



If I Must

Amy Lane

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Joel Martinez, a practical and organized computer programmer, is roommates with Ian Cooper, a certified IQ-in-the-stratosphere mathematical genius who literally can't find his own underwear in the mess of his day-to-day life. When Joel uneasily leaves Ian for the holidays, he ends up telling stories to his sister and discovers he feels much more for Ian than he thought. So when Ian calls, distraught because the only other thing in his life that loves him (a half-feral cat named Manky Bastard) is going to have to be put down, Joel hurries back home hoping that opposites really do attract.

If I Must Details

Date : Published December 2009 by Dreamspinner Press

ISBN : 9781615813377

Author : Amy Lane

Format : ebook 69 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary, Holiday

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From Reader Review If I Must for online ebook

♥Laddie♥ (Lee Lee) says

I can't BELIEVE I've never written a review for the AWESOMENESS that is this little story...

A number of months ago Joel met Ian when he saved Ian from being crushed by weights at the gym. Joel is neat, organized, a good guy that you could meet one day while getting coffee or waiting for the bus or something. Joel's looking for somewhere to live that has character. Here's where Ian comes in. Ian's a tall, slim but muscular, certifiably mathematical genius, blonde, absentminded professor who's Australian. The college pays for Ian to live in a kickass apartment in a Victorian house and all they want from him is for him to give some lectures and write a paper. Yeah, Ian is that much of a genius. Ian has a spare room and he and Joel become roommates.

Okay, I'm going to stop right there for a minute to say that I love the way this story is written. About half of it is told in a series of flashbacks but not the usual sort of flashbacks. Joel's at his mother's house for a vacation right before Thanksgiving and he's telling his older sister about Ian. That's how we learn about Ian, through Joel's eyes. It really, really works well because the reader sees just how in love Joel is even though Joel hasn't faced the fact that he's in love.

Through Joel's stories the reader also gets to see Ian in a light that makes him more real than just being a caricature of an absentminded genius. Ian, or Ee as Joel calls him, remains my favorite genius in the M/M genre. More than a few authors have tried to pull off the scatterbrained genius character and I'm never completely satisfied. Ian, though, is absolutely loveable, adorable, believable, and just plain sweet. I totally understood why Joel fell in love with him.

Joel is just as loveable as Ian. The way he takes care of his Aussie genius is sweet. Ian brings light and vitality into Joel's life and Joel makes sure that, in him, Ian has someone who takes care of him and lets him know that he's important. When Joel finally figures out, with the help of his amazing mother and sister, what he feels for Ian I was grinning like a mad woman. Ian and Joel just BELONG together. They fit like puzzle pieces.

Joel and Ian are my comfort read couple and they remain one of the most memorable Amy Lane couples for me. *If I Must* is also the first Amy Lane book I ever read and I'm glad this book was my introduction to her work. I've just reread it for the gazillionth time and as always my love for this story holds strong. I highly recommend.

Monika says

This was cute, sweet, funny, irritating and annoying it had that awww factor I like and there was heartbreak but not the angsty kind, I will admit a couple of tears were shed. Ian made me laugh and for anyone who thinks there isn't a real life person out there like Ian well I'm here to tell you you're wrong and while Ian maybe a tiny bit over-the-top I thought he was the sweetest thing but could I please shake some sense into that boy? I know not going to happen and why would I want to its the thing I loved about him. Unfortunately

it was Joel that I found irritating and annoying is there anyone out there that is that perfect? If there is could you please send him my way? :-p

This was a feel good little short and I just have to say it "I wish it were longer!" *lol*

~◊~Domi(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says

3.5 stars

Look, peeps, this has a kitten on the cover, yeah? Need I say anything else? This was totally adorbs, fluffy, and sweet. Loved the brilliant, geeky, totally spacey Aussie, Ian, and his roommate Joel, a Hispanic computer programmer. Ian forgets to eat and clean, and perpetually meets people while he's half-naked. Joel keeps Ian's life organized and falls for Ian in the process. It's a good thing Joel's feelings are returned. This is a lovely, low-angst Lane story, like a slightly sweet, spiked glass of eggnog. Holidays not necessary to enjoy.

Heller says

From the Amy Lane's I've read this very true to course. A sweet angst-fest of a story that focuses on a computer programmer, Joel, and his lovably screwed up genius roommate, Ian.

Cute cover!

Dina says

Cute little story. Joel was nice, but Ian grated on my nerves. The writing was OK, but there were tons of editing errors. What's the deal with ebooks? Don't they get proofread before being released?

Elspeth says

Very cute, loved it!

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

4.35*

I **love** this story. I read it originally back in 2011 and have reread it a few times since then, and realized I never wrote a review for it.

I'm not really going to write one now either, I'm just going say again that I **love** this feel good read. Ian, the lovable, brilliant, absent minded genius. Alone most of his life, no one that loves him or cares for him, and that boy needs someone to care for him.

Joel, the kind, sweet, caring roommate is just the person for the job. He sees Ian, really sees him.

“Ian’s heart was as big as the goddamned sky. It was as simple as that.”

Ian knows what a great friend he has in Joel and is scared to death of loosing him and disappearing back into his *just existing*, no one ever **stays** with Ian, eventually they all leave him. I could feel Ian's heartbreak at just the thought of not having Joel in his life. **“Ian swallowed, hard, “or when you’re here. You’re the only one who makes me... real.”**

The ultimate feel-good-friends-to-lovers-holiday-short.

Oh and there is a cat too.

Otila says

Joel Martinez might be in love with his roommate, Ian. But that's impossible because Joel is straight. Right? Riiight.

This is a sweet Christmas story. Ian was a little too OTT helpless but Joel was adorable and I love me a Latino MC. Too bad the Spanish is all jacked up. Unfortunately, I'm used to it and if I like the story enough I just overlook it. This however was one of three books I read in a week that was riddled with misspelled Spanish words and it bugged me. I also expect more from an Amy Lane book. So **2.5**, I guess. Rounded down because of the aneurysm I almost had from having to see *mammi* and *pappi* spelled like that over and over.

Ugh, and don't even get me started on *punto*. Aren't people supposed to at least know the bad words?

? Irena ? says

Roommates to lovers

One is completely in control and well organized, the other is his total opposite. Both have their own insecurities.

Ian's absent-mindedness is a bit exaggerated to unbelievable proportions, but it's still a cute holiday story.

Deja Dei says

Not much I can add that hasn't been said. Heartwarming and enjoyable. I will say the author has done a great job making believable and likable characters where they could have so easily fallen into cliches in a less talented author's hands. These guys felt so real, and it made me care about them right away. One to read when you need low conflict and cheering up. Reading this is like eating chocolate :)

Katrina Passick Lumsden says

I don't feel this was up to Lane's usual standards, and honestly, it would've been a lot better had it been longer. The character's are interesting enough to devote a full-length story to, so only getting a snippet of a tale made me feel shortchanged. Still, it's cute for what it is, I really liked the characters, and the friends-to-lovers theme is usually a nice standard.

Deeze says

I LOVE this book. Its such a feel good read. Ian is my favorite nerdy kinda guy, a total genius but completely at a loss in the real world. Joel is just a sweetheart with the way he looks out for Ian from the start. They both have insecurities and when Ian starts thinking Joel's gonna leave him my heart broke for him, as it did when poor Manky Bastard had to go away

Recommend to anyone looking for Fun, Love and that Awwww factor lol

Re read and I love it even more.

ETA Another book that just never gets old. Ian is one of my favorite characters. Would love another peak into Joel and Ian's life.

ETA Still waiting for an up date on this couple, but in the mean time still a great read

ETA Have I mentioned I adore this story? How about I would love an update? Seriously I need an update lol.

Vio says

Lovable and a good pick me up. Ian is in a shambolic state of disarray and wouldn't have a clue how to look after himself, coming from a genius you might think organisation is his forte. Don't be fooled he may be clever but every other aspect of his life is a mess, he hardly sleeps eats or has any sense of real time. Joel rents a room with Ian and helps to keep him balanced and maybe a bit more sane. Ian is adorable and frustrating at times I wondered how Joel didn't erupt and blow his top more often. Joel is his lifeline and I would hate to think how Ian's life could spiral out of control without him. Ian is craving love and hoping Joel will be the one who doesn't leave in the morning, all the doubts and anxieties work out so wonderfully in the end. Bonus the kitties names are a joy!

Kaje Harper says

This is the first Amy Lane book I've read that I found as irritating as it was appealing. Ian is just too helpless,

it is either pathological or a deliberate attempt to attract Joel, which would be too conniving to fit his supposed character. But this guy was on his own for nine years before Joel, he should know how to run out to the corner for Doritos. (A scene where he forgot to eat for two days and then bought only junk food would be okay. The existing version is over the top.) Also, writers, if you must use an IQ score to show how smart your character is, go BIG. This guy is supposedly so smart people throw him money and put up with his eccentricities, with an IQ of 170. Well, I know several people with IQs over 170 and while they are often brilliant in their own fields, we are pretty normal folk. You don't get this kind of situation until you get to Stephen Hawking level or add some major creativity to the smarts. So if you must use IQ, go over 200 (I know two of those, and one is maybe too bright to fit with us mortals comfortably.) I also found Joel's transition from straight roommate to love interest much too fast and smooth, both on the emotional and on the physical level. And I was not sanguine about the length of this relationship. When things are that one-sided in the care-taking area, it's going to get old. And just to complete the bitching, I'd have liked to see more grief over the cat for herself, not just her place in the relationship. With all the flaws, it is only Amy Lane's writing skills that redeem this story.

Ami says

I picked this book because of the cat cover *g*. If only the cat plays a bigger role. Anyway, the story is nice. Ian, as one of the main characters, are so messed-up *lol*. I guess having high IQ does that for you. It's interesting to see Ian and Joel together
