

**Time Frame:** Who knows! Sometime third season perhaps

**Feedback:** Definitely! Absolutely! Positively!

**Author's Note:** Another piece of fluff, with a minor **\*\*mush\*\*** warning. Thanks to Pam and the Usual Suspects for all their help!

### **Could I Have This Dance**

The restaurant was small and dimly lit. The faint golden glow of a single taper candle illuminated a table set to perfection, the candlelight sparking and dancing off the fine china and polished silver. Separated only by this simple centerpiece and a length of table covered in crisp white linen, Lee Stetson and Amanda King sat enjoying their meal.

Lee reached for his wine, taking this opportunity to cast another glance at his dinner partner. It had been nearly impossible for him to keep his eyes off Amanda this evening, and the champagne filled-crystal glass lingered at his lips, allowing him an extra few unguarded moments to appreciate the view. Amanda was dressed exquisitely in a black velvet, off the shoulder dress, her hair piled in soft ringlets atop her head. To Lee she seemed the vision of feminine perfection.

"Are you enjoying yourself, Amanda?" he asked, causing his beautiful partner to glance up into his watchful eyes.

She smiled and dabbed at the corner of her mouth with the burgundy linen napkin. "Enjoying myself? Oh, I should say so. This is the most wonderful restaurant, Lee."

He reached into the silver wine bucket beside the table, pulling out the half-empty bottle of Dom Perignon 78. Without asking he replenished her glass and then his, then returned the wine bottle to its home.

"Thank you," she murmured, taking a delicate sip of the champagne. "I guess I'm still a bit overwhelmed, and confused."

Lee raised an eyebrow. "Confused about what, Amanda?"

She shrugged her bare shoulders, causing Lee's heart to skip a beat. "Well, when you asked me out to dinner, I guess I just didn't envision this," she gestured to the elegant surroundings.

"Well," Lee hesitated, his eyes focusing on the soft line of her shoulder and neck, moving slowly up to catch her brown eyes with his own. "We just don't get out enough, you know. Not like this, I mean. No work, just us. As friends." He smiled seductively and drew out the last word.

Amanda blushed delicately, taking another sip of champagne.

Lee's smile grew. He loved bringing the rose out in her cheeks and he always knew just how to do it. "Besides," he continued, "you seemed a bit down this week. I thought maybe a special night out would cheer you up."

Amanda quickly looked down, concentrating on centering her napkin squarely on her lap.

"Amanda... if there was something wrong, something bothering you, I hope you'd feel like you could talk with me about it?" Lee tilted his head in question.

Amanda's gaze flickered briefly between her food and Lee's now inquisitive hazel eyes. "Oh, it's nothing, really. Just..." She fumbled with her napkin again, pulling it to her mouth to cover her unease, her eyes flitting away from Lee's.

"Amanda?" Lee reached a hand over to gently grasp hers.

"It's really so silly. It's nothing you even need to be bothered with," she said, taking a deep breath. She looked up and smiled into his eyes.

At his look of determination she sighed. "This week... well, actually, tonight... is my anniversary. Well, it would have been my anniversary. Mine and Joe's. If we hadn't... I mean if we'd stayed... well, you know."

She kept her eyes averted from Lee's and gently pulled her hand free of his. She tried to focus on the couples dancing on the small dance floor in the corner of the room, surprised by the tears that had filled her eyes.

"Oh," Lee breathed. "I guess it still kinda hurts, huh?" He regretted the question before it even escaped his lips.

He was embarrassed that he'd pushed her into revealing such a personal loss in the first place. He was also vaguely annoyed that that she was still grieving over her marriage to Joe. Her melancholy over her divorce touched him in ways he was ill-prepared to deal with. If they'd been trapped in a den of KGB agents or being threatened by terrorists that wanted to end civilization as they knew it he wouldn't have a moment of trouble finding the right words to tell her that everything would be okay...that the great Scarecrow would be able to get them out of any fix they might be in.

However, this... this was different matter. A matter of the heart. This was territory that Lee was definitely unfamiliar and inexperienced with. No game plan to draw on, no set rules to follow in this game. There was nothing Lee Stetson hated more than being faced with something he wasn't good at. He was definitely not good at this.

Amanda finally drew her gaze away from the dance floor, fixing Lee with eyes that were still slightly bright with tears. "Yes, a little," she whispered hoarsely. Her chin crinkled slightly, the corners of her mouth dropping. "I'm sorry... It's not even that I'm in love with Joe. I mean I did love him. Once. A long time ago. In some ways, I guess I always will."

She glanced quickly up at Lee. Noticing his rather pained expression, she rushed on. "It's just, we were married and it failed and that's not an easy thing to reconcile. You just always kind of remember the day you got married with all the hopes and dreams and plans and... well, you never think it's going to end up like this. I guess this time of year always reminds me of that failure. A failure that Joe and I and our children have had to live with. I guess in some way I wish it could have been different, that's all. And yet, I know this the only way it could be. You know what I mean? Oh, this is so ridiculous. I feel so stupid."

"Hey, it's not stupid." Lee again reached for her hand, this time holding it firmly in his grasp. He dropped his search for a game plan and decided the only rules to this game were going to come from instinct. He rubbed his thumb over the knuckles of her hand. "I do understand what you mean, Amanda. But I think you need to cut yourself a little slack. From what you've told me, both you and Joe really made an effort to keep your marriage together. It just didn't work, Amanda. It happens. I

don't see that as a failure. You've managed to stay friends and raise two wonderful boys. How can that be a failure?"

Her continued frown showed him he had not been able to convince her. "Look, Amanda, you're just a very sensitive person. There's nothing wrong with that. You feel things more. That's not always a bad thing. It makes you the person you are. You know, I bet I'd feel the same way if I... ah... well, I mean, if it were me and... ah..." He trailed off not knowing exactly how to finish what he'd started. He'd been on a roll of sorts and suddenly it felt like he'd rolled right off a cliff. Now it was his turn to pull his hand away and avert his eyes towards the dancers.

"Thank you, Lee." Amanda smiled at him as he looked over at her.

"For what? Dinner? Please, no, it was—"

"No, thank you for being a good friend. And for noticing that something had been bothering me. It helped to just acknowledge it... to talk about it. It really did." She reached across the table and tenderly touched Lee's cheek. She felt the muscles in his face tense, briefly, and she began to pull away when he drew her hand back, kissing the palm and holding it softly against his lips.

The band started a new song, a slow romantic melody that Lee vaguely recognized. He reluctantly relinquished her hand, smiling gently at her. When her beautiful eyes twinkled back at him he realized that he was beginning to do the one thing he'd sworn he'd never do again. He was falling in love with this woman. The first rule of the espionage game, the one he'd never tired of quoting to Amanda herself, and he'd gone and broken it. But looking into her sparkling brown eyes, he just couldn't muster up too much concern about his predicament. At this moment, he didn't want to worry or think about anything other than Amanda. He neither needed nor wanted anything beyond simply holding this woman in his arms.

"Would you like to dance?" he asked her quietly. Amanda nodded and Lee stood, pulling her to her feet and over to the dance floor. Taking her into his arms, he suddenly realized how very small Amanda seemed. Delicate and fragile. Like the moment between them. He held her tighter, pulling her slender body against his as she laid her head on his shoulder with a sigh so tender it nearly broke his heart. His breath rustled the tendrils of hair at the nape of her neck and the scent of her perfume enveloped him until all he could think and all he could feel was being in her embrace. *Is this how it feels? Is this it? This total, overwhelming sense of*

*everything in the world spiraling down to this one moment?... Her heart beating next to mine?* It just seemed so simple and yet so perfectly complex. It was the answer to all his questions. It was a million more questions left to answer. But they had plenty of time to figure it all out... all the time in the world. Right now, this instant, there were only the two of them, in each other's arms, swaying slowly to the music.

"Could I have this dance, for the rest of my life?" Lee whispered.

Amanda leaned back, looking up into his face, a question in her eyes.

"The song." He smiled down at her. "Aren't those the lyrics to this song?"

With a knowing smile, Amanda moved back closer into the circle of Lee's arms, her breath warm on his neck. "Yes," she murmured softly, answering both his questions.

**The End**