

On A Woman's Mind

By Scribblesinink

Heather tossed and turned in the darkness of her bedroom, wide awake even though the night was quickly sliding toward daybreak. She'd tried everything: reading a book, making herself some hot chocolate, attempting to finish a crossword puzzle. All to no avail—sleep still eluded her. Her mind kept going over the conversation she'd had with Jake down by the river, replaying his words over and over and over as if they were a recording on a loop. He'd said he loved her and wanted to be with her. But could she trust that it was real? Or was it only his dislike for Edward that, after all this time, made him decide he loved her?

She switched over to her side, plumping up the pillow beneath her cheek. The window was a faint gray square set against a wall of black, a sliver of light coming through the curtains from the street lamp outside painting a thin, yellow stripe across the bed. She stared at the window, not really seeing it.

Edward had been incredibly understanding when she'd told him about it, even though she'd caught fear and panic in his gaze before he'd managed to mask it. With him, there wasn't a glimmer of doubt in her mind: he loved her. And he was a good man; she was certain that if she chose him, he wouldn't do anything to make her regret it. He respected her and he'd take good care of her. She remembered their first kiss, two days ago, on the back porch of the Richmond farm. That had felt... so good.

And she liked him. She really did. He was handsome and strong, and kind and gentle.... Maybe, she thought, she even loved him.

But she didn't feel about Edward the way she felt about Jake....

She rolled onto her stomach, burying her face into the pillow with a groan. What should she do? It was so unfair: no matter what she did or whom she chose, someone was going to end up getting hurt. And she didn't want to do that to either man.

If only she didn't have to make that choice....

She squeezed her eyes closed, picturing Jake in her mind, that crooked half-smile that always made her heart go pitter-patter curving up his mouth. He reached out a hand to brush a stray lock of hair behind her ear, a habit he'd had almost from the day they first met. His thumb caressed her jaw, and Heather leaned into his touch, closing her eyes.

With a start, she became aware there was someone behind her. Glancing over her shoulder, she saw it was Edward, his brown eyes, warm and soft, gazing at her, like they had at the wedding, right before he'd kissed her. He put his hands on her shoulders, squeezing lightly as if in encouragement, before running his palms along her arms.

Heather swallowed. This was... strange. "What...?"

The rest of the question died on her lips when two sets of deft hands started to undo buttons and zippers. She thought that maybe she should object, but she discovered her clothes were gone before she could even form a coherent sentence—oddly, she didn't feel embarrassed, although she thought she ought to be mortified. And then Jake leaned in toward her, capturing her lips with his, and all thoughts fled from her mind. His kiss was both more sure and more passionate than it had been when he'd kissed her back after she'd thrown herself at him before he went to Rogue River, and she willingly parted her lips to answer him. Still behind her, Edward wrapped his arms around her waist, drawing her against him and cupping her breasts in his palms, his thumbs coaxing her nipples to hard points. She arched her back, mewling softly as Edward's touch and Jake's kiss bombarded her senses and overwhelmed her.

Next thing she knew, they all were on a bed—her bed? Edward settled her in his lap, pulling her back flush against his broad chest. She could feel his erection press against her buttocks, and perhaps she should be afraid, but his lips softly nibbled on her earlobe, making her shiver with desire. Jake nudged her knees apart and crawled up between her legs. He leaned down to kiss and lick the crease between her thigh and hip, before he shifted to suck on—.

"Oh my God!" Heather shot up straight, a scandalized cry on her lips. That was—. She blinked stupidly at the sunlight streaming in through the curtain, not immediately recognizing the room as her own bedroom. She was alone, tangled in the sheets and covered in sweat.

She let herself fall back against the pillow with a dismayed groan, strands of damp hair tickling her neck. As if having to make a decision wasn't difficult enough...! Now she was having sex dreams about the two of them?

Heat suffused her face as she recollected the dream, and fresh perspiration broke out on her brow. She extricated herself from the clammy sheets, not at all surprised to find that her nightshirt was stuck to her body, and that her panties—she shoved the thought away, unfinished.

She padded into the bathroom, dumped her nightclothes in the hamper, and reached for the shower tap. Her life had certainly taken a strange turn, she mused, that day the

bombs went off and she first met Jake Green. Who'd have ever imagined it: geeky Heather Lisinski torn between two lovers. She uttered a dry, humorless laugh—yeah, right now, she really did feel like a fool—and stepped into the spray, gasping in shock as icy water hit her flushed body. She hoped the cold would help her forget the dream.

She stayed in the shower until her teeth chattered and her skin was blue. Only then did she turn off the water and towel herself dry, although she didn't feel any more convinced she was ready to face the world—and the choice she had to make.

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