

It's DeJaVu

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Timeframe: This story takes place mid-third season, somewhere between Reach for the Sky and Dead Men Leave No Trails. I don't believe cannon is broken, although it might be nudged a bit.

Beta: Sorry. I have read enough Fan Fiction to know what a Beta is - but, I don't know exactly how to acquire one. I do have some background in business writing, which is obviously a whole lot different than fiction writing.....

Note: I have been dabbling in Fan Fiction for a while, but this is the first time I have gotten up the nerve to actually post something. I don't object to constructive criticism, but I do object to nastiness.

Amanda King sat at Lee Stetson's desk in the Q Bureau, mentally preparing herself for her assignment. She felt distinctly uneasy about it. Or, more accurately, she felt distinctly uneasy about how Lee would respond, if he found out. He had been upset when she had "spied" on him for Harry Thornton; he would probably be furious over this. It didn't matter that in this case, as in the previous one, she didn't really **want** to do it. It didn't matter that in this case, as in the previous one, she would be acting under direct orders. It didn't even matter that in this case, as in the previous one, she would be doing it for the good of the Agency. Lee would still see it as a betrayal of his trust. He had erected certain barriers between himself and the rest of the world, and he would see her actions as an attempt to breach those barriers.

Amanda sighed deeply. They had come a long way in the past few years. She had progressed from an irritation whose presence in his life Lee barely tolerated - to an acknowledged partner and friend. They had even fallen into a comfortable, playful flirtation. But maybe it was time to admit to herself that she was as close to Lee Stetson as she was ever going to get. No matter how much she cared about him, no matter how much she loved him, he was never going to let her past those emotional barriers - and it

simply wasn't healthy for her to continue to hope for something she was never going to attain. There were plenty of nice, normal, emotionally healthy men in the world; maybe it was time for her to give one of them a chance.

Amanda gave herself a mental shake as she realized that it was 8:45am. She had only fifteen minutes until she was expected downstairs in the Medical Lab. She hurriedly reviewed her meeting the previous afternoon with Billy Melrose and Dr Quorn, one of the Agency's top researchers of chemical warfare. The two men had explained to Amanda that the Agency was running controlled tests on a powerful Russian truth serum, the newest in the DeJaVu series. Ten highly experienced field agents had been selected to participate in the tests. Each had been given details of a mock assignment, with instructions that the information was top secret. No one without a Vermilion security clearance was to be given access to this particular operation. Then, each agent was questioned while under the influence of the new DeJaVu drug.

So far, the results of the tests had been quite impressive, Dr Quorn had confided to Amanda. Four of the agents selected for the test had given full details of the top secret assignment after one dose of the drug and a short interrogation. Five of the remaining six had resisted the effects of the drug when questioned by the standard interrogation team - but had given in quickly when questioned by a familiar person. Lee Stetson, on the other hand, had been questioned twice by the interrogation team, once by a coworker, and once by his section chief - and he alone had resisted the effects of the drug. He was to be questioned one more time, and Dr Quorn had selected Amanda to handle the interrogation. The doctor wanted to know whether Lee's resistance could be weakened by someone who he knew and trusted - his partner.

Amanda had tried to extricate herself from the assignment. She pointed out that she had never actually interrogated anyone. She also pointed out that she would be so uncomfortable attempting to interrogate someone that she wouldn't be able to concentrate. Neither argument worked. Mr Melrose and Dr Quorn told her to simply do her best, using whatever means she felt comfortable with. They also told her that her "interview" with Lee Stetson would not be observed, recorded or taped - and that Lee himself would have no memory of it afterward - so she had no reason to feel nervous. It was results, not methods, that mattered to them. When she had reluctantly agreed, they had simply given her one key word, "Rudolph," and told her to get whatever information she could.

Now Amanda sat in the Q Bureau, mentally bracing herself for the interrogation. She was about to get up and head for the Lab, when the door opened and Francine Desmond walked in. "Oh, I didn't know you were up here, Amanda," Francine said, her tone clearly conveying that it was not a pleasant surprise. "I was hoping to use Lee's desk for a few

hours. I know he's going to be, uh, otherwise occupied this morning, and we're having some phone problems downstairs."

"That's okay, Francine, it's all yours," Amanda returned quietly, as she got up from the desk and headed toward the door. "I'm going to be otherwise occupied myself."

Francine looked sharply at Amanda, "You're going to interrogate Lee, aren't you," she asked in a disbelieving voice. She shook her head as though trying to dislodge an offensive thought. Without giving Amanda a chance to answer, she continued, "I suggest you take a magazine or two. You'll be bored out of your mind. I did his third drug trial. Four hours of the most boring interrogation in Agency history. It's a good thing I didn't have my gun with me; if I'd heard his mantra one more time, I would have used it," Francine smirked at Amanda.

Amanda opened the door to the interrogation room and paused for a moment to survey her surroundings. The room was small, with an unexpectedly cozy feel. She decided that was because, unlike the majority of the Agency, it had no overhead fluorescent lighting. The only light emanated from two small lamps resting on wooden tables placed at either end of a comfortable looking sofa. The only other piece of furniture in the room was an equally comfortable looking armchair. Lee Stetson was stretched full length on the sofa; he appeared to be sleeping.

Carefully closing the door, Amanda walked slowly toward the sofa. Lee didn't stir. Pulling the chair as close as possible the point where Lee's head was resting, she gingerly sat down. "Lee?" she whispered tentatively. "Lee, can you hear me?"

A slight smile appeared on the handsome face beside her. "Yeah," he responded slowly.

Unsure how to begin her "interrogation," Amanda waited a few more moments before asking "Lee, do you know who I am?"

Lee's eyes remained closed and he continued to smile, as though he were having a pleasant dream. "Uh huh," he said after a moment, his voice slightly slurred "Mmmanda."

Amanda smiled. She wished she could just sit here and let him sleep. He looked so peaceful. She was certain he didn't get enough sleep; the rest would be good for him. Unconsciously, she let out a gentle sigh.

"Don't be sad, Manda. Don't like it when you're sad," mumbled Lee, startling Amanda slightly.

"I'm not sad," she assured him softly. Deciding this might be an opening for her questioning, she added "I'm just thinking about the case. You know, your new one. The Rudolph case. Mr Melrose sent me to help you."

Lee's face scrunched into a frown as he appeared to be considering her comment. "Can't help me," he finally said in a regretful voice. "Top secret. Eyes only," he added as an explanation.

Amanda's right hand reached out to gently brush a lock of golden brown hair that had fallen over his eyes. At her touch, he smiled again. As she gazed at him, an inspiration struck. "Well, you know," she coaxed, her fingers caressing his forehead, "I have eyes."

"Beautiful eyes," Lee whispered; his own eyes remained closed, and his smile became even more dreamy. At the same time, one of his hands reached up and lightly grasped Amanda's, pressing her fingers against his face.

Amanda felt her heart melt at the sincerity of his unexpected compliment. "You have beautiful eyes, too," she murmured tenderly. "Really beautiful eyes." Lee's only response was to rub her hand gently up and down his cheek.

Amanda suddenly realized the room was getting stuffy and she couldn't breathe very well. She shouldn't be doing this, she thought guiltily. This was getting personal; she was taking advantage of the situation. Besides which, she had a job to do. She tried to pull her hand out of his grasp, but he held on tightly, a boyish pout spreading over his features.

"Lee, if you don't want me to help on your case, maybe I should just get out of your way," she suggested.

"Not in my way," Lee insisted vehemently. Then his voice softened again and he added "Like having you around."

"Really?" she asked before she could stop herself.

"Uh huh," he responded.

Unsure how to continue now, Amanda asked the first thing she could think of. "Well, if you don't want me to leave, but you don't need my help with the case, what **do** you want me to do?"

Lee's mouth suddenly hardened into a stubborn frown, a look Amanda knew only too well. His eyes slowly opened and looked into hers. "Can't tell you," he said. "I ssa secret." To emphasize his point, he put one finger over his lips and made an exaggerated "ssshhhhhh" sound. Since Amanda's hand was still firmly grasped in his, she felt his soft, warm breath on her fingers, sending a tingle up her entire arm. She really shouldn't be doing this, she thought again.

Pulling herself together with effort, and trying valiantly to concentrate on the task at hand, Amanda decided to switch tactics again. "Well, if you don't want me to help, and you don't want me to leave, I guess I'll just sit here and watch for a while."

"Kay," was Lee's only response. He began rubbing Amanda's hand against his cheek again, and he continued to watch her with an unreadable expression in his hazel eyes.

After several minutes, his eyes began to close again, and Amanda glanced at her watch. She had been in the room for nearly half an hour, and she really wasn't getting anywhere. Not that anyone really expected her to get the information from Lee, of course, but Francine had been right about one thing: it was going to be tough to sit here like this for four hours. Particularly if Lee slept through most of it. He appeared close to falling asleep now.

"Lee, how do you feel?" she asked, in an effort to rouse him.

The dreamy look instantly disappeared from Lee's face and the stubborn one took its place. "Don't feel anything," he growled.

"You don't feel anything?" Amanda blinked, surprised by this response. He had looked content, even happy. Was he actually feeling numb? "You don't feel anything at all?" she repeated.

"Can't. Don't want to," was the gruff response.

Amanda watched in confusion for a moment. What was that supposed to mean? "I don't understand," she finally said.

"Don't want to feel anything," he grumbled in a childlike, almost petulant voice. She thought he was not going to say any more and was about to change the subject when he added sadly, almost wistfully "Everyone I love goes away. Don't want to love you. Don't want you to go away too."

Tears pricked the back of Amanda's eyes as the meaning of his words sank in. "Oh, Lee, that's so sweet," she said as a warm glow filled her entire being. "I won't go away."

Lee appeared to be considering her words. "Promise?" he asked hopefully. He opened his eyes and studied her apprehensively, as though he were trying to decide whether to believe her.

"Promise," she whispered back. Slowly, Lee's taut body relaxed. His eyes closed again, and he released his grip on her hand. A smile once more settled across his handsome face. He appeared to be drifting into a pleasant dream and, this time, Amanda decided, she would just let him sleep. She would sit here and read her magazine and let him sleep.

Amanda smiled to herself as she settled more comfortably in her chair. Lee wanted her in his life. He was just afraid. Afraid of loving her. Afraid of losing her. Afraid of getting hurt. Well, maybe he wasn't such a lost cause after all. She understood now, and she would give him all the time he needed.

"Operation Rudolph," Lee's voice startled her, she was so lost in her own pleasant thoughts. "We're going to the North Pole to kidnap Rudolph. Gonna find out what makes his nose glow..." To Amanda's amazement, Lee spent the next several minutes spilling the details of his top secret "assignment", after which he burrowed into the sofa cushions and began to snore softly.

By 10am, Amanda had given a verbal report on Operation Rudolph to Mr. Melrose and Dr Quorn, and she was waiting for the elevator to take her up to the Georgetown Foyer. She had already decided that the unofficial information she had collected in her interrogation was well worth not only the time and effort, but also the discomfort she would undoubtedly suffer if Lee discovered her involvement. His annoyance might be intense, but it would also be short-lived. And she had much more pleasant encounters to look forward to, if she just waited patiently. Lost in her own very happy thoughts, she didn't even notice that Francine had exited the elevator she was waiting to enter until she heard a falsely saccharin voice. "Amanda, you've given up already? I thought you might hold out for a bit longer before throwing in the towel."

Amanda didn't even notice the blonde woman's puzzled expression as she responded. "Oh, I will, Francine. For as long as it takes."

The End