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Synopsis: Amanda and her family are relocated to another part of the country after being threatened.

Double Negative

Fallsburg, New Hampshire normally a sleepy little town was geared up to welcome home its most celebrated native. Princess Celana Charisee Khan (the former Penelope Squire) was to make a one-day stopover in Fallsburg during this her second trip back to the States since her marriage to the prince of Zaqir. A brief welcoming ceremony with the mayor was to be followed by a luncheon with prominent locals. Finally an informal garden party was scheduled for the afternoon.

Penelope was feeling more than a little exhausted by late afternoon. The pace during the previous few days had been strenuous and today it seemed that everyone in Fallsburg wanted to come out to see her.

She slipped away from the crowd for a few moments' peace. Rounding a hedge she nearly ran into someone else taking refuge there. Glancing up she realized that the person was no stranger to her.

"Amanda? Amanda King? What are you doing here in Fallsburg? And why are you hiding back here?"

"Penelope, please. I can explain. But don't call me Amanda. I'm not supposed to be here."

One of Penelope's body guards came around the corner. "Your Highness, is everything alright?"

"Of course. I was just talking to an old high school friend of mine - Suzie Tompkins. Could we have some privacy please?" The body guard left.

"Thanks," Amanda said.

"Okay, let's hear your explanation. Why can't I call you Amanda? And why aren't you in Washington? I thought I might see you there in a few days. I'm flying there tonight to meet up with Rheza."

"It's kind of a long story. You remember I was working for the Agency?"

Penelope nodded.

"Well about six months ago an assignment went very badly. An agent was killed and an attempt made on my family so the decision was made to relocate us - give us new identities, the whole works."

"So you live in New Hampshire now?"

"No, I drove in today - don't ask from where. I read in the paper that you and Rheza were coming to the States and that you would be here today. I knew I shouldn't but I couldn't resist the temptation to see someone who had been part of my old life."

"As I said, I'm going to Washington tonight. I'm sure the Agency will be providing some of the security. Is there anyone you want me to pass a message to?"

"I really shouldn't. It would be totally against the rules. Of course so is this."

Both women smiled.

"What about that agent I used to tease you about - Mr Stetson. Weren't you two involved?"

Amanda blinked quickly to hold back tears. "Lee was the agent killed in the assignment six months ago."

"Oh Amanda, I'm so sorry."

"It's okay. I'm okay. It's just that Lee and I were partners and..."

"And..."

"And yes we were in love. I've never felt that way about anyone else. I still can't believe he's gone."

Penelope gave Amanda a quick hug. "Oh Amanda."

"I'm sorry I'm such a mess. But Lee was such a big part of me. And now there's just this empty hole. I loved him so much."

"And there's no one else I can contact for you?"

"Well if you see Billy Melrose just tell him I miss everyone and that I'm okay. Or as okay as I can be right now. He was my section chief."

"Sure."

The next evening a small dinner party was held at the Zaqireze Embassy in Washington. Penelope and Rheza went down to the dining hall about half an hour before the first guests were to arrive. Their protocol liaison introduced them to Francine Desmond, the agent in charge of security for their visit.

Francine was in her element, mingling with ambassadors and royalty. This arrangement suited her much better than the one during the previous visit of the royal couple. Back then Francine had played a background role while that tiresome Amanda King got all the glory.

Francine was reviewing the security arrangements for the next evening's reception when Lee Stetson showed up at the embassy. "So how is everything going Francine?"

"Lee what are you doing here? Isn't this your night off?"

"I know, but I thought I'd stop by."

Lee looked over to where the Prince and Princess were chatting with several people. He really didn't know why he had come - except that Penelope had been so fond of Amanda when they had met four years earlier. Somehow he felt closer to Amanda just seeing someone else who had appreciated her.

At that moment Penelope glanced over, saw Lee and paled. When Lee started to walk towards her, she quickly excused herself and darted away.

Francine saw this and fearing that the Princess was going to pull her notorious disappearing act followed her out into the hall. "Your Highness," she called.

Penelope turned.

"Is everything okay?"

"Yes, it's just I had a bit of a shock. I didn't expect to see Lee Stetson. Someone told me he was dead." Penelope stumbled a bit over the last word.

"Well they got their facts slightly mixed. His partner, Amanda King was killed six months ago."

"Weren't they involved?"

"In a manner of speaking, I guess you could call it that." Francine had never thought very highly of Lee and Amanda's relationship.

Penelope turned away, her anger at Lee growing. Apparently he had conveniently arranged for Amanda to be moved somewhere else when he got tired of her. Amanda was honestly mourning Lee's supposed death while he callously tossed her aside and went on with his life in Washington.

The next day Lee was on escort duty for the Princess as she attended several functions. He was surprised at the change in her - aloofness bordering on coldness, bordering on rudeness at times. Four years earlier she had been a much more open and friendly person.

By midafternoon he realized that she was still open and friendly - to everyone else. Her coldness seemed to be directed specifically at him.

When they arrived back at the embassy, Lee asked Penelope, "Your Highness, may I speak to you for a moment please?"

"Certainly."

"Is there something wrong?"

"No," she said shortly.

"Then have I done something to offend you?"

Cold, hostile eyes looked back at Lee. "Why don't you ask Amanda?"

"Amanda? She's... dead. I thought you knew."

"And you're just torn apart about that aren't you?" Penelope asked sarcastically.

"Is that what this is all about? You think I didn't care about Amanda?" Lee began to raise his voice.

"Oh I'm sure you cared about her. I just don't think you care anymore."

"She was the best thing that ever happened to me. When she died part of me died too. I can't tell you how many times I've wished that I had been killed instead of her."

"Save it for someone who doesn't know the truth. And could you please have the Agency send someone else to the reception tonight in your place? I don't think I ever want to see you again." Penelope spat the words at him, then turned and walked into the embassy.

Lee attempted to follow her but was blocked by two body guards. He returned to the Agency and explained to Billy what had happened. "Billy you should have seen

her," he concluded. "Talk about if looks could kill. There is definitely something strange going on."

"Well until we figure out what it is you'd better stay away from the Princess. And since I haven't got anyone else available tonight I'm going to have to go to the Embassy reception."

When Billy arrived at the Embassy that evening Francine introduced him to the Prince and Princess. "Your Highnesses, may I present William Melrose, head of my section at the Agency. Billy, the Prince and Princess of Zaqir."

"Pleased to meet you," Rheza said.

"Mr Melrose," Penelope offered a dazzling smile, recognizing the name of Amanda's friend. Billy found it hard to believe that this was the same woman who had been so angry with Lee just a few hours before.

Later in the evening Penelope walked over to where Billy was standing. "Your Highness," he greeted her.

"Mr Melrose," she spoke quietly so as not to be overheard, "I just wanted to deliver a message from an old friend of yours. Don't ask me how I know this but Amanda King wanted you to know that she's okay and that she misses you."

Billy looked at her blankly. "But Amanda King is dead."

"It's okay - I know the truth. I saw her a few days ago."

"What are you talking about? Amanda really is dead."

"I know that's what everyone is supposed to think. But wherever she was relocated to was close enough to Fallsburg for her to come and see me."

"Your Highness you don't understand. I'm not giving you a cover story."

Penelope stared at him. "I think we need to talk."

PART TWO

Lee sat in the den of 4247 Maplewood Drive, his head in his hands. At times he felt it had been a mistake to have had the Agency buy Amanda's house for use as a safe house. And yet it was a tangible reminder of what they had had together. Every time he walked in he half expected her to be there. He had stopped coming in the back door altogether - too many memories. Some days it seemed impossible that he would never see her again. At other times he felt as if those days when they were so happy together were years in the past.

Lee's mind wandered back to that morning five months earlier when he had awakened to find himself in a hospital room. He had been drifting in and out of consciousness for a few days but this was the first time he fully came to. "Amanda?" he called out as his eyes began to focus.

"Lee." But it was Billy not Amanda who answered him. "How do you feel?"

"Like the bad end of a train wreck. Where am I? And where's Amanda?"

"You're in Galilee General Hospital. Do you remember what happened?"

Lee fought his way through the fog and tried to concentrate. "We were investigating a microchip smuggling ring. Someone was getting stuff to the Mideast. An agent from the Justice Department was working with us. Grant... Grant..." Lee groped for the name. "Steven Grant."

"Right," Billy confirmed. "Anything else?"

"We followed a suspect to a warehouse. There was an explosion... Where's Amanda? Is she alright?" Lee struggled to get up.

Billy held him back. "Lee take it easy. You've just come out of a coma."

"Where's Amanda? How long have I been out?"

"Lee just relax and I'll tell you everything. You were in the coma for four weeks."

"Four weeks? And what about Amanda?"

"Amanda wasn't hurt in that explosion. She and Grant kept investigating the smuggling ring - when she wasn't here with you."

"Then where is she now? Billy tell me," Lee pleaded, a cold knot of fear beginning to form in his stomach.

"A week after the warehouse incident there was another bombing. Or rather several bombings. First one at Amanda's house - her garage was destroyed. Then Grant's apartment. Next a bomb scare at Amanda's sons' school. Luckily it was a false alarm that time. And then..." Billy stopped, unable to meet Lee's eyes.

Lee looked at Billy, every instinct he had telling him he didn't want to hear the rest of that sentence. "And then..." he prompted slowly.

"Amanda and Grant received another tip about a possible location of the smuggling ring. This time Grant checked the exterior of the building while Amanda stayed in her car and called for backup. They thought there might be another bomb and they didn't want to take any chances. Amanda was on the phone with me when there was another explosion. But a car bomb this time." Billy swallowed hard. "Lee I'm so sorry. Amanda was killed instantly."

Lee turned away from Billy. "Could you leave me alone for a while. Please."

When Billy returned later Lee seemed to have regained his composure. But the look in his eyes...

"Lee are you okay? I probably shouldn't have told you so soon. But there didn't seem to be any point in hiding the truth."

"How are Amanda's mother and the boys?"

"There was another bomb threat at the boys' school the same day Amanda was killed. Only this time it wasn't a false alarm. The bomb squad diffused it in time but at that point Steven Grant suggested the family be relocated. Someone was

obviously turning this whole thing into a vendetta. I didn't like the idea much but it seemed to be necessary."

"So they're gone too. Just like that - I wake up this morning and my whole family is gone. Well it's not like I haven't been there before." Lee felt just like he had that day over thirty years earlier when he was told that his mother and father had been killed. He was all alone.

"What do you mean your family?" Billy asked.

"You might as well know the truth. At this point it isn't going to change anything. And besides Amanda and I talked about this once. If something happened to one of us the other should tell you the truth."

"And the truth is?"

"Amanda and I were married last February."

"Married? Why didn't you tell anyone?"

"We wanted to keep our family as safe as possible. The less anyone knew about our relationship the less risk there would be. Although given what's just happened it doesn't seem to have worked too well."

"I can't believe it," Billy said. "Lee, I never would have permitted the family to be moved if I had known."

"I know. I know." Lee's face suddenly crumpled as he lost control. "It's over. It's all over. Dotty and the boys are gone. Amanda's dead. What am I going to do without her? She was my whole life."

"She was an incredible person," Billy said. "You were fortunate to have met her. I remember the first time you brought her to the Agency."

"You knew how special she was right from the start." Lee smiled through his tears. "Once when Amanda and I were discussing the possibility of a regular wedding we had this huge argument over you."

"Over me?"

"Yeah - I wanted you to be my best man. Amanda wanted you to give her away. I argued that I had known you longer. Amanda said that you were her first friend at the Agency. You believed in her before anyone else did, even me."

"So who won the argument?"

"Oh I did. But Amanda got to be the one to personally deliver Francine her invitation to the wedding."

Billy smiled. "I would have loved to see the look on Francine's face. She never thought you and Amanda would end up together."

"Well neither did I at first. I was so blind. I had this incredible gift just handed to me and I couldn't see it."

"But you did fall in love with Amanda."

"Very slowly. Afterwards I couldn't understand why I fought it so long. It took me almost three years to realize I was in love with her."

A knock at the door jolted Lee back to the present day. Amanda had been dead for almost half a year. He was sitting there in her house all alone - just as he had been alone for the last five months. Just as he would always be alone. He knew he would never meet anyone like Amanda again. As he had said to Billy, it was all over.

Billy walked in the door. "When you weren't at home I thought I might find you here."

"Billy, what the Princess said this afternoon really shook me up. I haven't forgotten Amanda you know. But maybe it's time I started looking forward not back."

"Lee, I don't know how to say this. The reason the Princess was so angry was..."

"Was what?"

"She saw Amanda two days ago."

"WHAT?!" Lee leapt to his feet.

"Amanda showed up at some party the Princess was at."

"That's impossible. Amanda is dead."

"Apparently she was relocated with the rest of her family."

"To where?"

"I don't know. The Justice Department handled the relocation, remember. Since there were only civilians and no agents involved we handed it over to them. Of course we thought Amanda was dead."

"This is impossible. Amanda wouldn't just leave me," Lee said in a bewildered voice.

"Lee, Amanda thinks you're dead."

"But how?"

"You were in a coma remember. You almost were dead. They must have told her you didn't make it."

"Did the Princess find out where Amanda is living?"

"No, apparently Amanda was quite careful not to say anything too revealing. The only thing specific was that she had driven to Fallsburg that day. So that narrows it down to anywhere within an eight hour drive of New Hampshire. Not much help."

"What about the Justice Department? They know where she is."

"Well they're not talking. Lee they're in charge of the Witness Relocation Program. They're not exactly going to hand out information freely."

"Did they give you anything?"

"I had them fax over their copy of our original request for help in relocating the King family. I've also got our copy of the paper work. Look at this - we request that three people be relocated: Dotty West and her two grandsons. But their copy mentions **four** people. Someone obviously put a lot of time and effort into this."

"Billy at this moment I'm not interested in how it happened. We've got to find Amanda."

"Agreed. But if we can prove her family was never in any danger they may tell us where they are."

Lee thought out loud, "The whole scheme must have been engineered by someone who had access to both the Justice Department and the Agency. And someone whom Amanda trusted."

"Steven Grant," they said together.

"Billy you told me he was the eye witness to the bombing that killed Amanda - that supposedly killed Amanda. He was the one who said she was in the car when it blew up. He was the one who suggested the family be relocated. That lying son of a ... I'll kill him myself."

"Lee slow down. We need proof. But I have to admit it looks suspicious. After Amanda's 'death' and with you in a coma, our part in the investigation ended. The Justice Department took over the whole thing. And I'll just bet Grant hasn't made any progress since then."

"Then let's reopen our investigation. Only without telling the Justice Department this time."

PART THREE

The following Monday morning Amanda drove her two sons to school. She still felt very protective of them. The last half year had been a horrible strain on her whole family. Their new city still didn't feel like home.

Afterwards Amanda drove to a part of town where she normally didn't shop. She bought an out-of-town edition of a Washington paper at a newsstand and went to a coffee shop to read it. She didn't do that very often - she knew that part of her life was over and she should focus on the future. But after having talked to Penelope just a few days earlier she wanted to see if there was anything in the society pages about the royal visit.

There were three photographs from various weekend events - the royal couple together at an embassy dinner, Rheza at the White House with the president and Penelope walking from a limousine into a hotel for a charity luncheon. Amanda smiled as she looked at the pictures of her friend. Four years earlier Penelope had been worried about the state of her marriage. Judging from the expression on Rheza's face in the picture where he was looking at Penelope, everything was fine.

Four years earlier... Amanda thought back to when she first met the Princess. She had only been working at the Agency for a couple of months at that point and was still pretty intimidated by the whole place. And Lee had been driving her crazy, acting as if he was doing her this huge favour by letting her tag along on assignments and always making it clear that he'd rather be working with anyone else.

Those first few months had been pretty rough at times, especially when Amanda realized that she was falling in love with Lee. At first she thought it was just infatuation or hero worship but gradually she had to admit that it was the real thing. And if it was difficult for her to acknowledge her real feelings, Lee had been a thousand times worse. But he was worth it in the end. If only they could have had more time together...

Amanda sighed and was about to close the paper when someone in the background of one of the photographs caught her eye. It was the picture of

Penelope entering the hotel. Several bodyguards and security people stood around her. And one of them half hidden in the background looked like ... Lee? Amanda clutched the paper convulsively and looked more closely.

It was impossible. And yet it really looked like Lee. But Lee was dead. They must have used one of the file photos from the earlier visit, she thought. However she carefully tore the page from the paper, folded it up and put it in her purse.

That evening after dinner Amanda sat alone in her bedroom and took out the picture again. It had been preying on her mind all day. Now she examined it in detail using a magnifying glass. There was no doubt in her mind now; it was Lee. And Penelope was wearing the same coat Amanda had seen on her just a few days earlier. The picture had to be current.

So Lee was alive? But how? Amanda's mind reeled. What could have happened?

She thought back to the day the decision had been made to relocate her family. Everything was a jumble; the whole time had taken on the proportions of a nightmare. Lee had been in the hospital in a coma. She had been worried sick about him. And then the bombings - everyday some new disaster: her garage, Grant's apartment, the boys' school. And the car bomb - that had been a close call. She had been on the cell phone with Billy and had just gotten out of her car when it exploded. A few seconds earlier and she would have been killed.

It was later that same day that Grant told her Lee had died. She had immediately wanted to go to the hospital. But Grant explained about the second bomb threat at the school and moved them all to a Justice Department safe house.

"I should have insisted on speaking to Billy," she thought. "But I was so upset about Lee's death and so worried about the boys' safety that I could hardly think at all, let alone logically. So I just agreed to everything."

Lee had not been idle since his chat with Billy. He had found out that the microchip smuggling ring was still in operation. The Justice Department was continuing their investigation but so far had failed to break the case. Steven Grant was still the agent in charge.

Billy phoned a friend of his in the Justice Department to see if he could find out where Amanda and her family had been sent. Finally his friend made contact with the person who had supervised the relocation of the King family. He confirmed that yes Amanda King had been moved with the rest of her family. And although he refused to divulge their location he did offer to patch through a phone call to Amanda's new home.

Lee stood in Billy's office his heart racing. "Billy, you had better talk to her first. This is going to be quite a shock."

"Don't worry I'll break it to her gently." The phone rang and Billy picked it up. "Melrose here. What?! How long ago? Did she give any indication of where she was going?" He hung up.

"What?" Lee asked.

"Amanda's not at her house. She left yesterday - she told her mother someone at the Justice Department wanted to see her and that she would be gone for a few days. But no one at Justice knows anything about this. They have no idea where she went."

Amanda had slept fitfully Monday night but woke up with one thought crystal clear in her mind: she had to know the truth. She had to find out if Grant had lied to her about Lee's death. And if he had lied about that maybe everything else was a lie too. Maybe her family hadn't needed to be moved. But what if the danger was real? she argued with herself. If she contacted someone in Washington she might be endangering all of their lives.

Somehow, she had to contact someone at the Agency. But how? Phone lines could be tapped and traced. Airports were under video surveillance. It would take hours to drive to Washington but at least in person she would be in control.

Amanda packed an overnight bag and explained to her mother that she would be gone for a few days. Someone from the Justice Department had called and wanted to go over some evidence about the bombings for a possible upcoming trial. Amanda half smiled as she drove away - lying to her mother about where she was going. Just like the good old days at the Agency.

She drove for five hours in the opposite direction of Washington. Then she left her car in an airport parking lot and took a cab to a hotel. From there she walked several blocks to a rental agency and rented a car. "If someone does try to trace me back at least I'm making things difficult for them," she thought as she drove off.

After another three hours of driving she stopped for the night, paying cash for a room in a rundown hotel and using a false name. The next morning she got up bright and early and headed for Washington. She arrived in Georgetown late in the afternoon. "Okay now what?" she thought.

"Billy, where could she have gone?" Lee anxiously paced back and forth in Billy's office.

"Try to relax Lee. At least we know she's alive."

"But where is she? The Princess flew back to Zaqir yesterday. She wouldn't be trying to contact her again."

"Lee, she told her mother she would be back in a few days. And my contact at the Justice Department said he'd call as soon as he knows anything more."

"The Justice Department," Lee said contemptuously. "Billy they're the ones that moved her in the first place. What if Grant arranged this too? What if he told Amanda he needed to talk with her?"

"I'm ahead of you on that. Grant is still here in D.C. And he showed up for work today. Did you come up with anything more on him?"

"Well if he is involved in the smuggling operation he's been pretty quiet with his share of the profits. No large purchases lately. And he has less than \$5000 in his bank accounts. Of course he'd be a fool to draw attention to himself by spending large amounts of cash."

"So he must have it hidden away."

"I'm checking on the possibility of a safety deposit box with the various banks. I'll update you later."

Lee went back upstairs to the Q Bureau. He sat at his desk and looked over at Amanda's. He hadn't been able to bring himself to have it removed from their office. Funny, he still thought of it as their office not just his. He stretched his arms out in front of him on the desktop and put his head down. "Amanda," he thought, "where are you?"

Amanda sat at a picnic table in Rock Creek Park staring at the phone booth next to the parking lot. Finally she walked over and picked up the phone. With her heart in her mouth she dialed a familiar number. An answering machine picked up. "Hi this is Lee Stetson. I'm not available right now so please leave a message."

Amanda quickly hung up the phone, tears streaming down her face. She walked over to some trees and sat down quietly thinking things out. Lee was alive. Somehow a horrible mistake had been made. Or was it a mistake? Had someone wanted her out of the way? Or had Lee...?

"No!" Amanda instantly dismissed the thought before she even finished thinking it. "Lee never would have done this to me. He loves me and I love him. I know that. Nothing could ever change that. But what about the last six months? Obviously Lee survived the coma. But then what? Did he search for me? Or.."

Realization dawned on her - did Lee think she was dead too? She had to contact him. But how? She still didn't know if it was safe to be seen. Whoever had orchestrated all those bombings wasn't kidding around. She didn't dare just walk back into the Agency or contact anyone there directly. She would have to find another way.

PART FOUR

Steven Grant was sitting at his desk in the Justice Department, slogging his way through a pile of paperwork when he received a phone call from a friend in the Witness Relocation Division. "Grant, you remember that Agency team you worked with about half a year ago - Lee Stetson and Amanda King?"

"Sure."

"Have you been in contact with either of them recently?"

"No. Wasn't one of them relocated?"

"Yeah, Amanda King. She disappeared yesterday. She claimed that someone from our office called her."

"Well I haven't spoken to her. Let me know if you hear anything else."

"Sure. Someone from the Agency has been calling here too. Apparently they're trying to get in touch with her."

Grant broke out into a light perspiration as he hung up the phone. He knew things had been going too smoothly to last. He had managed to keep his smuggling operation going while deflecting any part of the investigation which started to point in his direction. By now he had quite a tidy little nest egg amassed - all carefully hidden away in bearer bonds and numbered Swiss accounts.

But now it seemed as if the roof was about to cave in on him. If the Agency was starting to ask questions about Amanda King it wouldn't be long before the truth came out. Perhaps he should have killed both her and Stetson when he had had

the chance. But Grant didn't like to think of himself as a murderer. All he wanted was money plain and simple.

He sat back trying to figure out his next move. The smart thing to do would be to get out of the country immediately. Unfortunately he was right in the middle of brokering a large shipment for his Mideast buyers. Buyers who would not take kindly to an aborted deal. He would have to stay in Washington for a few more days to tie up loose ends.

Grant left his office and quickly drove home. He packed a bag and called the office explaining that he would be missing the next few days of work - a family emergency had come up.

Back at the Agency Lee had received the report from the banks. Steven Grant had four safety deposit boxes at various locations around the city. Lee checked the dates on which Grant had accessed the boxes. Several occurred shortly after known thefts of microchips.

Quickly Lee went to Billy's office and showed him his findings. "I'd say that's enough evidence to move in on Grant."

"Agreed," Billy said, "let's check if he's still at his office."

Billy phoned over to Justice, had a short conversation and then turned to Lee with a frown. "Grant's gone. He left work early this afternoon and said he'd be taking a few days off. It looks like he's running."

"Well he'll want his stuff from those safety deposit boxes. Let's put a team at each location and see if he turns up."

By noon the next day though there had been no movement at any of the banks. Lee sighed with frustration, "Billy, I'm going crazy here just sitting on my hands. There has to be something else I can do."

Just then Francine popped her head in the door. "Lee, they just sighted Grant at First National on 10th street. And T.P. Aquinas is on line three - he says it's important."

"I'm on my way. Tell T.P. I'll call him back later." Lee rushed out of Billy's office and through the bullpen. Twenty minutes later he was following Grant's car as he left the bank.

Earlier that morning T.P. Aquinas was in his office at the Library of Congress when the door opened and the last person in the world he expected walked in.

"Amanda King," he said in shock, "what are you doing here? I thought you were"

"Dead," Amanda finished for him, her fears confirmed. "Lee thinks I'm dead too, doesn't he?"

"Well yes, we all do. I was told you had been killed by a car bomb."

"And I was told Lee died in the hospital six months ago."

T.P. got up and gave Amanda a hug. "I'm just glad that neither is true. Have you seen Lee yet?"

"No, that's the problem. My family was moved because of the threats against us. I don't know if it's safe for me to contact Lee. So I came to you. Lee trusts you implicitly and you're not directly connected to the Agency. So I thought I would take a chance."

"I see what you mean. I'm sure I can get Lee to meet us somewhere. Where are you staying?"

"Nowhere at the moment. I just got into town yesterday. I stayed last night in a motel out towards Baltimore."

"Okay so here's what we're going to do." T.P. thought quickly. "I'll rent a hotel room for you in my name. Then I'll call Lee and arrange a meet. I assume you want some privacy for this reunion."

"Thanks, T.P."

Unfortunately when T.P. phoned Lee it was just as he was headed out to the bank to tail Grant. "Sorry Amanda," T.P. told her, "we just missed him. We'll have to try again later."

Lee returned to the Agency a few hours later. Billy met him as he walked into the bullpen. "Well?" he questioned.

"Well we caught Grant redhanded. We followed him to an apartment in Silver Springs. There was enough evidence there to safely say he's going to be away for a long time."

"And Amanda?"

"He couldn't tell us anything more. And believe me I was quite persuasive. He did admit to setting up all the bombings to shut down our investigation. And it seems to have been a one man operation. So Amanda and her family should be safe. She hasn't returned home yet?"

"No. Lee she has to be somewhere. We'll find her."

Francine walked up. "Lee, T.P. Aquinas has phoned twice since you left. Could you please call him and get him off my back."

"Okay, okay." Lee picked up the phone on the nearest desk.

"Oh but he's not at his office. He's staying at the Hotel Monroe tonight."

"Wonder what that's all about?" Lee thought as he called the hotel switchboard and asked for T.P.'s room. "Maybe there's some medieval banquet tonight."

"Hello."

But it wasn't T.P. who answered the phone. It sounded like... Lee thought his heart had stopped beating for a second. In fact he felt like the entire world had frozen in place. "Amanda?" he finally managed to say, "is that you?"

"LEE. I was starting to worry about you."

"You were worried about me? I've been going crazy trying to track you down ever since the Princess told us you were alive."

Lee broke more than a few traffic laws driving from the Agency to the Hotel Monroe. T.P. was waiting for him in the lobby. "She's upstairs in room 337."

"T.P. how did you?"

"Never mind. We'll talk tomorrow." He gave Lee a push in the direction of the elevators.

Lee however took the stairs - running up them three at a time. He raced down the hall to room 337 and knocked. Instantly the door opened. He stepped forward into Amanda's waiting arms and they clung to each other.

A few minutes later Amanda was able to get some words out between kisses. "It's really you," she said with tears in her eyes. "I can't believe it. Lee I thought you were dead. I thought I would never see you again."

"I know," Lee said holding her tight. "And I thought you were dead."

"How did all this happen?"

"Steven Grant. He was behind the smuggling ring the whole time. He got us out of the way in order to shut down the Agency's investigation. We just arrested him this afternoon. We re-opened our investigation as soon as we found out you weren't dead. If you hadn't gone to see the Princess..."

"We wouldn't be here right now," Amanda said. "I'd be hundreds of miles from here, trying to piece together a life without you."

"And I'd be trying to find some point to life here in Washington without you."

Amanda sighed, "I tried to be so strong for Mother and the boys. But someday

the world seemed like such a cold and lonely place. All I had left were memories of you."

"I know," Lee said. "I wasn't sure what would be worse - to always think about what I had lost, or to start to forget."

"Sometimes it hurt so much I almost wanted to forget. But I couldn't. You are so much a part of me. I couldn't forget anything about you."

"Are you sure you remember everything?" Lee smiled and scooped Amanda up in his arms. "Maybe I can jog your memory", he said as he walked towards the bed.

"I'm not sure some things could possibly be as good as I remember." Amanda reached up to caress his face.

"Maybe they're even better."

The next morning Lee awoke to find Amanda lying awake beside him, staring at him. He smiled. "No fair spying on someone when they're asleep."

"Sorry," she said brushing a lock of hair out of his eyes, "force of habit. The person who trained me did too good a job." She snuggled up close to him. "I still can't believe you're really here - that it isn't just some wonderful dream. When I think of the last six months..." Her eyes clouded.

Lee leaned over and kissed her. "Don't think back. Let's just go forward. And speaking of the future...marry me."

"I can't. I'm already married."

"I know but that guy doesn't deserve you. Keeping your marriage a secret. You know if Billy had known I was the boys' stepfather he never would have moved our family. This is all my fault."

"Lee, don't say that. Grant convinced me you were dead. He could have easily convinced other people at Justice of the same thing and moved us regardless. Maybe he even would have killed you. Anyway, you're not dead. You're here with me - where you belong."

"And it's where I'm going to stay. Marry me Amanda - but for everyone to see this time. I know we wanted to keep our family safe but when you think of what just happened... I don't ever want to lose you again. So marry me - with your mother and the boys there and Billy and Jeannie and Francine and everyone. I want them all to see how much I love you. And no more living apart. I want us to be disgustingly normal - a real family."

Amanda stopped his words with a kiss. "I thought I was the one who was supposed to babble."

"Amanda please. I had a lot of time to think these last few months. About what I should have done differently. And about what I want. So, what do you want?"

"I want you. And yes, I'd love to marry you again. It all sounds perfect."

THE END