

Retrouvaille

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Retrouvaille

by [HidingBehindAGlassWall](#)

Summary

Kelly steps forward on a shaky leg, revealing a sight that rips a gasp from Magna's chest.

For a moment everything stops, her heart, her breath. Everything around her fades as her mind scrambles to comprehend the sight before her.

Because there, standing across from them in the dark, is someone she thought lost to them, to her. Someone whose grip still ghosts her hand, whose loss has weighed on her shoulders far heavier than any for a long time.

Someone Magna would recognise anywhere.

Connie.

AKA the 11x06 Connie and Magna reunion that we never got to see bc the show is rude

Notes

taps mic anyone out there?

Raise your hand if you're pissed this scene got cut, yeah me too.

It's been a long time since I've written and so apologies for the fact I'm a little rusty and this fic isn't quite up to par with my old stuff, but alas we move.

Oh and incase it isn't clear enough, speech written in italics is being said in sign

Enjoy

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“Look!” Kelly’s voice from ahead breaks the quiet that has long since settled across the group.

She turns back to face Carol, Rosita, and Magna who have been following her through the trees, the ever present look of hope in her eye growing.

Magna’s brow creases as she sees the younger girl pointing into the foggy night. However, shifting her gaze to follow the direction of Kelly’s arm line, her eyes widen as they settle on what appears to be a destitute house in the far distance ahead of them.

A shiver runs down her spine.

Harrowing echoes of sickos and *god knows what else* ripple through the night air. It’s cold and eerie, and she’s fleetingly taken back to terrifying memories of being trapped in Alpha’s horde.

Tightening her grip on her warhammer, Magna glances down to her thigh harness in order to ensure each of her knives are still in place. She finds a strange reassurance in their presence, although she can’t help but grimace as she spots, *now dried*, blood splattering the handle of her favourite.

Their group has been travelling since the morning and, whilst she would never voice her complaints aloud, Magna is tired and weary.

Panicked adrenaline still pumps through her veins courtesy of her fear at Kelly’s absence earlier this morning, and when mixed with the heavy burden of guilt and shame already weighing on her shoulders, it’s draining to say the least.

Night has long since fallen from Kelly’s revelation and yet their group of four shows no sign of stopping. A renewed hopeful energy has been surging between them since Kelly’s discovery of her sister’s notebook.

Magna regards the youngest member of her family as her little sister, someone she will do anything to protect and someone she now has sole responsibility for, considering the rest of their family are scattered further away from them than they’ve ever been.

A sigh heaves from her lips as Magna’s shoulders sag. She lifts her gaze from her knives and finds herself drawn to Carol’s blade reflecting the moonlight as the older woman stares into the distance at the house.

She watches as Carol inhales a sharp gasp. Desperation practically reeks from the other woman’s frame, as it has done since long before they began their search.

Magna’s mind is cast back to the day their group of four went searching for Alexandria’s lost horses. She thinks of Carol and her need to carry on, her refusal to give in, her determination to find *something, anything*.

It'd been hard to witness her clinging to the fraying thread of hope, especially considering Magna was painfully aware that in actuality it wasn't about the horses.

It was never about the horses.

Torment. Anguish. Self hatred.

Magna can see it all rippling within Carol's eyes. Sorrow clings to her heart, grief claws at her back. The burden of all that's happened is weighing heavily on her shoulders.

And Magna knows it's not there without due cause. She's more than aware that the Devil's whisperings from its perch on the older woman's shoulder have led to more than enough damage for this lifetime.

Hell, she should know, she's one of the ones dragged into the fray.

But Magna is also all too aware of the sheer torment and loss clinging to the other woman's frame, of the harrowing thoughts that echo through her mind in the early hours of the night, of the regret rippling through her.

She's aware because she's been there.

More than once.

Even now, all these years later, the sobs of her baby cousin still echo through her ears. After all this time, Magna is still haunted by the younger girl's pained recounting of the heinous act so cruelly done to her.

She still wakes breathless in the middle of the night, chest heaving and heart pounding, as her mind forces her back to memories of her time in jail.

*Her heart still aches - even if she tries to pretend it doesn't - at the knowledge the woman she loves is god knows where , doing god knows what. That she may never get the chance to see her again, to hug her again. To tell her she loves her; **will always love her.***

Let alone make up for her decades long lie, a secret kept without malicious intent but that caused no end of hurt nonetheless.

The horde still haunts her, flashing through her mind both in sleep and consciousness. The sounds of the sickos still tear through her ears, the feeling of Connie's grip falling from hers still ghosts her palm.

When Yumiko had been here, she'd been able to provide at least some comfort from her tormenting nightmares, holding her close at night, a soft caress of her cheek in the day. But then she too had left, and Magna found herself once again alone whilst surrounded by the never ending horrors of this new world.

Miko had made it bearable, as she always had. She'd given her strength and the nurture Magna had spent her life seeking.

And now she was gone without any way of Magna knowing if she'd ever see her again.

Just like Luke.

And Bernie.

And Connie.

*There's a heaviness clinging to Carol's frame and it's obvious to them all. It's been there since the cave - no, since **Henry**. Since Alpha brutally murdered her son and left his head on a pike for all to see.*

A shudder ripples down Magna's spine as she thinks of Miko recounting the horror she'd seen whilst she'd sobbed in her arms later that fateful night.

Her heart pangs as she thinks of all the people they'd lost.

Enid.

Henry.

Tara.

And even now, watching Carol so determined to find these horses, so hell bent on convincing herself that Connie is somehow alive and out there, it creates an ache in Magna's chest.

*For standing in front of them after attempt **fuck knows what**, it's clear to them all that Carol will not stop.*

*She **will not** give in.*

And it's not like Magna herself isn't yearning for Connie's return. It's not as if she's stopped waking in the night, gasping her name. It's not as if she no longer spends her days searching for any trace, any sign that she's still out there.

It's not as if she's given up hope of ever seeing her sister again.

No, she would give anything to have her back, to have Connie's hand in her own once more.

But Magna doesn't just have herself to think about. She has to look out for Kelly, has to do what's best for her, what's right by her.

But no matter how badly Magna wants to believe Connie is out there and will be returned to them soon, she can't allow herself to lean into her hope. She can't take comfort from the thought of 'what if'.

She can't allow anything to lead Kelly on, to make worse the already devastating blow if their hopefulness ends up being nothing more than wishful thinking.

If Connie never returns to them.

Magna is all too aware of the resentment held within her heart for Carol, of the ache that surges through her chest every time she looks at her and is reminded that Connie has yet to come home.

*Every time their eyes meet, Magna's taken back to the feeling of the cave crashing down around the two of them, of Connie's fingers slipping from her own. Even her mere presence is enough to remind her that whilst Carol stands here safe and sound after the damage she caused, Connie has now been - at best - alone out there for **weeks**.*

But right now, watching Carol crumble before their group, Magna can't find it in herself to hold onto her resentment, not really.

For underneath her bravado of anger and toughness, Magna knows - and the few she allows close to her - that she is actually softer than most. She cares, perhaps too much, doing whatever she must to protect her loved ones with a loyalty knowing no bounds for the family she's finally found, after spending her entire childhood wishing for one.

*And whilst the other members of Magna's family of five will **always** hold more importance than anyone or anything else in her life, she cannot stand by as Carol shatters.*

"Alexandria needed these horses yesterday."

As Carol turns away again, Magna knows it's up to her to help. It's up to her to alleviate even but a shred of the other woman's guilt. Because no one else here can, no one else here has the gravitas when it comes to Carol's torment.

For Magna's not unknowing of the anguish held within Carol's eyes every time they fall on her, not unaware that the guilt burdening her shoulders isn't reserved for Connie alone.

Which is why, watching her shoulders droop ever heavier as she walks away, Magna calls out to her, "Carol."

At the sound of her name Carol turns back to face the group once more, and, drawing in a breath, Magna steps towards her.

And Magna would be lying if she said the look of weariness that ghosts across the older woman's face at her approach doesn't cause a pang in her chest. Carol looks almost nervous at her advancement, as if she expects the very worst from Magna.

*But then again, Magna supposes that's what everyone expects from her, has **always** expected from her.*

*Apart from one, **apart from Miko**.*

But then again, Magna isn't too sure she can even say that anymore.

She continues undeterred towards the older woman, and before Carol can protest, Magna is wrapping her arms around her frame, holding onto her tightly.

It takes a second, but eventually a heavy sigh falls from Carol's lips and Magna feels the other woman's body sag against her own, arms wrapping around her.

And, for but a moment, the despair oozing from Carol's body isn't as harsh, her panic isn't as rife, and it's almost as if an unspoken acceptance passes over them.

Carol had tried to apologise to her once, for what happened in the cave, but it was too soon after the tower, too soon after Miko left, and Magna didn't have it in her to even hear the other woman out.

*But now, having come to accept that what happened **happened**, even if she's still burdened with guilt and shame at her lonesome return, Magna finds she has it in her now.*

She closes her eyes as the moment takes hold of them both. Remorse mixes with forgiveness in the air around them, and both women know this is the moment of change between them. This is the moment they begin to truly come back together as family.

*Carol's fingers grip her jacket tightly as her voice ghosts over Magna's ear, too quiet for the others to hear, "I'm so sorry." Her breath hitches and Magna can **feel** the honesty rife within her tone, the regret, the anguish, and she knows that the woman in her arms truly means it.*

Magna nods slightly and tightens her hold, her own voice barely above a whisper, "I forgive you."

She doesn't say that it's okay, because it's not, and whilst Magna may be ready to hear her apology and forgive Carol for the damage done to her personally, she doesn't know if okay is something it will ever be.

*But then again, it wasn't Carol's hand that Connie's slipped from, it wasn't Carol who lost her. It wasn't Carol who had to face her family, to face **Kelly** and tell her that her sister was gone.*

*No, it was **her**.*

And Magna doesn't blame Carol nearly as much as she blames herself.

When they pull away, Magna hopes her forgiveness will be enough to quell some of the heaviness weighing on Carol. That she'll hear their concerns and together they'll head back home and try again for the horses tomorrow.

However, Carol only smiles weakly at her before turning away again.

Magna reaches towards her, her hand wrapping around Carol's arm, and attempts once again to convince her to call it a day, "let's go home."

*But when her words are ignored, Magna knows there will be no stopping Carol, knows the older woman **will not** cease until she finds what she's looking for.*

Although at this point Magna isn't sure that what Carol is searching for can be found, for she herself knows perhaps better than anyone, that the weight of guilt and loss is not one that can be easily lifted.

For even if they do find Connie, Magna knows the burden weighing on her own shoulders will be there for a long time to come.

Turning back to meet the gaze of Kelly and Rosita, Magna knows they cannot allow Carol to continue alone. Tilting her head in gesture for them to follow, she sighs a quiet 'come on', before turning to head after their friend.

The snapping of a branch underfoot brings Magna's mind back to their current predicament. Her eyes widen as she takes in the sight of what lies before them.

They've drawn close enough to the building to see that it is definitely a house. It's derelict and crumbling, as are most they come across these days, but standing nonetheless.

But it's not the house that's causing her skin to prickle, it's what surrounds it.

A group of sickos are clawing frantically at the front door whilst others roam across the yard to join them, all clearly having been drawn to the building by the sounds echoing from it.

And it's not the sound of more sickos. Even if not for her time surrounded by them in the horde, Magna is more than aware of their timbre.

No, it's the sound of something not quite human yet not quite animal.

It's the sound of hunger and desperation, growls and groans.

It's the sound of something dark and threatening. The sound that echoes across nightmares from the darkest corners of one's mind.

It's the sound of something terrifying.

Feral.

And yet there's something else too, a shriek of sorts. A noise of panic, of fear.

A sound that is most definitely *human*.

Kelly turns back to her and the others, eyes wide. The look on her face tells Magna that she knows, *she knows* they have to get into that house, *knows* what they might find, *who* they might find.

Carol and Rosita turn to her then, and Magna becomes aware they're looking to her to see if she'll indulge Kelly with this obviously dangerous need.

But the thing is, Kelly isn't the only one drawn to the house. For Magna too is unable to ignore the way her body pulls her towards the crumbling building. Her gut is begging her to follow her intuition. Her mind is pleading with her to open the door and reveal what is lying in wait for them.

For as much as Kelly can sense there's something important inside the building ahead of them, *Magna knows too*.

A single nod from her is all it takes for Carol, Rosita, and Kelly to turn back towards the house.

They move towards the sickos roaming the yard, weapons at the ready, the plan already silently formed between them thanks to the many encounters they've already dealt with together. By now their group works like a well oiled machine, each of them working in sync with the other, playing to their strengths, defending each other's weaknesses.

It's Kelly who strikes first, slingshot having been aimed and ready the second Magna had given the go ahead. Magna's own grip tightens around her warhammer before lifting it and plunging it into the skull of an advancing sicko to her right whilst Carol and Rosita each take on a sicko of their own further ahead of her.

As the four of them advance towards the house, taking down sickos as they go, they're aware of the commotion inside growing louder, more desperate, *more frantic*.

A grunt from Rosita echoes across the yard and Magna's gaze finds her just in time to watch her pull her weapon from the skull of a now lifeless body on the ground.

Movement catches her eye and Magna looks over just in time to see the front door open and sickos pile into the house. Her gaze shifts to Kelly ahead of her and she feels a panic rise in her chest that should whatever in the house escape, she won't be able to get to the younger woman in time to protect her.

A groan to her right pulls Magna's attention away from Kelly, and instinctively her fingers are tightening around the handle of one of the knives strapped to her thigh. In one swift movement she throws it and watches the blade fly through the air before sinking into the skull of her target, her aim true as always.

She turns her attention back towards Kelly, desperately needing to ensure her safety, to keep the guilt ridden promise whispered into the early hours of the morning in desperate hope that somehow Connie would hear it and know her little sister will be protected at all costs.

But Kelly is still.

She's completely unmoving, standing rooted to the spot, staring ahead at something Magna cannot yet see.

At first she panics, thinking the woman she sees as a sister is hurt, that perhaps a sicko had gotten too close for comfort and has left her shaken and defenceless.

But before she can rush to her, Kelly steps forward on a shaky leg, revealing a sight that rips a gasp from Magna's chest.

For a moment everything stops, her heart, her breath. Everything around her fades as her mind scrambles to comprehend the sight before her.

Because there, standing across from them in the dark, is someone she thought lost to them, to her. Someone whose grip still ghosts her hand, whose loss has weighed on her shoulders far heavier than any for a long time.

Someone Magna would recognise anywhere.

Connie.

Kelly stumbles forward as if almost dazed, and Magna knows that like her, she too is trying to figure out if this is real. If her sister truly is here or if her mind is using her desperation to concoct a cruel figment of imagination amidst her exhaustion.

But then Kelly is pulled lovingly into Connie's arms and Magna knows this is real, knows it isn't a lie.

Connie truly is here, alive and returned to them.

She watches as the two sisters hold each other, their embrace fierce yet also filled with tenderness. Sobs fill the air, replacing the groans teeming within it only minutes before.

Tears stream down her cheeks and her heart pounds within her chest as she is reminded of the sheer terror that had gripped her weeks before, of the torment that still holds her in its clutches.

The last time she'd seen Connie they'd been clinging to each other terrified as they'd tried their hardest to imitate the dead surrounding them, Magna desperately trying to lead them through the sickos, attempting to navigate their way home.

Their hands gripping each other's impossibly tight.

*Until they **hadn't**.*

Until Connie's grasp had slipped from her own and Magna was helpless to do anything about it, unable to allow the panic in her chest to show. Until she'd been rendered powerless to stop and search for Connie for terrifying fear that even the slightest slip of the facade would have brought tens of thousands of sickos down on her.

Even once she'd managed to escape the horde, Magna had spent *days* searching for Connie. She'd spent days following the sickos from the sidelines in hopes of spotting her, days leaving as many signs for Connie to find her as possible.

But it had been to no avail and Magna had known she couldn't stay out there forever, known she had to make her way back to Hilltop. Her journey home had been spent devising

countless plans of action, thinking of numerous ways she would rally the others to go out and find Connie.

Trying to come up with how she was going to break the news to Kelly.

But all that had gone to shit when she'd arrived at Hilltop only to find it on fire and overrun.

Walking through the gates to see Miko fighting with every last shred of strength, watching as her eyes had filled with horror upon seeing her and instantly thinking the worst, had crumbled the final remaining pieces of Magna's already shattered heart.

She blinks away her memory and focuses on the sight before her, the sisters clinging to each other, just as she and Connie had.

Except now, they don't shake from terror, but relief. Their tears aren't born of sorrow but joy. Their embrace isn't filled with pain, but love.

A thud brings Magna out of her daze and her focus is pulled to Rosita, who has moved to the doorway of the house and plunged her blade into the sicko attempting to leave.

Her eyes fall upon the bodies littering the floor inside the house. Some are clearly sickos, but there are others too.

Others that remind her these days, being alive doesn't necessarily mean being human.

Knowing that, thanks to Rosita, there is no longer any threat to them or this crucial moment, Magna pulls her attention away from the gruesome sight and back to the sisters reuniting before her. Her lips twist upwards at seeing them finally reunited after weeks of uncertain separation.

Tears continue to stream down her cheeks and Magna closes her eyes as she lifts her hand to hastily wipe them away.

Her movement however, draws attention and upon opening her eyes again, she finds Connie looking directly at her.

Magna sucks in a gasp at the sheer warmth held within them.

The joy, the relief, the love, *the forgiveness*.

And Magna wants *oh so desperately* to run to her, to wrap her up in her arms and never allow Connie from her sight ever again. She wants to beg for forgiveness, to plead her guilt and shame in the hopes it may be even a step towards repenting for losing her.

She wants to hold on tightly to her, to never let go as so she will always be certain they will never be without Connie ever again.

But Magna doesn't move.

She doesn't run to her.

She doesn't pull Connie into her grasp.

She wants to, *she yearns to*, but she *can't*.

For how dare she when she doesn't deserve to?

How can she when she's the reason Connie hasn't been with them all this time?

How can she even begin to pray for forgiveness for all Connie has suffered through alone?

How can she, after she failed her?

Whilst they are all skilled in many areas, everyone within their little family has a role: Luke keeps their spirits high, Miko is the voice of educated reason, Connie their moral compass and Kelly the one that keeps their family sane.

And Magna, she's the protector.

She's the one that looks out for them above all else. The one that does whatever necessary for their survival, even if deemed morally wrong or at detriment to herself. She keeps them safe at any cost, she looks out for them, *fights for them*.

Because Magna has *always* protected those she loves.

Except for when she didn't, *couldn't*.

First her cousin, and now Connie.

Magna is supposed to be the one who protects them, but she *failed*.

She failed Connie, she failed Kelly, she failed their family.

So whilst she desperately wants to rush forward and join the embrace, to be reunited with someone she sees as her sister, Magna *can't*.

She doesn't feel worthy enough to.

But as Connie's eyes stare into her own, Magna's mind swirls with confusion.

She failed, so why is Connie looking at her with such warmth, such love? How can it be that there is an understanding in her eye? How is it as if Connie knows she has been tormented with guilt and burdened with grief, as if she's more than aware of how Magna has held herself shamefully accountable for what happened?

Magna doesn't understand. She can't comprehend that Connie even wants her here, let alone is looking at her as if she's *glad to see her*.

Connie smiles at her knowingly before unwrapping one arm from around her sister to instead reach out towards her.

The very hand that slipped from Magna's grasp is now held out to her, beckoning her forwards to take it once again. Begging her to relieve herself from the weight clawing at her back and reunite with her family.

Magna's breath hitches and she takes a stumbling step backwards, her head shaking.

No, she can't, she doesn't deserve to, *it's her fault, **her failure.***

But then there's a hand on her back, steadying her, *supporting her.* Magna looks to her left to find Carol next to her, standing by her side.

As if sensing the storm raging within her mind, the older woman's lips twist upwards in a small smile of reassurance before Magna feels the hand on her back pushing her forward, gently but definitely.

With the push from Carol, Magna finally finds her feet and slowly but surely moves forwards towards Connie and Kelly.

The moment she's close enough, she lifts her hand to take hold of the one held out towards her.

The second their fingers meet, Connie pulls Magna into her and holds her tightly against her body. Magna wraps her right arm around her sister with a sob and her left lifts to wrap around Kelly, warhammer still in her hand, and the three of them cling together in a tight embrace.

Closing her eyes and causing more tears to spill, Magna drinks in the moment, committing to memory the feeling of her family back in her arms, back together after so long.

Air from her lungs rushes out in a sigh of relief. The ache in her heart releases, as if the stamp of blame has lifted its foot off ever so slightly off her chest. The whisperings of failure quieten as if the devil has released its claws from her body and the demons in her mind have been chased away.

And at long last, after bearing the crippling weight of her burden for so long, the grip of guilt is overcome with one of relief. The clutches of shame release her into the arms of love.

For standing there with family she thought lost, Magna feels almost whole again. Yes, Luke is at Oceanside now and Miko is further away from her than she's ever been, but feeling Connie's arm around her, holding her so tightly, Magna feels the shattered pieces of her heart begin to mend.

The three of them stand there for a while, none of them wanting to end their embrace. Eventually though, Connie pulls back and releases her grip on both her and Kelly before lifting her hands to her sister's cheeks and pressing a gentle kiss to her forehead.

Magna moves to step away and allow them more time to reunite, but is stopped by Connie's hands moving to take her face in their hold. And when Connie's lips press tenderly against her own forehead, Magna's knees buckle.

A tormented sob rips from her chest as Connie pulls away and smiles at her with a warmth only her heart seems to possess. Her hands move to sign words that cause Magna's heart to jolt, *"I knew you'd make it back, I knew you'd find her and keep her safe."*

Kelly, who has stepped back knowing Magna needs this moment with Connie, translates her sister's words for Carol and Rosita. The three of them cannot ignore the pangs in their chests at the sheer guilt radiating from Magna's frame.

Magna's eyes blur as she signs back with hands as shaky as her voice, *"I'm so sorry-"*

But before she can finish Connie is cutting her off, taking hold of her hand to stop her, *"you have nothing to apologise for."*

However Magna only frowns, her brow creasing in confusion at how on earth the woman before her has possibly come to that conclusion. Her eyes fall to the floor in guilt as she makes her next gestures, her voice breaking as she speaks, *"but I failed you, I didn't protect you, I lost you..."*

Both Magna's words and movements cease as another sob rips from her throat at speaking the very words her demons have been sneering at her ever since Connie's grip fell from her own.

But Connie is having none of it. She's unwilling to bear witness to Magna's self hatred.

Shaking her head with a look of sheer certainty, Connie dips her head in order for her eyes to meet Magna's once again. *"That's not true, you protected me every second we were together. And I knew when you made it back you would protect my sister for me. It's what you do Magna, you protect people, you keep them safe."*

But her words do nothing to shake the self blame still rippling through Magna's heart. *"But I-"*

However Connie cuts her off again, her eyes pleading with Magna to believe her words, *"what happened wasn't your fault. You didn't do anything wrong, there is nothing for you to feel guilty for."*

Magna moves to speak again, but Connie knows it will only be words filled with torment and pain, and she cannot bear for the woman before her to carry this harrowing weight for even another second longer. *"You need to listen to me, you need to forgive yourself, because I don't blame you, not for one second. You didn't lose me Magna, you found me."*

Tears continue to flow down both their faces, and Magna finds she has no words left, so instead pulls Connie into her arms in attempt to express all she cannot find it within herself to say.

After allowing them to have their moment, Carol moves towards them. Her heart is heavy at their conversation - Kelly having continued to quietly translate her sister's words - and the torment rife within Magna's voice has rendered Carol unwilling to listen to her bear her pain any longer.

Once she reaches them, Carol places her hand on Magna's shoulder, causing the two women to pull apart. She draws in a deep breath, her eyes fixed on Magna's, "she's right. What happened wasn't your fault, and the only person that blames you is yourself. It wasn't on you Magna, and I know that because," Carol swallows, her throat thick with shame and turns to look at Connie, who is watching Magna's hands move in translation.

She sighs before continuing, "I know that because it was my fault. I was so consumed by my need for revenge, I lost sight of what truly mattered, and I-" she falters, her eyes falling to the floor, "I'm so sorry, to you both."

Connie's eyes lift from Magna's hands, the look on her face saying all she needs to.

For, in perhaps the purest display of humanity any of them have seen in a long time, Connie wordlessly pulls Carol into her arms without even the smallest shred of blame or anger.

There isn't an ounce of resentment, not a morsel of animosity held in Connie's grip. No, there is only understanding and forgiveness.

Magna takes in the pair before her, and nods to herself resolutely. For whilst Connie possesses perhaps the biggest heart she's ever known, Magna decides that if she who has suffered the most from the older woman's actions can truly forgive Carol, then she can fully too.

And if she can forgive Carol for all that happened, maybe, *just maybe*, she can begin to work on forgiving herself.

Magna steps forward then, joining the embrace, and Carol can't comprehend how or why, but she knows she is forgiven by them both. She knows that in spite of all they've endured, even with the lasting trauma they will both now carry for a long time to come, neither woman holds any resentment towards her, that she truly has been given redemption.

The three of them feel two more bodies add to their group as Kelly and Rosita join the embrace. All of them have tears streaming down their faces, each of them clinging to the other in a moment of sheer, pure humanity.

A groan echoes across the night and they jolt apart, each of them reaching for their weapons and eyeing their surroundings.

Connie frowns as she looks at the others springing into defence mode, however when her eyes fall to the body on the floor just behind her, she realises what must've happened.

Virgil writhes in pain on the ground, his blood soaked hands pressing tightly to his wounds, and Connie's eyes widen as she realises that he'd slipped her mind amidst the relief and emotions of seeing her family again.

She rushes to kneel by his side, drawing the attention of the others who join her, all of them weary.

Connie looks up at her sister, her hands moving frantically as Kelly voices her words to the others, “he found me and helped me, we got stuck in the house together and when those things attacked us he got hurt.”

Carol crouches beside Connie to survey Virgil’s wounds, “it looks like he’s been stabbed, he’s lost a lot of blood. We can patch him up here but he needs a doctor.”

Rosita slips her backpack from her shoulders and begins rifling through it to find the few medical supplies they’d managed to scramble together. She and Carol tend to Virgil’s wounds, bandaging them as best they can with the meagre provisions they have to hand.

Kelly however searches through Rosita’s pack until she finds a water bottle and presses it into Connie’s hand, who accepts it gratefully and drinks from it hastily, evidently having been without for a long time.

Once her thirst is quenched and Virgil has been patched up as best as possible, Connie hands the bottle to him to drink from whilst the others decide the best course of action.

Magna is listening to Carol and Rosita discuss the logistics of the six of them, including a badly injured Virgil, traveling back between four horses, when she senses movement to her side.

She turns to see Kelly looking up at her, but before Magna can say anything the younger woman beats her to it, “I knew we’d find her, I knew we’d get her back.”

And then, in a touch so tender, *so profound*, Kelly reaches up to trace her finger over Magna’s ear.

Magna’s heart thuds and fresh tears pool in her eyes. It’s not lost on her that Kelly’s action is reminiscent of the moment between them a few days ago. That the younger woman is once again reminding Magna of just how much she trusts her, of just how much faith she has in her.

A tear breaks through its barrier and runs down Magna’s cheek, however it’s caught by Kelly’s finger, moving from her ear to gently wipe it away.

Kelly wishes so desperately that in doing so she will wipe away some of the pain still lingering in the older woman’s heart, that she will be able to chase away the guilt still clinging to Magna’s shoulders. However, Kelly knows that in spite of her sister’s return, Magna will struggle to let go of the burden she’s been carrying, let alone the lasting terror of all she’s endured.

Eventually the plan is formed and both Virgil and Connie deem themselves rested enough to make the journey back.

They move slowly, Carol and Rosita supporting Virgil on either side, and together the six of them head towards where they’d left their horses.

They make their way in silence, each of them lost in their thoughts, still trying to comprehend all that has happened in the past few hours.

As she walks, Magna feels a presence beside her, and then a hand is slipping into her own, fingers clasping around it firmly, reassuringly.

It's the same hand that had fallen from her grasp amidst a time of nothing but terror and despair. The same hand that loss had caused her nothing but guilt and anguish.

Except there is no longer loss, but relief. No longer anguish but joy.

And Magna knows the burden of shame gripping her will not easily be released, knows that Connie's return does not mean the demons inside her mind will be instantly silenced.

No, she is more than aware that she has a long way to go to heal from the suffering she has endured. Magna knows her dreams will still be filled with harrowing memories and their family is still missing members. She knows that Connie's lack of blame towards her does not beget the blame she's placed on herself.

But Magna finds that as she walks with Connie by her side, her breath comes a little easier, that the burdening weight of guilt upon her shoulders rests a little less heavily.

No, the only thing that grips Magna now is the hand held within her own. A hand that had once been lost, but is now returned.

A hand of forgiveness, of love, of family, of home.

Fin.

End Notes

Hope you enjoyed, leave a comment or a kudos if you feel inclined, it would be greatly appreciated!

Oh and to anyone here that read(s) my old stuff and is wondering if I'll ever go back to/finish them, yeaah no soz about it

Until (maybe) next time

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!