It’s Only a Paper Crane

by coolbyrne

Summary

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AUTHOR: coolbyrne

RATING: K

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A/N: I wanted to do a story about Jane’s physical therapy after Hoyt, and this idea originally started out with Jane knowing sign language. But for whatever reason, this origami idea found its way into my head and I really wanted to write it. I hope you really want to read it. My beta reader, RomanMachine, has decided to make 1000 cranes. I told her I’d write a sequel if she does. I will patiently wait…

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“Look out, here it comes!” Jane playfully warned as she directed the paper bird towards the young boy sitting on her lap. “It’s gonna get you!” TJ reached out and grabbed his attacker with a small
chubby hand. “Oh! Godzilla TJ has destroyed the crane! Boston is safe again. Good job, buddy.”

Maura took a sip of her coffee. “I’m not entirely familiar with the Godzilla story, but I’m fairly certain Godzilla destroys the city.”

“Yeah, but that’s Tokyo. Godzilla would fall in love with Boston so much, he’d protect the city, wouldn’t he, TJ?” She punctuated her question with a raspberry to the child’s neck that made him giggle. Reaching over for another piece of paper, she adjusted the boy on her lap and bracketed him with her arms. “Watch,” she told him.

The small granite island was the perfect surface for the job, and both TJ and Maura watched intently as Jane smoothed out the piece of paper and began folding. Lengthwise and widthwise. Diagonally from right corner to left, and left corner to right. A fold. Another fold. Crisp edges and sharp points. Over and over. Jane kissed the side of TJ’s head.

“You really are watching, aren’t you, little guy?”

“It’s quite enthralling,” Maura admitted.

Jane raised her eyes across the island and smirked. Her attention back to the infant, she said, “Not as enthralling as your foot though, huh?” He looked up at her, foot in mouth, smiling as if he understood. Jane soon discovered the real reason behind the smile. “Oh, God, TJ!” she pulled her head back sharply and pressed the back of her hand to her nose. “Good thing Nonna’s gonna be here soon.”

“Jane!” Maura admonished.

She looked at the blonde. “What?” Her attention returning to TJ, she said, “The advantage of being the super awesome aunt is, I get to spoil you, tickle you, and make paper cranes for you.” Her sing-song voice elicited a gurgle of laughter. “Then I get to give you back. Isn’t that right?” she asked as she nuzzled his neck.

“Isn’t what right?”

Angela’s voice came from behind Jane, who turned in her seat and immediately handed over her nephew. “Saved by Nonna.”

The older woman frowned in confusion, but was temporarily distracted by the squirming happy child in her arms. “How’s my grandson?” she asked softly into his hair. The sweet scent of baby didn’t last long. “Oh!” she exclaimed, holding out the boy at arms length. Sternly, she narrowed her gaze at her daughter. “Jane! How could you?”

With a look of well-practiced innocence, Jane said, “It must’ve just happened, Ma.”

“Mm-hmm,” Angela muttered, then looked at TJ. “Come on, sweetie. Let’s get you to Nonna’s and clean you up.”

“Bye, Ma. Bye, my little cutie.” She pinched both their cheeks.

“I’ll see you later, Maura,” Angela said, unimpressed at the gesture. Throwing a final glare at Jane, she added, “And you.”

As the older woman walked out, Jane silently mimicked, “And you.” She swiveled in her chair and rolled her eyes at Maura.
The blonde smiled and pushed Jane’s coffee towards her. “Where did you learn how to do that?”

Jane savoured the bitterness of the hot drink before replying, “Pawning off shitty jobs on Ma? No pun intended.” She waited for the smile she knew was forthcoming. “That is an art form years in the making.”

Maura shook her head and chuckled. “You know what I meant.” She motioned to the crane that had avoided destruction. “The origami.”

Jane gazed into her cup and held up her hands, showing front and back. “Physiotherapy.”

Maura glanced down. “I’m sorry.”

The brunette made a face and shrugged. It hadn’t been her intent to make Maura feel bad. The scars and their history were her issue, not Maura’s. “I was really impatient when it came to the therapy,” Jane began as way of apology. She smirked. “I’m sure you’ll find that surprising.”

“Very,” Maura deadpanned.

“Anyway, I got tired of the strength exercises. You can only squeeze a ball so many times, or pinch clay, you know? I wasn’t seeing results.”

“You were getting frustrated.”

“Yeah,” she whispered at the memory. “‘Why am I not getting any better?’”

“You were,” Maura replied.

“Not fast enough!” Jane laughed, readily admitting her impatience. She reached out for a piece of paper. “So my therapist recommended origami. She told me a story about cranes – anyone who folded 1000 would get their wish granted. I said, ‘I wish I could get out of this time-waster.’ She told me I had to make the cranes first. Zanzibar.”

“Senbazuru,” Maura warmly corrected. The two women smiled and she watched as Jane carefully folded. “I think I know where this is going,” the doctor said. “You tried to do them all in one night.”

Jane dropped her head to hide her blush. “It took me almost 20 minutes to fold one. I did 19 on the first day.”

“Jane!”

“Yeah, it was stupid. My hands were so sore the next day, all I wanted to do was cry.” Maura reached across the counter top and squeezed Jane’s forearm at the admission. “And that’s when Jane Rizzoli found patience.” The brunette looked up with a smile.

“And when did Jane Rizzoli misplace it again?”

“Oh, snap!” Jane drolled, and set the crane on the smooth granite.

Maura gently took it, as if it were a fragile thing. “It’s lovely.”

Jane made a face, deflecting the praise. “It’s just origami, Maura.”

“It’s craftsmanship,” she countered. “And it’s lovely.”

“You are all about the craftsmanship,” Jane admitted as she watched her over the rim of her cup.
Maura held the crane in her palm, and inspected it from all angles. “Did you ever finish them? The 1000, I mean?”

Jane smiled at the question. “The last time I checked, they were still hanging in the physio wing of Boston General. That’s how I finally got out of it.” Seeing Maura’s questioning gaze, she reminded her, “The wish. I wished I could be finished with therapy. My therapist said if I made 1000 cranes, I’d get my wish.”

“No, no,” Maura objected. “That’s not how it works. You make the cranes, then make your wish. It’s the reward you’re given after the work. It would be like… making a wish, then rubbing the magic lamp.” Jane stared at her in disbelief. “Besides, your release from therapy was inevitable. You’re owed a wish.”

“What? No. Maura,” she said. “It was a joke. It was a challenge that helped me get my hands working again.”

Maura sat back and shook her head. “I don’t feel comfortable circumventing the legend. I think it’s bad luck.”

Jane crossed her arms. “You don’t believe in luck.”

“Well…” she stammered, “I’m still not comfortable appropriating another culture’s custom for our own benefit and not doing it correctly.”

“You are crazy,” Jane told her. Realizing Maura was adamant in her position, she sighed. “Fine. What do you suggest we do about it?”

Maura seemed to give the question some thought. “I suppose we can’t really fix the original challenge. Perhaps we could consider it void, as it wasn’t properly worded.”

Jane rolled her eyes. “Somehow, we’ve turned an innocent Japanese legend into a breach of contract.”

“So I propose,” she went, ignoring the brunette, “we re-start the challenge.”

“Sorry?”

“If you make 1000 cranes, I will grant you a wish.”

Jane blinked. “Sorry again?”

Maura beamed and clapped her hands. “It’s settled, then.”

“What? What is settled, Maura??”

The blonde sighed and spoke slower. “You make me 1000 cranes. I will grant whatever wish is in my power to give you.” She heard her words and clarified, “You. A wish for you alone.”

“So no transferring of the wish to someone else- what am I saying?” Jane threw her hands up in the air. “Why does it sound like I’m agreeing to this?”

Maura stood and stretched. “All this talk about Japanese culture makes me want sushi. I’ve been dying to try that new place on Dartmouth Street. Give me a minute to freshen up.”

Like a whirlwind, she was gone, and Jane was left wondering what the hell just happened.
“Good morning, Susie,” Maura greeted as she entered the morgue. “You’re early.”

The young criminalist beamed. “I know you wanted those toxicology reports rushed on the John Doe that came in yesterday. The results are on your desk if you’d like me to get them?”

“No, that’s fine. I’ll have a look.” She made her way to her office, but not before praising her best worker. “Thank you, Susie.”

With an arm full of files and another pushing against the door, she entered the room and nudged the door closed with her foot. As she went to put the folders down, she saw it.

There, in the middle of her desk, at 8 o’clock in the morning, was a colourful origami box. Written on the top, in handwriting that Maura knew well, were the words, ‘Open me’. She looked out the glass that separated her office and the morgue, wondering if Jane was watching. When she didn’t see the familiar shock of dark brown hair, her attention returned to the invitation. Carefully, she undid the top flap and peered inside. She let out a quiet, “Oh!” when she discovered what was inside. Carefully, she pulled out a small blue crane that nestled in the palm of her hand. Her eyes lit up and a smile spread across her face.

Jane.

As she admired the delicate art, something else caught her eye. Slowly, she unfolded the box and discovered a note.

11 down, 989 to go.

I hope you know what you got yourself into.

Maura’s smile grew even wider, then she realized the implication. 11 down. She had one in her hand. Where were the others? There. In the corner of the room, attached with string, hung 10 blue cranes.

…..end.

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