

**Title:** It'll All Come Out in the Wash

**Author:** BohemianFling

**Summary:** Amanda deals with her decision to resign from the Agency.

**Rating:** PG

**Feedback:** Please! I'd love to hear what you have to say, either on or off list.

**Timeline:** This is a filler for "Brunettes are In." It takes place the night of Lee and Amanda's fight, after the boys have gone to bed.

**Type:** Following "strict" AU rules, it is AU, since this never happened in an episode. Bending those rules, it's not quite AU, because it does stay within canon.

**Disclaimer:** The Scarecrow and Mrs. King characters belong to Warner Bros. and Shoot the Moon Enterprises Ltd. The story, however, is all mine. Please don't post or redistribute this without my consent.

**Notes:** This was originally written as an answer to a challenge to write, by a certain date and time, a filler for "Brunettes Are In." I, the procrastinator that I am, waited until the last minute and wrote it the afternoon it was due, just like I always did with writing assignments in high school & college. Then, I had to beg Dotty to do a quick – and I do mean QUICK! – beta job to meet the deadline, which was way back on August 6, 2001. With her help, I made it just under the (blue?) wire. When I ran across the filler on my hard drive the other day, I decided to post it. I drafted Pam to do another beta, which she graciously did late last night. Any mistakes left in the posted version are most definitely mine, not theirs.

**Thanks:** This wouldn't have been written without the challenge, so thanks very much to the person who issued it. She got me to think and write about something I had never considered. To Dotty and Pam, thank you for the beta jobs! I'd also like to thank the others who participated in the challenge, even though they made me look bad by getting theirs done EARLY. ;-) Without them, the challenge wouldn't have been as much fun.

~~~ SMK ~~~ SMK ~~~ SMK ~~~ SMK ~~~ SMK ~~~ SMK ~~~ SMK ~~~ SMK ~~~ SMK ~~~

"Amanda!"

The impatience in Dotty's voice told Amanda that it wasn't the first time her mother had said her name. She closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and turned toward the couch, where Dotty was busily straightening the cushions.

"What did you say, Mother?"

Dotty pointed to the broken flower pot, dirt, and mangled flowers at Amanda's feet then waved her finger at the dustpan and broom in her daughter's hands. "That won't clean itself up, you know." She tilted her head to one side and gazed thoughtfully at Amanda. "What's bothering you?"

"Nothing, Mother."

"Hmmff," Dotty commented as she bent over to pick up a magazine that had skittered under the coffee table. "I'm your mother, and I know that look. Something is on your mind, and don't try to tell me it's this mess." She stood and waved her arm around the room, punctuating her words by jabbing the air with the magazine. "We've seen worse than this after the boys have had a sleepover with the Junior Trailblazers."

Amanda sighed deeply. She knew her mother wouldn't accept a lame excuse like being tired. Leaning on the broom, she said, "You're right, Mother. Something is on my mind, and I just don't know what to do about it."

"Well, come sit down here with me and we'll talk about it." Dotty settled onto the couch and patted the cushion next to her. "Maybe I can help."

With a grateful yet apprehensive smile, Amanda propped the broom against the wall, dropped the dustpan on the floor, and joined her mother on the couch. Not quite sure how to begin, she fiddled with her scarf while trying to put her thoughts into words.

"So, what's the problem, dear?"

"Oh, Mother. What do you do when someone you work with -- for -- doesn't think you're competent?"

"Is this about that commercial you were supposed to do this morning? Did someone at that place where you work tell you that you weren't good enough to do a laundry ad? I mean that's just ridiculous! You are perfect for selling detergent! You should just march right down there and tell them how many loads of laundry you do in a week. That should set them straight." Dotty slapped her palm against her thigh. "I'm going to write to someone. Better yet, I'll call that place and tell them . . ." She began to rise.

Amanda grasped Dotty's hands and pulled her back to the couch before she could dash off to the telephone and do exactly as she threatened. "Mo-ther! This has absolutely nothing to do with the commercial. There was no commercial."

"No commercial?"

Shaking her head, Amanda repeated, "No commercial."

Puzzled, Dotty asked, "Then why did they have you take a laundry basket full of dirty clothes to the office this morning?"

Thinking quickly, Amanda replied, "They wanted me to do some laundry at a local coin-op laundry to see if it would be a good place to shoot a documentary on the habits of people who use those places." Even to Amanda's ears, the explanation sounded extremely weak, so she moved directly into the real problem. "Mother, everything was fine with the laundry, it's the . . . um . . . the director who's the problem."

Nodding her head sympathetically, Dotty sighed. "The director. I should have known. A real tyrant, I bet."

"Yeah, you could say that."

"So, the director told you he thinks you're incompetent?"

Amanda swallowed hard against the lump that was forming in her throat as she remembered the fight she and Lee had had. In a small voice, she answered, "In his own way, yes." She rested her head on her mother's shoulder and sniffled. "He doesn't think I should do this job anymore."

Dotty wrapped her arm around her daughter's shoulders and squeezed gently. "What do you think?"

"I think he may be right."

"Because you *can't* do the job, because you *think* you can't do the job, or because *he* thinks you shouldn't do the job?"

With a shrug, Amanda pulled away from her mother's embrace. "Because I don't want to work with someone who doesn't think I can do the job, even though I can do the job."

"Well, then, you need to decide what's more important to you: doing the job or trying to please this director of yours." Dotty gave Amanda's hand a pat and stood. "I'm going to bed. We can clean up this mess in the morning." She headed for the stairs, but turned as she reached the lower step and called back into the family room, "Sleep on it, darling. Don't do anything rash tonight while you're upset." With a smile and a "Good-night, dear," Dotty went up to her room.

Amanda's own words tumbled around in her mind. "Because I don't want to work with someone who doesn't think I can do the job, even though I can do the job." She didn't see how sleeping would change that fact. Lee didn't think she was cut out for Agency work. Lee thought she bungled the entire microdot assignment. Lee was angry with her. Lee was the only person she ever worked with -- ever *wanted* to work with -- and he thought she should resign. "Well, then, you'll get just what you want," Amanda stated to the empty room.

She stood and walked to the desk, retrieving a box of writing paper and pen from the center drawer. Sitting at the desk, she began to write. A few minutes later, she set down her pen and reread the two full sheets she had written. With a sound of disgust, Amanda crumpled the sheets into a ball and tossed them into the trashcan next to the desk. "For crying out loud, Amanda, you're resigning, not writing the Gettysburg Address."

After more than a few crumpled sheets of paper had been discarded, Amanda slammed the pen onto the desk in irritation. "This shouldn't be so hard!" Leaning back in the chair, she closed her eyes and thought for a moment. A slow, sad smile spread across her face as she opened her eyes and reached for the pen. "Dear Mr. Melrose," she wrote, "I, Amanda King, hereby resign." At the bottom of the sheet, she signed her name.

Satisfied with the simplicity of the message, Amanda carefully folded the paper, inserted it into an envelope, addressed it appropriately, and placed a stamp on it.

After standing and stretching to relieve the knot that had formed in her shoulders from sitting hunched over the desk, Amanda picked up the letter and took it to the kitchen. She placed it in her purse to be mailed first thing in the morning. She realized, if she got up early enough, she could drop it in the Agency mail on her way to take her turn at leading sighted people on the 'blind' demonstration in the morning. That way, she wouldn't even have to wait the few days the Post Office would take to deliver the letter. "I'm sure Lee would appreciate that," she muttered as she turned off the kitchen light and made her way to bed.

**The End**