. "Rabb."

"Glad to know you're still among the living, Commander."

Instinctively he straightened. "Admiral, good morning. Uh, have you been trying to reach me?"

"Only for the past hour or so." Admiral Chegwidden's voice was cool, with only a slight undertone of annoyance. "There was a mishap at Oceana last night - Class B, only minor injuries, but I'm told it was a hell of a crack-up. Unless you feel the need to ruin someone else's weekend as well, you can handle this one on your own. Helo leaves Andrews at 1120. I'd like to see you in the office before you take off."

Harm checked his watch. *Aw, shit.* "Sir, that might be a little tight."

"Why's that?"

"Well, I'd need to get into uniform before coming into JAG, and - well, I'm not exactly at home right now."

"You're not out at the airfield, are you?"

"No, sir. I have my uniform from yesterday, but - um, that is ..."

Mac and Harriet were smirking at each other, which he stubbornly ignored. There was a pause on the line, and he pictured their commanding officer narrowing his eyes. "Commander, do I want to know where it was that you spent last night?"

"In all likelihood, probably not, sir."

Another pause followed, and when the admiral's voice returned, it was startlingly cold. "Mr. Rabb," he began stiffly, "I have always made it a point not to get too deeply involved in the personal affairs of my officers, but there are times when I feel compelled to step in."

Harm felt a twinge of dread. Had they misjudged their CO's opinion on this? Was he already concerned with the appearance of impropriety?

"Sir?" he asked weakly.

"I was under the impression that you'd come to some sort of decision regarding the colonel after the Paraguay incident."

Where's he going with this? "I'd call that an accurate assessment, sir."

"Then how in *hell* could you do this to her?" Chegwidden thundered. "She has had numerous opportunities to give up on you, but she's still here, which ought to tell you a few things. Has that fact not even registered on your scope?"

"Sir, I think there's been - "

"And this is how you repay her? If you're even considering bringing this new woman around the office, you're oxygen-deprived."

As realization set in, Harm closed his eyes and rubbed the bridge of his nose. He knew he ought to be at least mildly insulted by the accusations flying in his direction, but the whole situation was just too bizarre to even bother. "Could you hold on just a second, sir?"

He covered the phone before he could hear the admiral sputter, and handed it to Mac. "You talk to him. He currently wants to kill me."

"Why this time?"

"He's convinced I'm going to show up at the office with a new girlfriend and break his chief of staff's heart."

Harriet dissolved into laughter. "First Commander Turner, now - "

"Sturgis, too? Christ, does everybody at JAG think I'm a clueless wonder?"

"Apparently so." Mac snickered, then pasted on a serious expression and lifted the phone. "Good morning, Admiral." She waited for understanding to dawn on him before continuing. "I really do appreciate your concern, sir, but I think you can understand why it's not necessary ... Not long, sir. We just didn't want to make any big announcements in the office ... no, sir, he's been the perfect gentleman. I don't think people give him enough credit ..."

Harm threw his hands up in the air and flopped down on the couch in surrender.

"Yes, sir - thank you." Mac smiled sweetly and handed the phone back.

"Thanks for the ringing endorsement," he grumbled in her direction. "Admiral?"

Chegwidden's voice was distinctly more subdued this time. "Commander, I believe I owe you an apology."

"Not at all, sir."

"No, I jumped to conclusions," he insisted, rather gruffly. "For the record, I'm happy for the both of you. Provided that you don't dare use the office as a battleground for a lovers' spat."

"Absolutely not, sir."

"All right. You might as well go home to pack and just head for Andrews from there, then. I'll have all the information that's come into the office thus far sent ahead for you. Can you make the flight?"

Harm sighed. So much for a relaxing weekend with Mac. "Yes, sir. 1120 at Andrews."

"Very well. Check in when you have your preliminary findings."

"Aye, sir."

When he hung up, the two women had stopped snickering and were looking sympathetic. "Duty never sleeps, huh?" Harriet asked.

"Something like that." He shook his head and pushed himself up from the couch. "Class B mishap investigation. I have to get going. While you two are enjoying your day at the spa, spare a thought for me, riding an oh-so-cushy helo down to Oceana."

"Sorry, honey," Mac offered, wincing.

Harm did his best not to blush at her first use of that term of endearment. "Ah, it's all right. I had to do something this weekend." He ducked into the bedroom to grab his bag. Returning, he scuffed into his shoes as Mac stood up to join him by the door. "I'll call you tonight, okay?"

"Okay." They both hesitated for a moment, and Harriet immediately got the message.

"I'm not here," she claimed, turning her head. "Go about your business."

"Whatever you say." Harm smiled at Mac, one eyebrow raised, and leaned down to deliver a soft, sweet kiss.

Harriet's rather audible sigh of happiness gave her away, but Harm pretended he hadn't heard, choosing instead to focus on the stunning woman who currently resided in his arms. "I almost forgot," Mac added, stalling the inevitable goodbye. "Sturgis had a question about the Willingsley case."

"I guess I'll call him from Oceana, too. Anybody else feel the need to check in this morning?"

"No, I think that'll just about do it."

"I have to go," he repeated. "I'll see you tomorrow night or Monday, all right?"

Mac nodded. "Safe trip." She stepped back, reluctantly, but he pulled her close again for another, more longing kiss.

"Love you," he said softly, with a gentle smile. "Have a good weekend, Harriet."

With that, he opened the door and stepped out into the hallway. Maybe it wasn't the ideal weekend, but any period of time that began and ended with her couldn't possibly be bad.

Harriet watched Mac close the door behind him, and was surprised at how shell-shocked she looked. Misinterpreting, she hurried to reassure her friend. "Hey, you know how good he is at poking around those investigations. He'll probably have it wrapped up by this time tomorrow."

"Hmm?" Mac responded absently, her gaze elsewhere.

"Mac? Are you okay?"

Without warning, she jerked toward Harriet. "Am I hearing things? What did he just say?"

"Well, he said he'd see you tomorrow night or Monday, and that he loved you, and ..."

The younger woman trailed off. "Ohh - was that the first time - ?"

Mac nodded, at a loss for words.

“Did you really think that there was any chance under the sun that he *didn't* love you?”

She spread her hands wide in a gesture of total bewilderment. “I don't know ... I mean, I think I *knew*, kind of, but I didn't expect to actually hear him say it - ” She cut herself off in mid-sentence and bolted to the window, shoving it open. “*Harm!!*”

Almost to his car, he turned and looked up at the window, a question in his eyes.

“I love you, too!” she called, feeling utterly ridiculous and not giving a damn.

In reply, he merely flashed that perfect grin, and climbed into his car.

Harriet watched with a knowing look. “Ah, the shouting-from-windows phase. It's awfully nice, isn't it?” Receiving no verbal answer, she got to her feet and shut the window, pulling a still-stunned Mac by the hand. “Come on. You look like you could use a massage.”

*** THE END ***