

## Nice Thoughts

"Think nice thoughts," Jesse muttered. "Just think nice thoughts." He hurried into the Double Helix and sat down in front of the console to continue the repairs to the onboard computer system. It was hard to believe that Emma could 'hear' him even from this distance, while he was shielded by the metal hull of the craft. The idea made him uncomfortable. He wasn't sure if she'd been joking or not, but he wasn't about to take any chances. Emma had sounded serious enough.

*"I can guarantee you'll never have those kinds of thoughts again about anyone. Ever."*

Jesse suppressed a shiver.

Unbidden, his mind drifted back to his teammate who was looking out for him while he tried to get the small aircraft up and running. She'd looked so alluring; sitting cross-legged on top of a rock, with that intense expression on her face and her gaze focused on something only her eyes could see. It wasn't his fault that he found her beautiful, was it? With her large, dark eyes, full red lips and auburn hair framing a pale face, he would have been blind not to notice.

He'd been attracted to her from the moment they met, over a year ago, yet he had never acted on those feelings. Emma was right about one thing: teammates shouldn't have lustful thoughts about each other. Besides, if Emma ever decided she felt something other than friendship for her Mutant X partners, it would be for Brennan, not him, Jesse.

He tapped his temple with a finger. "Nice thoughts, buddy" he reminded himself. "You don't want to find out if Emma can make good on that threat." He ducked his head into the open panel, and for the next few minutes, concentrated on tying wires together and unscrewing others in an attempt to get the system back online so they could get out of here.

And so Emma would stop scanning him.

Jesse knew that she would never access his thoughts or emotions without his permission, so he usually felt secure in the privacy of his own mind around the tele-empath. Knowing that she could hear his every thought made him nervous.

Again, the image of her sitting outside sprang to mind. Jesse recalled how his gaze had drifted down toward her chest when he approached her, where her breasts were straining against the tight cloth of her shirt. He hadn't meant to look at them, or think about them and he blushed at the memory of being caught in the act.

He had not wanted to embarrass Emma, or make her uncomfortable. But she ought to know men found her desirable. She'd even said so herself, that she'd been fielding such thoughts from men all her life.

"Silly girl," he told the screwdriver, a little annoyed at the memories. At the time, he had not even been aware what he was doing. Hey, he was a guy; what did she expect? How could he help but notice those full, firm orbs, high and round, barely contained by the black shirt?

His hands stilled their work while he imagined the feel of Emma's breasts in them. They'd be heavy, and soft to his touch. Although he had never seen Emma naked, except for a quick peek when he accidentally stumbled upon her in the shower, he only had to close his eyes to envision her nipples sitting proudly in the middle of dark pink areolas, tiny hard buds beneath his fingers.

Oh yes, those were *very* nice thoughts. . .

Suddenly Jesse realized what he was doing. His face flushed with shame, while his blood withdrew quickly from other body parts, leaving him limp and shaking.

"Sorry, Em," he said out loud, hoping she would pick up and accept his apology.

But the harder he tried to *not* think of Emma, the more insistent his subconscious reminded him of how much he liked her. Thoughts, which he didn't even know existed and which were hidden deep within the crevasses of his mind, came forward unplanned and unwanted.

Visions of her perfect body, naked and slick with perspiration, as it undulated beneath him with unbridled desire. Fantasies of what her smooth skin would feel like beneath his hands. Daydreams of making love to her, of drowning in the depths of her eyes while his body pulsed deep within her.

oOo

Outside, Emma sat in the clearing. She didn't move or blink; she was as motionless as a statue. Sunlight dappled her hair with gold. A soft breeze cooled her skin. Her eyes were distant and unfocused. But she was no longer listening for government soldiers or Kovakhstan rebels.

Instead, she was basking in the glow of Jesse's daydream, in the emotions that engulfed her, in the exciting way he felt about her. Never in her wildest dreams had she dared

imagine he desired her, that he wanted her as much as he inadvertently told her now.

She knew she should tell him to stop. She probably should be angry with him for distracting her from her guard duty. Except Jesse wasn't doing it on purpose. His thoughts were real.

Now, if this were Brennan, then it would be another story. He might embark on a flight of erotic fancy designed to make her uncomfortable. Brennan was an impossible tease sometimes. But Jesse just wasn't the type. When she'd threatened to mentally de-man him, it had been a joke, an innocent jest, and look at how it discomfited him!

She had had no idea how deep his feelings for her ran. It made her heart beat faster to discover how much he liked her. He'd always been more like a big brother to her than a prospective suitor.

Her breathing was ragged and superficial, as if it were hard to draw the air in. Blood suffused her cheeks, coloring them pink. Her skin glowed as she lived through the fantasies in Jesse's mind. She could almost feel his fingers touch her most intimate places, sending tingles along her spine and butterflies aflutter in her stomach.

"Oh. . ." Unplanned, the gasp escaped her lips.

"Jess, did you hear that?"

Shalimar's voice broke through the spell, interrupting Jesse's train of thought and sending Emma spiraling back to Earth. It felt like a cold shower and she gasped, panting for breath.

For a long moment she feared Shalimar was referring to her involuntary gasp and it took a while to realize they were talking about someone else.

"I heard everything. Never figured Brennan for a death wish."

Emma exhaled. Leave it to Brennan to get himself in trouble. She was grateful, though. Anything to distract her from the disconcerting sensations was welcome. Even if it meant danger to one of her teammates. After all, they always came out all right, didn't they?

Now, *that* was a nice thought.

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