

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Author: Merel

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Amanda approached the apartment door as if it was the gateway to hell. It had been less than twelve hours since she'd stormed out of the same apartment, leaving Scarecrow trussed up like a Thanksgiving turkey and tied to a decorative column in his living room. Less than twelve hours... and yet it felt like an eternity to Amanda.

It hadn't taken long for the adrenaline high to wear off and for her to regret most of the previous night's events. She wasn't sure what had come over her. Maybe she'd simply reached the end of her patience with Lee and, unfortunately, her rare but volatile temper had taken control and pushed her common sense out the window. What had she been thinking? Tantalizing him like that... leading him on... then tying him up to that column. The answer was easy. She hadn't been thinking. She'd been feeling. Her feelings had been hurt by his callous comment to Francine and she'd allowed those hurt feelings to propel her into actions she now desperately regretted.

Now she had to make things right. She wasn't sure how she was going to do it, but standing stiff-legged outside his apartment door wasn't going to help.

He was going to kill her.

No, first he would torture her, then he'd kill her.

Maybe he'd humiliate her, then torture her, then kill her.

In any case, it would all be over soon.

Cautiously, she leaned an ear against the metal door, straining to hear any movement that might tell her if Lee had managed to extricate himself. Once she'd gotten home, she'd called his apartment repeatedly throughout the night, only to hear, time after time, the sound of his answering machine picking up. She cringed,

recalling his friendly voice announcing that he was unable to come to the phone. Thanks to her he was definitely unable to come to the phone. And undoubtedly feeling much less friendly than his taped voice sounded.

There was no use putting it off. It had to be done. She had to find out if he'd been able to free himself from his bonds, and if not, she'd have to untie him herself. She couldn't leave him there like that for someone to find. Well, she could... but she figured if she did she'd have to enter the Agency's witness protection program and how would she explain that to Mother and the boys?

Digging into the pocket of her coat she pulled out the lock-pick kit that Leatherneck had given her recently. She'd proven to be quite adept at jimmying locks with only a hairpin or Bombers Booster button, but Leatherneck had thought it more professional that she have the right tools for the job. She quickly worked the lock and very slowly opened the door a crack. Taking a deep breath and saying a prayer that she wouldn't find Lee as she had left him the night before, she stepped inside the apartment.

A sigh escaped her body as she spied the tattered remnants of her stockings on the floor next to the empty column. Hesitantly, she stepped further into the apartment, her eyes shifting about the living and dining rooms, searching for any signs of life. She'd seen the 'Vette parked out front when she arrived, so she was sure he was in the apartment somewhere.

Now that she knew Lee hadn't been in bondage all night, Amanda began to rethink her decision to face him, and the music, so soon. Maybe it would be best just to let things settle for a day or two. No sense inflaming the situation by approaching Scarecrow while the memories of last night's debacle were still so fresh in his mind.

She turned quietly on her heel and tiptoed towards the door, making good her escape. A creaking noise followed by the deep timbre of a man's voice stopped her dead in her tracks, her hand hovering about the doorknob.

"Leaving so soon?"

Amanda swung around to find Lee watching her as he leaned casually on the jamb of the doorway to his bedroom. His hair, dark from a recent shower, was slicked back

from his face. He was wearing a navy blue towel, slung low across his hips, and a smile.

Amanda felt as if a spell had been placed on her. A spell cast by the intense gaze of Lee's piercing hazel eyes. Her feet were concrete blocks, her muscles unwilling or unable to make them move. Her heart pounded in her chest. In the silence between them she could hear the steady tick-tock of the mantel clock. For what seemed like a lifetime she stood there, mute, staring back at the man who, at this moment, was the last person on the face of the earth she wanted to be alone with.

Lee pushed away from the doorjamb and walked toward her casually. Amanda desperately searched his face for any signs of murderous intent. Finding only an insolent grin, her eyes perused the rest of him. *"At least I don't have to worry about him being armed,"* she thought as she focused on the tight muscles of his abdomen. Her mouth was dry and she licked her lips nervously.

"Lee," she squeaked, finally finding her voice and moving her gaze back to his face. She coughed, clearing her throat. "Lee," she stated stupidly once again.

"Returning to the scene of the crime?" Lee raised an eyebrow, stopping a few feet in front of her to lean against the column to which he had so recently been tied. "Classic criminal behavior."

Amanda chewed her bottom lip. "Lee, I'd really like to explain..."

"You'd like to explain?" Lee asked, stepping away from the column to stand in front of her. "This should be interesting."

He still radiated warmth from his shower and he smelled of soap and after-shave. Amanda's head was swimming with the nearness of his barely clad body and her apprehension about what was to come.

"Lee, first let me say that I am so sorry." She swallowed hard and tried to focus on his eyes and not the smooth, bare chest that was so tantalizingly close.

"Explanations, Amanda." His voice took on a slight edge but his sly smile and cocked brow never faltered.

Taking a deep breath, she started, "Well... ah..." then trailed off.

Lee leaned in, "You said I didn't know what sexy was," he prodded, whispering into her right ear.

She bolted to her left, frantic to put some space between herself, Lee, and that towel. He seemed calm. Frighteningly calm. Far too calm. Amanda took a deep breath and willed her knees to stop shaking. She moved to stand by the sofa, hoping some distance between them would help to quiet her nerves.

"You don't understand... " she squeaked, having gathered just enough saliva to form the three words.

"Oh, I think I understood you just fine." Lee turned and walked towards her. He approached slowly, languidly, like a jungle cat that was toying with its prey before devouring it. Amanda's eyes widened as he drew near.

Seeing the devilish glint in his eyes, she backed away from him. He pressed on, steadily advancing towards her as she retreated, thwarting her efforts to keep a portion of the couch between them.

"You," he drawled, his narrowing eyes glued to hers, "made yourself perfectly clear last night. I admit I was a tad bit confused at first. Chalk it up to the charming ensemble you changed into." His eyes raked down her body and back up to her face. "However, by the time you left, it was crystal clear."

"C-C-Crystal--" she stuttered.

"Clear," he stated.

"Lee," she croaked.

"Amanda," he purred, continuing to follow her around the sofa.

"Lee, I said a lot of things last night... " Amanda scurried into the dining room, planting herself at the far end of the long mahogany table.

Lee followed her, standing at the opposite end. "Yes, you did." He started to walk around the table towards her. "You said I didn't know what sexy was. Didn't you?"

Amanda circled around the table, backing out of the dining room. "Yes, but I... "

"You were wrong, Amanda, I know what sexy is." He continued, his voice low and smooth, "Walking in the rain in Paris is sexy. The nape of a woman's neck is sexy. The scent of perfume on her wrist is sexy." He watched as his prey unknowingly backed towards the column. "Blood-red lipstick on the collar of a dress shirt is sexy." His longer legs began to eat up the space between them.

"Uhh..." Amanda's feet caught for a moment, tangling in the tattered remains of the discarded stockings, and she fell back into the column. Before she could right herself, Lee was there, effectively blocking her escape with a hand on either side of her.

Her breathing grew shallow as he pressed the length of his body to hers, his lips hovering mere millimeters from her own. "Yes, I most definitely know what sexy is, Mrs. King."

She could feel the warmth of his breath on her face as he moved to once again whisper in her ear.

"It's getting to know someone. Really know them. Know them better than maybe you know yourself." His voice was husky, his body resting intimately against her. "Sexy is taking your time and realizing that the journey is just as important as the destination. It's realizing that the person you've been waiting for your whole life, the person you didn't even think existed, is right under your nose."

He pulled back slightly and she looked up into his eyes. Her mind struggled to focus on his words and not just his proximity. "What did you say?" she rasped.

"Another thing from last night," he stated, ignoring her question and her incredulous gaze. "I seem to recall you using my body as a canvas for your artistic talents."

She'd drawn a heart on his chest. A big red heart. Scrawled with a tube of her best lipstick. She'd taunted him, daring him to reveal himself to her. She nodded, her brain slowly beginning to understand where this conversation was leading.

"So," he murmured, reaching down to grasp one of her hands in his. "You want to know what's in here?" He placed her hand on his chest, where she'd marked his body.

She could feel the steady beat of his heart beneath her fingertips, the smooth, toned skin under her palm. "Yes," she whispered, nodding again.

"Then we're both going to have to come clean," he stared down at her. His eyes darkened and he cupped her chin with his other hand. "No more games. No more denial. No more pretending."

"No more," Amanda repeated, her eyes bright. A part of her was afraid to believe that what she was hearing was real. But the look in Lee's eyes told her that he was, at last, speaking from his heart. Hesitantly at first, then with more assurance, she wrapped her free arm around him, pulling him closer, her fingertips slipping under the terrycloth material of his towel to caress his lower back.

"Okay, then." He smiled, his dimple deepening, "I'll show you mine, if you show me yours."

She glanced down between them, studying what little she could see of the thick terry towel that adorned his hips. Raising an eyebrow she looked back at him. Moving her hand up his chest and around his neck, she pulled his head down to hers. Slowly, softly she brushed her mouth against his. "Sounds like a plan, Scarecrow," she said, lightly nibbling his lower lip.

Lee trailed his fingers along her jaw, then pushed his hand through her hair, holding her tight as his mouth opened and deepened the searing kiss. They were so totally absorbed in each other, neither noticed the blue towel loosen and fall. The terrycloth puddled on the floor at their feet, joining the tattered pair of stockings.

The End