

# Adrift

Amanda awoke to the sensation of a wet rock, pounding in her skull. At least it felt like that. A noisy, wet rock.

Her legs were cold, but it was hard to move much of anything but her legs. She was trapped under something heavy. The movement of the floor wasn't helping. Her head was pounding in time to the rocking motion.

*Why is the floor moving?* she thought hazily, fighting to clear her head. She was almost afraid to open her eyes.

There was barely enough light to see. The unfamiliar surroundings were even more confusing when viewed from the floor. Amanda pushed hesitantly on the weight pinning her and immediately realized it wasn't a *something*, but a *someone*, whose head was pillowed on her shoulder.

She craned her neck to get a good look, but it was impossible at this angle. Her head throbbed in warning, but she shoved harder, finally working enough leverage to turn her head and take a better look in the dim surroundings.

"Oh, no. Oh, my gosh -" she gasped. She was face to face with her partner, pinned under the dead weight of his unconscious form. The afternoon returned to her in a rush and she struggled to free herself as fear set in.

Panting, she hoisted herself upright and grabbed the nearest railing. All she could see was water and the night, in every direction. Vainly, her eyes sought light, land... something. But the sky was a forbidding uniform gray, and visibility poor.

Kneeling on the deck of the boat, she grabbed the shoulder of Lee's jacket and hauled him over onto his back. Something solid fell from his limp grasp to clatter onto the deck.

His pale, still, face twitched into a slight frown and Amanda let out the breath she was holding in sheer relief.

"Lee... LEE!" She shook him firmly, and the frown deepened. "Wake up!" Panic started to feel around Amanda's raw nerves like fire seeking dry wood. She slapped his face gently, trying to get a reaction and was dismayed to hear her own voice break as she cried, "Don't you do this, you have GOT to wake up!"

A low, miserable sound started somewhere in his chest and developed into a moan. He brought a hand up hesitantly to his head and flinched. "Stop... stop. I'm 'wake. Oh God," he said in a voice that was barely recognizable, "...Feel like shit."

With Amanda's assistance, he made it into an upright position and opened his eyes. Blinking he looked at her, then frowned. "Wha' happened...? You're hurt..." He blinked, trying desperately to focus on her shoulder, where he reached out to touch the bloodstained fabric.

"No, no. I'm OK," Amanda responded. Looking down, she saw the drying bloodstain on her clothing and instinctively flexed her shoulder. Stiff from being squished underneath him, but fine. She looked back at him, confused, before realization sank in.

Lee's eyes could barely keep track of anything, his face was ashen, and he looked like he was suffering from a drunken stupor. He was making a futile attempt to see where her shoulder was bleeding, but couldn't find a hole in the fabric. "Wheresit commin' from?" he demanded, tugging at her blouse, but his speech was slurred.

"You!" she said batting his hands away and scrambling to her feet. "Come on - get up." Hooking her hands under his arms, she helped him to his feet, then tried to keep him upright long enough to get him down below.

Amanda awkwardly directed him into the cabin, then sat him down on the bunk. Immediately, he tried to lie down, but she grabbed his lapels and hauled him back upright. "No, don't do that!"

She knelt on the bunk next to him and immediately saw where his hair was matted to the scalp, sticky with drying blood. Amanda gasped, and realized there was no way of telling how bad that was without cleaning him up. Lee turned and blinked at her owlishly. Finally able to focus on her from scant inches away, he said belatedly, "My head hurts."

"Yeah, well," Amanda said feeling the lump on the back of her own head, "So does mine. You weigh a ton." She cast her eyes around the cabin, but didn't find what she was looking for. "Lee, listen to me," she insisted until she was sure he was listening. "I'm gonna find a first aid kit and the radio. What code should I use?"

"Code?" Lee stared at her blankly.

"The code, Lee - The agency monitors a channel, and there's a code to use, to let Mr. Melrose know what's happened, but I don't know what it is, and don't look at me like that." she said in a rush, dreading what he was about to say next.

"Huh?" His expression spoke volumes – Lee was genuinely at a loss. Her heart plummeted. *Oh, boy.*

"Stay here. Don't lie down, whatever you do. Can you do that?"

"Uh-huh," he agreed, though she didn't believe him for a minute.

Miraculously, he was still upright when she returned and placed the contents of her arms on the bed beside him. "Well, forget about the radio," she said, going back into the other room and returning with a bowl of water.

"Why?" *Radio...? What radio?*

"It got shot," Amanda said.

"Oh. Okay." Lee thought she seemed a little concerned about that, though he didn't exactly know why.

"Hold still a little. I need to clean this up." Amanda gingerly set about cleaning the wound in his scalp.

Lee's forehead eventually came to rest against her middle – which did nothing for the throbbing in his head, but was oddly comforting. His fingers curled around her belt and held on – she was about the only thing in his world right now that was not trying to sway.

As she cleared away the blood, Amanda got a much clearer look at the extent of his injury. After a moment, she looked away to compose herself. The good news was that the bleeding had stopped. She suddenly realized that his face was hidden against her midriff, his hands latched on to her waist, and froze uncertainly. Finally, he lifted his head and looked up.

She didn't dare interpret his expression, for whatever it was worth under the circumstances. Seeing the damage, and him so disoriented, was unsettling enough.

"Am I cut? Does it look bad to you? Do you think I'll need a Band-Aid?"

"Band-Aid?" *Heck no! I think you need stitches!* "Uh... No... I don't think a Band-Aid would work for that."

"My head just hurts. The light hurts," He released her belt to shield his eyes from the bedside lamp. Amanda quickly switched it off, leaving the cabin dark, lit dimly by a light in the next room.

"Sorry!" Amanda looked at him in dismay. "Stay put. I found some painkillers in the first aid kit. I'll get you a glass of water – be right back."

She left the bottle of ibuprofen on the table beside the bed, and taking the bowl of bloody water, went back up on deck. She tossed the contents over the side and looked hopefully out at the horizon. It was as hazy as it was before.

She sighed. Adrift – Lord only knows where. Not only could she not see where they were, a search party would have a difficult time finding them in this. And this was just the sort of situation when you'd be glad of the fact that you knew a spy.

Except the spy she knew was in all probability suffering from a pretty bad concussion – she doubted seriously that he'd know his own name at the moment (and she was afraid to ask) – and wouldn't be of much help.

As she turned to go back, her foot connected with something hard that scuttled across the deck with a metallic clatter. Kneeling, she saw the faint outline of the flare gun in the dim light. Amanda snatched it up and managed to open the chamber. The shell inside was spent of course, however the launcher remained undamaged.

Hope, after all. A brief search of the bridge yielded a small box, which at one time contained six 15mm signal flares, but now only held two. She stuffed the box in her pocket.

Clutching her prize, she ran back down below. She froze when she entered the cabin and found it empty.

"You were gone a long time." Amanda spun around. Lee was feeling his way back into the cabin, holding something.

"I told you to stay put," she sighed.

"You were gone a long time," he repeated as he gingerly sat down. "I wanted something to swallow the pills with."

Amanda started guiltily – she had forgotten his water when she'd discovered the signal flares. "I'll get that water –"

"S'Okay. I took 'em."

"The pills?"

"Uh-huh."

"How many?" Amanda asked in alarm, dropping the flares and launcher on the small table and picking up the pill bottle. There were many still left, to her relief.

"Oh... four or five." She mentally added up the dosage and winced at the figure as she picked up the glass he'd put precariously on the edge of the bedside table. Then sniffed it as she caught a familiar aroma.

"With *scotch*?" *Stetson, I hope you have a cast-iron stomach.*

Lee lay back on the bed in the manner of one that was afraid that something might break if he moved too quickly.

"I dunno. Lissen. I haveta lay down a little. " He struggled with the task of removing his shoes, until she assisted him.

"Lee, I don't think you can go to sleep yet."

"No, no... I think I can. I feel kinda tired," he informed her, closing his eyes.

Shaking his leg to get his attention, Amanda insisted, "That's not what I meant. You probably have a concussion, and I think you better stay awake for a while."

Lying back against a pillow, Lee looked at her. "I just have a cut. And my head hurts."

"Oh yeah? Well, what's my name?"

He frowned. "'Manda."

"Amanda What?", she prodded.

He stared at her.

"I saw you on the train," he said hesitantly, then corrected, " - By the train."

Whatever she expected, it hadn't been that. She smiled, in spite of things being what they were. "Yeah, that was me. Come to think of it, you didn't know my name then either," she added wryly. "But you trusted me. I'm just asking you to trust me again and stay awake for a while."

Lee digested this fragment of memory, but didn't close his eyes. Instead he watched her, trying to piece everything back together. "We're on a boat... but I don't remember getting on it."

"Don't worry, it'll come back. My uncle, on my father's side, a couple times removed, he got a concussion once coaching little league. Well, actually, he gave himself a concussion – he really had a coordination problem with a bat. Anyway – knocked himself cold for almost ten minutes. When he woke up, he didn't say a word for half an hour. Just stared at us.

"By the time we got to the hospital, he started to put things together and by that evening he was fine. The next morning, you couldn't tell that a thing had been wrong with him. He's really quite normal. More or less. But that had nothing to do with the bat incident."

For once, her ramblings washed right over him without managing to puzzle him any more than he already was. "But why are we on a boat?" Lee insisted. Amanda was starkly reminded of the conversation they'd had that afternoon while locked below deck.

*"Lee – I know this may sound like a silly question to you, but why aren't we dead yet?"*

*"These aren't the normal sort of eastern-bloc operatives. These guys decided to make a go of things without benefit of diplomatic passports, visas... important stuff. On the one hand, it's good for them – we don't know they're in the country."*

*"And on the other hand?"*

*"Bad. Very inconvenient not to have diplomatic immunity as a safety net. Instead of killing us and letting the diplomats sort things out, they have to go through all the bother of being neat about it. Like, say, motoring out into international waters to dump our dead bodies."*

*"Oh. Thanks for, ah... clearing that up."*

*"Anytime."*

"Uhm... Well, cause no one's found us yet," she said, wondering if that could be counted as a lie of omission. Heck, he'd remember himself soon enough anyway. "But, I found some flares and if we hear a ship or a plane pass nearby, they'll be sure to see it, and then they can come rescue us."

"Someone's looking for us?"

*I hope. "You bet."*

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Consciousness filtered into Lee's thoughts by degrees, until he was absolutely sure that he was not dreaming – someone was leaning over him.

Almost before he opened his eyes, his hands shot out and he hauled the person down onto the bunk and pinned her underneath him.

*Her...? Yes, it was definitely a 'her'.*

She squeaked in alarm.

Lee hesitated. She was awfully familiar. He could barely make her out in the dim cabin, but he knew her features well enough. She smelled good.

"Hi." Amanda said uncertainly. He looked worn out, he still sounded a little 'off', but he could see her anyway.

"Hi," Lee replied with a lopsided smile. The tension washed out of him almost immediately, and Amanda felt him relax against her.

"I guess I surprised you, huh?" Amanda was pretty sure he recognized her, but he was making no attempt to release her forearms. Though his grip had loosened considerably, he hadn't let go. She made the mistake of looking up into his eyes, and found herself unable to look away.

"Mmm-hmm. Well, I guess I fell asleep." Lee's expression settled into a bemused frown. She had the deepest brown eyes, and hair that framed her face like an angel, curling softly against her neck... Did it always do that? Lee tried to decide if it did, or maybe he'd just noticed.

He dipped his head lower, a breath away from the column of her throat, but hesitated. There seemed to be something important he was forgetting, but it didn't seem all that important at the moment. He wished he could just remember, but it was hazy at best, and he found it hard to think when her skin smelled like sunshine.

He raised his head again and got lost in her eyes. There was something, but what? It was like someone was shouting at him from a long way off, and he couldn't make out the words.

Lee shook his head, as he'd come to some inner conclusion, then gave in to the desire. Amanda had difficulty breathing from the instant he began to explore the taste and texture of her skin with lazy kisses along the curve of her neck.

Her mouth opened and closed, but no protests came out. Surely, she'd fallen down the rabbit hole this time.

"... Lee..." There! She'd managed to say something. It just didn't sound very much like a protest. Yet his hands released their loose grip on her arms. But then one hand slipped immediately into her hair, cradling her head and the other sought out the curve of her neck following the path his kisses had made.

"Shhh," he hushed her, paying particular attention to the spot about an inch or two behind her ear where he lingered, his tongue doing maddening things to the sensitive skin. "I hear it too."

Amanda's eyes, which had somehow drifted shut, snapped open. "Hear what?"

Lee abandoned the spot to lift his head and capture her eyes with his again. "I seem to remember... I can almost hear myself saying there's a very good reason why I shouldn't be kissing you, but I can't remember what." His eyes drifted down to her lips as his fingertip lightly traced the corner of her mouth, and he added, "It just couldn't have been a very good reason."

*Strictly professional ...It's not as if we're involved –*

Lee's words came back to her with perfect clarity right before he scattered them to the winds. His mouth stamped down on hers, lips moving against hers as if he knew her response was never in question – only inevitable. A shock went straight through Amanda's body, and she gasped against Lee's mouth, startled by the strength of it. Once her mouth yielded, opening under his, the kiss deepened, became possessive. His tongue was shamelessly thorough in its demands – there was little finesse in raw need.

Someone moaned.

Amanda discovered that her hands apparently had a mind of their own. One was under his shirt somehow, fingers splayed wide against the skin of his back, the other cupped his face feeling the texture of stubble there.

When the kiss ended, the room was silent but for the sound of ragged breathing. Lee nuzzled her neck, his hand dropping from her nape to slide around her waist, pulling her against him as he rolled onto his side.

Amanda took the moment to collect her scattered wits. *Okay... Okay – What was that? Dumb question. One of us has an impaired ability to make rational decisions right now, she tried to think reasonably...*

Then abandoned hope of that as Lee gravitated to the sensitive spot behind her ear again. *The other one just has a concussion.*

"How do you do that..." Lee murmured against her skin, breathing in her scent. "Smell like sunshine?"

Her mouth fell open, temporarily robbed of speech. Just the husky sound of his voice, thick with desire, and his lips brushing against her skin as he spoke had power over her.

"Oh, well – you know," she finally said weakly, and was surprised by the breathless sound of her own voice trailing away: He'd discovered the hollow at the base of her throat, and his tongue was exploring this new territory with undisciplined strokes.

"No... I don't. Amanda... what was the reason anyway?" Lee wanted to know, his voice seductively deep and drowsy as he nuzzled her throat. "This feels... right."

*It feels more than right, she wanted to say. It feels wonderful.* But all she could manage were the very words he'd explained to her for years. "You can't get emotionally involved with the people you meet in our line of work – you told me that all the time. Keep things impersonal, otherwise, it just complicates things. But y'know? Now, I think it does. Cause let's face it; by tomorrow, you're probably not going to remember *any* of this. But I will. Which will be just fine for you -

Amanda found her voice failing her in mid-ramble and she fought it back down from a squeak as she said, "But *I'll* know..."

*...what it's like to feel intoxicated by your touch, your kisses. To feel you hold me, as if I was the only important person for that one precious instant...*

"Didn't you tell me that you hated that Joni Mitchell song... about the clouds... but now I hear it and I think of you. 'If you care, don't let them know, don't give yourself away'. Well, that's you – funny isn't it? I guess if you don't cut anyone a break, we can't get in. And if we can't get in, we can't mess up your life, we can't hurt you – I can't hurt you, or change anything and you can go on keeping people who care at arm's length."

Amanda remembered some of his harsher reactions to her intrusion into his world. "Farther, sometimes. It's easier I guess. Or it was. But you know what I think, Scarecrow? I think it's not that easy anymore.

"Or," her voice choked, "One whack upside the head and I'm just one more of the countless women who pass through your sex-life for half a moment."

Amanda was breathless as she came to this conclusion aloud. Silence pervaded the room. She squeezed her eyes tightly shut, dismayed by how much she'd wanted to hear him deny it.

Lee took a deep breath, then exhaled. Amanda tensed in anticipation of what he'd say, and rolled away onto her back. His weight followed her, until his head came to rest in the hollow of her shoulder, one arm sprawled across her hips.

Then he took another deep breath, and expelled it. There was a pause before another followed. And again, in a deep regular rhythm.

He was asleep.

She sighed.

Several moments passed before Amanda's eyes opened, but she'd stopped thinking for the most part. Her hand absently stroked the back of his neck, enjoying the feel his hair under her fingers as a single tear escaped and slid unhindered down her cheek.

Before exhaustion claimed her as well, she stared sadly at the ceiling, wondering how many excruciating hours it was before daybreak when this bittersweet torture might come to an end.

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Lee opened his eyes from a pleasant dream to unfamiliar territory and rapidly took inventory.

He found himself looking across Amanda's collarbone to the window, where the sky was the color of pale, pre-dawn gray.

He was snuggled against her side, head on her shoulder, right arm was wedged beneath them somewhere. Speaking of his head, it felt raw and brittle, pain lurking in the background.

His left arm crossed her slender body at the waist, and disappeared under the hem of her blouse. He lifted his head slightly and stared in fascination at this, as if it were someone else's hand. He flexed his fingers experimentally, and they stroked against warm, firm, soft skin.

Lee snatched his hand away as if the contact had burned. He felt color rising in his face as he hefted himself upright and looked guiltily at Amanda's face. Her lashes curled softly against her cheeks as she slept on, oblivious.

His heart lurched when he saw again the now-dry bloodstain on her far shoulder. His hand darted back, sliding under the collar of the fabric to explore her shoulder and reassure himself of what he'd somehow already known. That her skin was undamaged under his seeking fingers. He withdrew his hand carefully, but still she didn't stir. His eyes drifted of their own will, taking in the softness of her cheek and the curve of her mouth, then lingered there on her lips.

Their legs were tangled together.

The events of the day before came suddenly, sharply into focus. His mind reeled. *What the hell?* The voice of reason that had been so muffled and indistinct just a few scant hours ago sounded perfectly loud and clear once more.

*Damnit all, Scarecrow! Were you trying to ruin everything? Stupid, stupid, stupid...*

Lee extricated himself cautiously, and wobbled to his feet, swaying slightly as he looked down at his friend.

*And when the hell did that happen, anyway? She'd somehow gone from pain-in-my-ass to friend.* But then she was never that much of a pain.

It was just easier to think so because she was a symbol of everything he'd never have. It's easy to think you don't want, or despise, something when it's already too far out of your reach.

Disturbed by the direction his thoughts were taking, Lee pushed a hand through his hair then gasped in pain. No blood on his fingers, but it felt sticky and jagged - pretty bad. He spent a moment doubled over, then decided his head felt much better without more blood rushing into it.

The sound of his own pulse throbbed in his ears as he slowly straightened.

No. That was something else.

Chopper!

He grabbed the flares and launcher and made his way up on deck. Even misty and gray, the light of day sent a shaft of agony through his abused skull.

Lee squinted against the light, but the sun's rays hadn't yet burned away enough of the mist to make anything visible. He could still hear the distant beat of the helicopter's blades and fumbled the flare gun open, yanked the spent casing and got a flare in the chamber.

He fired the signal and watched the flare shoot a red arc into the mist until he could just barely make it out, then the sharp report as it exploded. The box only had one flare left. He loaded the launcher with the last shell and waited. Lee couldn't tell if the sound of the blades was getting closer or not.

"Do you think they saw it?" Amanda's voice was tired and sleepy behind him.

"I don't know." Lee didn't dare look at her yet, and gave himself a moment or two before he turned. When he did, she was not looking at him, but up into the sky. She looked tousled and exhausted, still rubbing sleep from her eyes. He wanted to fold her into his arms and keep her there until things made more sense. They sure as hell didn't now.

"Wait – it is getting closer?"

He considered the beating sound of the blades. "Yeah. Yeah it is." Lee fired the last shell into the mist and while the red signal still hung in view, the chopper definitely turned in their direction and grew gradually louder.

Lee sat down then, and closed his eyes, his head pounding mercilessly. He could feel Amanda's presence across the deck, and knew that she would be coming no closer than she already was.

He felt his pocket, and reassured himself that the complex little bit of circuitry that had prompted the last few days' events was still with him.

That way, the only thing he had to worry about salvaging when this was all over, was personal in nature.

And that was complicated enough on it's own.

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"If you feel bad now, I don't recommend trying to get up. Could get drafty."

Lee's eyes cracked open and he focused on William Melrose who was speaking of the inadequately short and thin hospital gown.

"How are you feeling?"

"Perforated. Guy gave me a local. He'll be back to sew me up in a sec. Billy, they're talking about keeping me overnight," Lee growled, half rising off the gurney.

"Yes. I know. That's what they do to people who come in with an extra hole in their heads." Billy smiled with the air of one who expected to get his way. "Besides, who do

you think recommended that they lock your clothes in an office somewhere? If you want to go home, you can wait until you're cleared medically, or you can throw decency – among other things - to the wind and streak our nation's capital. Your call, Scarecrow."

Lee groaned and lay flat again, closing his eyes.

"Glad you agree. The missile guidance component you retrieved is back at the SkunkWorks where it belongs. The official debrief will come tomorrow morning before you're released, but since we've got some time while you get cleaned up, you want to hit some of the highlights?"

"Mainly, Nollbridge is out of commission."

"Amanda mentioned as much, but she didn't elaborate. I know it got messy."

"I lost my weapon in the fight – it's at the bottom of the bay somewhere by the way – so we both grabbed the next best thing. He got a boat hook, and I grabbed a flare pistol. He creased my skull with it as I fired ... I don't remember much after that. "

"From what Amanda said, it caught him center mass and took him up against the rail. She shoved him over. Then the flare probably did the rest."

Lee quietly considered the 1/8 or 1/4 stick of dynamite that was packed into nautical signal flares. "Yeah. That's messy all right. I don't know how long I was out. I remember waking and it was already dark..."

Lee had no intention of relating what he remembered of last night and floundered briefly. "Amanda, uh... found some more flares. The radio was shot – literally. Visibility was crap. We just sat tight until morning when we heard the search chopper go by."

The doctor came back in at that moment and pulled on a pair of disposable gloves. "How are we doing now?" he asked while gently prodding Lee's scalp.

"Well, I don't know how *we're* doing, but *I* can't feel a thing up there. I still have a headache though."

"Gotta love local anesthesia. We can get you something for that headache after I'm done stitching you up." He then set about cleaning the wound. Billy winced at the vigorous scrubbing of torn flesh.

Lee tried very hard not to notice Billy's expression. He didn't particularly want to know what it was he wasn't feeling. "Billy, ah... where's Amanda?" Lee's own expression was one of sheer indifference.

"Oh, she's fine. She managed to get a bump on the head when you collapsed on her, but other than that, the doctors were satisfied. Francine will drive her home after her debrief."

"Ah. Okay." He didn't pursue it any further with the section chief, but it would have seemed odd if he hadn't asked at all.

Not that Lee expected to see her under the circumstances, but on any other occasion, she would have been there to see how he was doing.

Not only was he bothered now by the fact that she had already gone and probably didn't want to see how he was doing, it bugged the hell out of him that he was bothered by it.

*Which only illustrates the point why it's better to avoid this sort of thing in the first place. And only makes things more complicated once you find you couldn't avoid it,* noted that inner voice of reason.

He was starting to hate that voice.

"Try to get some rest, Scarecrow," Billy said, patting his shoulder. "You've earned your long weekend."

After Billy left the doctor had set eight stitches in his scalp, and cheerfully added medication to his IV line. "There ya go. This'll kill off that headache – or just make you so out of it that you could care less that you're in pain. Either way, it works. Someone will take you to your room shortly."

By the time he was in the hospital bed, Lee was feeling no pain. Which was nice for a change.

Guess it wasn't such a bad idea to stay over. And he really hadn't been looking forward to the idea of making his way across town to Georgetown wearing nothing more than a hospital smock.

But he still had plans for tomorrow. He needed to see her. He had absolutely no idea what he'd say to bail this one out, but he knew he had to say something.

*God, what must she be thinking now?* Maybe she would just chalk all this up to having Nollbridge go for a line drive with his head. That would really be best.

*Wouldn't it?*

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Amanda wondered why she was here.

She was infinitely thankful of the fact that Lee was asleep. She had absolutely no idea what she'd have said to him if he weren't. But in spite of her misgivings, she'd given in to the need check in on him.

Reassure herself that he was in fact, fine. She was relieved to note that his color was quite normal again and his head neatly stitched up, with a dressing applied. His chest rose and fell regularly - sound asleep.

A slight frown was etched on his forehead. Without thinking, Amanda reached out and smoothed a stray hair away. His features relaxed, though he didn't awaken. His face was unguarded again in sleep, though lately she'd found that she could see through most of the barriers he wore on a daily basis. Except of course the ones designed especially to keep her out. Those worked as well as they ever did.

*God*, she thought. *What would he think tomorrow?* "Is it too much to hope that he'd just chalk last night up to being brain damaged? No... better yet if he just doesn't remember any of it at all." she whispered aloud to the silent room.

She could easily admit to herself that she found him attractive. Well, more than attractive. But she didn't want him to know it - not if all it meant to him was another pleasant distraction with the likes of Randi, or Cindi or...*what is it with him and women whose names end in "I" dotted by smiley faces?*

Or worse yet, if he just humored a suburbanite's apparent admiration for a dashing figure. Amanda shook her head and sighed. No, it would be much better if he simply couldn't recall anything about that night.

*Wouldn't it?*

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Barely able to open his eyes, Lee saw dimly as Amanda turned to go. He hadn't dreamed of her touching his forehead after all. He hadn't imagined her voice providing the answer he needed... as she always seemed to do.

He sighed deeply as his eyes drifted sadly shut when the door closed behind her. It would be better if he simply forgot. But since he knew he couldn't, he'd just say that he had. After all, it was what she wanted, and situations like this never worked out in his experience. It would be for the best.

*Wouldn't it?*

**The End**