

# Unspoken; Unacknowledged; Unrealized

by eman



The night  
She looked down upon my flushed cheek  
Smelled of all those remnants of a party saying I'll be  
back with you  
I was in my own mind

It has been like every time I believe that I never find  
another like you  
Ocean lapping sand under my feet  
I'm all alone again tonight not again, not again, not again

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**Title:** Unspoken; Unacknowledged; Unrealized

**Author:** EmilyAnn

**Summary:** Does speaking of something make it real?

**Rating** PG

**Timeline:** Between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> season

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**Notes:** Okay, so . . . umm . . . how does this go again? Yeah, I know it's been a while. I've been puttering, trying to write, but nothing until this has really captured the tone I try to bring to my stories. Feedback is wonderful – in fact I'm dying to know what you think of it, so let me know, onlist or off.

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From behind the boxes, he watched. He watched paralyzed as her limp body was dragged along the pavement. He watched immobile as she was unceremoniously dumped into the rear of a van. Shocked, he struggled to find a way to get to her, but, in the end, he was powerless to do anything but watch.

"AMANDA!"

He woke himself screaming, lost in the twists and tangles of his bedding. His t-shirt and boxers clung to him, damp with sweat. Turning on his bedside light, Lee forced his breathing to slow. His heart, in turn, returned to a normal rhythm.

Amanda. It was the third time in as many nights that he'd had that same nightmare, and he didn't know what to do to make it go away.

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"I'd ask if you had a new girlfriend, but somehow, I don't think that's the case. Why aren't you sleeping, Lee?" Amanda asked, with equal measure of concern and teasing, after he'd yawned for the umpteenth time that afternoon.

"I'm sleeping fine," he countered, absently.

She handed him a cup of coffee and then looked down at his feet. "Your socks don't match."

"My . . . they . . ." He stopped. "What are you doing here, anyway? I thought today was your day off."

She laughed at his maladroit subject change, and he had to smile with her. "Billy called me in," she finally responded. "He said he wanted to meet with both of us." Confusion crossed her face, and she added, "I take it you don't know what this is about."

He pursed his mouth, as confounded as she. "No . . ." Then, putting his hand on the small of her back, guided her out the door ahead of him. "Let's go find out."

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It was a simple case, really. A milk run, he would've called it in his earlier days – while suggesting, none-too-gently, that it would be better handled by someone else. Yet today, he didn't mind. It got him out of the office with, and gave him the opportunity to spend time with, her.

At least, that's the way it was supposed to go.

They arrived at the warehouse on time, but saw no sign of their contacts. In the distance, dark thunderclouds threatened to turn the summer afternoon into a sloppy mess.

Lee parked his Corvette, and reclined his seat part way. "I guess we wait."

"I guess so," Amanda answered matter-of-factly.

She gave their surroundings a cursory scan, and then turned back in his direction. "So . . . are you gonna tell me what's been keeping you up?"

"It's nothing," he replied, his gaze trained on the horizon.

"Lee . . ." she said, a touch of warning in her voice. "I know you. It's not 'nothing'. You wouldn't be losing sleep over nothing. Something's bothering you – what is it?"

"Nothing but a little insomnia," he continued to argue. "I'm fine."

She pursed her face in consternation. "No, Lee, you're not. I'm worried about you. Now, if you don't want to tell me what's going on, that's fine. That's your decision. But," she added more seriously, trying to meet his eyes, "I'd like to think we've been through enough together that you could trust me."

He bit the inside of his cheek and refused to meet her eyes. Redirecting his attention to the small digital clock, he commented, "It's late. I think I'll go take a look around."

In a fluid movement, he unbuckled his seatbelt and opened the door. "I'll be right back – keep an eye open."

"I always do," she answered, smiling tightly. He shut the door soundly and she added, "This ain't over yet, Stetson."

She watched as he walked away, growing smaller with each step. Beneath his jacket, his shoulders were squared – his step sure. So strong, and yet, she was learning, also so very vulnerable.

Lost as Amanda was in thought, she didn't notice the figure next to her car, nor the gun pointed at her through the passenger side window until a sudden strike of lightning illuminated the metal.

She gasped, bringing her hand slowly to her mouth and shrank away from the would-be assassin. With the gun, he motioned Amanda out of the car.

She shook her head with more emphasis than she felt, and moved to slide into Lee's seat before she realized that he'd brought his keys with him. As she saw him cock the gun, Amanda began to sink down, praying all the while that his aim would prove faulty. He knit his brows together, and raising his hand, repeatedly beat against the window with the butt of the gun – once, twice, again - until he had broken through the safety glass.

Silent up to that point, Amanda screamed.

Her cries didn't have any effect, and as she watched, powerless to stop him, he reached in, and opened the door from the inside. Playing on her last hope, Amanda leaned over again and reached for the horn, but before she could hit it, he grabbed her by the upper arm, and pulled – yanking her from the car.

In desperation, she kicked and flailed against him – trying to make contact with any weak spot – his nose, his groin, his kneecap – but her efforts were futile. As she screamed, "LEE E E!!" a clap of thunder drowned her out, and the skies opened up.

She tried to use the rain to her advantage, struggling to slip out of his grasp. Ultimately, her resistance won her nothing. For, as she continued to fight him, her captor again made use of the butt of his gun to hit her at the base of her skull.

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From inside the warehouse, he'd heard her cry – and was hit with a sense of déjà vu and desperation that sent his heart plummeting to the pit of his stomach. He broke into a sprint, running frantically in the direction of the dimly-lit exit, and beyond it, Amanda.

'It's too late,' his subconscious tormented him. 'You can't do anything; she's gone.' He ignored the taunting voice and whispered prayers to a God he hoped was listening.

As he rounded the corner, he knew the voice was right – for even as he continued to run – to shout out – she slumped against the man holding her captive.

"Khalif!" Lee shouted, his voice competing with the tempestuous weather. "Let her go."

Supporting Amanda's limp body with one arm, he raised the gun to the side of her chest with the other. "Back off, Stetson, or she dies."

Already in his stomach, Lee's heart began to beat a more frantic tattoo. He reached slowly for his shoulder holster, but Khalif was faster, shifting Amanda's limp body in front of him. "Are you that sure of your aim?" he asked. "Because you might hit me, but you're surely going to hit her."

As Lee forced his hand to drop back to his side, he was met by another flash of lightning. In that fraction of a second, Lee saw Khalif squint, and he made his move. With a growl that came from a long-forgotten primal place, he broke into a sprint and hurled himself bodily against Amanda's captor – aiming for Khalif's side to avoid hitting Amanda. As he fell to the ground, he let Amanda fall next to him, and Lee continued to press.

Fighting not with form or structure, but fueled by pure animal anger, he punched Khalif repeatedly – in the jaw, the stomach, the solar plexus, until the rogue foreign operative had long ceased fighting back.

Reaching up, Lee began to apply pressure to Khalif's wrist, trying to wrest the gun out of the other man's hand. Khalif grimaced in pain, but did not surrender his firearm. Lee pressed further, and heard a snap as the other man's hand went limp and the gun slipped to the ground.

Picking it up, Lee turned it on him. "Get up," he growled. Bruised and bloody, Khalif complied, wincing as he moved his arm.

"Up against the wall," Lee motioned toward the aluminum-sided warehouse wall, and bit back the clichéd, 'and spread 'em.'

Lee pulled a pair of plastic flexicuffs from the hem of his jacket and tightened them around Khalif's wrists – noting with a small amount of pleasure that his right one was already beginning to swell. With another pair, he carefully secured him to a drainpipe, preventing his escape. He then held the gun over the other man's head, threatening to knock him out as he had done Amanda. Sneering as he saw him flinch, Lee only muttered, "coward," and turned away.

Amanda was still on the ground. Kneeling at her side, he felt the lump at the base of her skull and a new wave of anger began to spread through his chest. The shattered glass from his car window had scraped her cheek just below her eye and, mixed with the rainwater, small drops of blood had run down her face like red tears.

"Oh, Amanda." He wiped the red droplets away, letting his fingers linger along her cheekbone only slightly longer than necessary.

He scooped her into his arms, and effortlessly carried her the short distance back to the Corvette. Wrestling with the driver's side door, he slid Amanda into the seat. Then, with a quick glance to be sure that his captive was secure, reached over her to pick up the mobile phone.

At his boss' answer, Lee spoke choppily, breathlessly. "Billy – Scarecrow – It was a trap – Amanda's hurt – We've got Khalif."

Lee hung up, returning his attention to Amanda. "You're going to be okay. It's going to be okay. I'll take care of you."

He held her hand as he spoke – unconsciously stroking her fingers

"Lee?" She clutched his hand, squinting to bring his face into focus. "What happened? What's going on? Ohhhh . . ." she brought her hand up to her head. "My head is \*killing\* me."

Lee motioned in the direction of the captive, still leaning sullenly against the drainpipe. "That's Hashim Khalif. He's a Libyan agent – we've been hoping to catch him for a while. He's also the man responsible for the bump on your head."

"Oooohh," Amanda scowled at Khalif. She then caught a glimpse of the glass on the passenger seat. "Your car, too?"

"Looks that way." It was Lee's turn to grimace.

A fleet of Agency sedans, splashing through a puddle as they came around the corner, caused him to drop his hand. "Looks like the cavalry's here."

Amanda nodded and then grimaced at the pain the movement caused her. "Yeah..."

One team of agents rushed toward Khalif while another flocked toward the Corvette.

"Mrs. King?" A young agent held his hand out to her. "I'm Alex Torkas. Can you tell me what happened?"

"She doesn't remember anything," Lee answered for her.

Alex glared at him. "I'm sure Mrs. King can answer for herself."

Amanda wrinkled her brow. "He's right; I don't."

"Well, let's get you back to the Agency and let the doctors check you over." Alex took her hand and helped her out of the car.

Lee moved to keep in step with them and was cut off by another agent. "We're going to have to ask you to ride in the other car."

"Marissa, please..."

She shook her head causing her deep black bob to swing back and forth. "No contact until you've been debriefed. No exceptions."

Scowling, Lee followed her.

In the other car, Amanda sat in the back and watched, mesmerized, as the windshield wipers did combat with the deluge.

She wondered where Lee had gone. She wished she could remember what had happened. She wondered when she'd see Lee again. She was looking forward to finding out what was going on.

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"I told you; I don't remember." Amanda grimaced as the sound of her voice reverberated through her own head.

She wanted nothing more than for this day to be over. Instead, she was in a dimly lit conference room facing her boss and a cadre of other Agency administrators.

"Mrs. King . . ." Billy began. "Amanda . . . No one's in trouble here. We're just trying to get an idea of what happened. Now, do you really mean to tell us that you can't remember what you and S carecrow discussed before he went to inspect the warehouse? Surely he had a reason for leaving you behind?"

She furrowed her brow, trying to ignore the throbbing at the base of her skull. Images flashed through her head – Lee in two different socks. Lee evading her questions. Lee moodily leaving the car when she pressed further. Losing track of her surroundings as she lost herself in thought. "No," she answered his question. "I can't remember anything."

Billy sighed and put down his pen. "Mrs. King, if you're keeping something from us . . ."

"I'm not," she stated firmly and looked from Billy to the exit and then back again. "I'm really very tired . . ."

"You're dismissed . . ." Billy sighed again. Taking a more personal note, he asked, "Will you be okay to get home?"

Amanda nodded, grimacing again at the pain it caused her. "I'll ask Lee to take me."

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"Hi," Lee looked up from his paperwork as Amanda entered the O Bureau.

"Hi," Amanda answered him and put her purse down on her desk. "Everything okay with Khalif?"

Lee grinned, "Telling us everything and begging for leniency."

"Good," Amanda smiled softly. She moved to sit in her chair and another wave of dizziness left her sitting a lot harder than she intended.

"Whoa!" He was at her side in an instant. "I think we better get you home."

She nodded glumly. "I think that might be a good idea."

Lee supported her as she stood, and though it wasn't entirely necessary kept his arm around her as they made their way down their stairs and to her car. "Keys," he said, and held his hand out to her. "You're in no shape to drive."



Biting back her argument about the Wagoneer not even being broken in yet, she handed him the keys. She knew he was right.

He helped her into the passenger seat. As he closed the door after her she felt as though its thump resonated throughout not only the vehicle, but her body.

She closed her eyes as he pulled out of the garage onto Wisconsin Avenue – wanting to dull her senses to all that was going on around her, and praying to the universe for some assistance in the matter.

Lee splashed through a puddle and she could hear the splatter as it hit the windshield and then the squeaking hum as the windshield wipers began to wipe it away.

Splish, squeak, tap . . . splish, squeak, tap . . . splish, squeak, tap – it had a rhythm to it, and she forced her mind to wrap around that, and let everything else float away.

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She sighed, and he turned to look at her, and instantly he was transported back to the warehouse, watching her struggle against Khalif as thunder and lightning flashed around them. Then, watching her lose that struggle – suddenly, shockingly.

Once again, he felt the mind-numbing guilt and gut wrenching pain. He'd already lost one partner – could he bear the loss of another? Especially when she . . .

A car horn trumpeted behind him, and he realized he'd been sitting at a green light. He quickly took his foot off the brake and continued the journey.

"Lee?" Amanda looked up at him, her eyes half lidded. "Is everything okay?"

The question, so innocent, and yet loaded with the weight of all he'd ever told himself would never happen, caught him off guard, and his hands clenched reflexively against the steering wheel. "It's fine," he managed, knowing even in her semi-lucidity she'd see through him, and yet not sure what else to say.

Fine was a state he'd perfected long ago. Fine was no past, no future, only the fleeting present. Fine was where he went with girls whose names ended in i. Fine was a bottle of wine and a cut of beef. Fine was as comfortable as a pair of monogrammed robes with matching bath towels. And, while fine always left him with that empty feeling – like someone who'd finished a four course meal but skipped dessert, who was he to complain? He was, after all . . . fine.

"Okay."

The lack of argument caught him off-guard, and he found himself tasting words, wanting to speak, just to fill the space that she'd left absent.

"Amanda, I . . . we . . . remember this morning when you asked what was going on . . ."

He took the slight groan from her side of the car as assent, and continued. "It's just that . . . Amanda, I'm worried. If you . . . I can't lose another partner."

"And I'm not going anywhere . . ." she opened her eyes again – more fully this time, and reached for his hand. "Especially not with you watching my back."

He squeezed her hand in return, and then brushed her knuckles with his lips. "It's a full time job, you could try not to get into so much trouble, y'know."

"Gotta keep you on your toes, Stetson." She smiled weakly and yawned

He rounded the corner and pulled to a stop in front of her house. She seemed to have fallen asleep again, and he was reluctant to wake her. He turned off the headlights and left the engine running – as he debated whether or not to wake her, the last three years ran through his mind at breakneck speed. When had he gone from wanting to be rid of her, to fearing her absence – and what had taken him so long?

He disengaged the ignition and reached over, brushing his fingers along her arm to wake her up.

"Lee – oh, are we here?" She looked around stiffly and yawned. "I guess so."

"Let's get you inside." He unbuckled his seatbelt, and exited the car. Opening her door, he reached in, and hands around her waist, swept her down.

Rather than letting go, however, his grip tightened, and he drew her closer to him. He cupped her chin in his hand, tilting her head upward and she sighed again, softly. Her lips were relaxed, and looking up into his eyes, she blinked – once, twice, three times. Running his thumb down her jaw line once more, he then leaned in, and captured her lips with his.

Her lips were like warm honey – sweet liquid, running wherever he wanted it, and her tongue flicked out daringly, teasingly, spurring him on. He reached down, cupping her buttocks and lifting trying to get her ever closer.

And then her porch light flicked on. "Amanda, is that you?"

Lee heard Dotty West's voice call out into the night time.

"Yeah, Mother, I'm just . . . checking the mail."

"I got it already, Amanda. Come in – I kept your supper warm."

She shrugged at him apologetically, and he reached out – clasping her hand one last time. "You take care of yourself, Amanda King. I'll see you tomorrow."

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