

TROPICAL ESPIONAGE PART 3

Title: Tropical Espionage

Author: Debbie Ann Macabie

Disclaimer: Scarecrow and Mrs. King belongs to Shoot the Moon and Warner Brothers Productions.

Setting: Somewhere in Season 3

Rating: PG

Notes: Thanks to Blue Leader for getting us off to a great start!! (kept that from Uncle Charlie's notes) Thanks to Uncle Charlie for continuing AND choosing me to go next. Thanks to Kitty Holcomb for the quick beta job.

Part Three

After tearing off the end of the envelope, Lee peered inside. His expression turned from apprehension to puzzlement. Turning the envelope upside-down, he dumped the contents in his lap.

Amanda stared at the small pile of black fabric that now lay on Lee's legs. "What in the world is that?" she asked.

Lee grinned slowly, his smile growing ever wider as he gingerly picked up two straps of the fabric and lifted it for Amanda to see. "I never imagined *you* as the itsy-bitsy bikini type."

Amanda, realizing what it was that Lee was holding, took a deep breath and closed her eyes. "Mother!"

Hearing Lee's chuckle, Amanda opened her eyes and quickly grabbed the bikini top from his hands. She then snatched the bottom portion of the suit and the envelope from his lap. She hurriedly stuffed the garment back into the envelope, pulling out a slip of paper that hadn't come out when Lee had turned it over the first time. Silently, Amanda read the note. She sighed and hung her head in frustration.

Lee, still grinning, deftly took the note from Amanda's clenched fist. He read out loud, "Have fun!"

"I can't believe my mother did that."

"Oh, come on, Amanda," Lee said as he placed the note into the envelope. "She probably didn't expect you to open it in front of someone."

Amanda took the envelope and started to put it back in her bag. She stopped and looked at Lee. "What do you mean you never *imagined* me as the bikini type?"

Lee froze. "I . . . I meant . . ." He started squirming in his seat, looking for someplace to go. Nowhere to run. How was he going to get out of this?

Just as he opened his mouth to attempt an explanation, the stewardess' voice came over the speakers, "Ladies and gentlemen, we are preparing for our descent into Miami International Airport. Please return all tray tables to their locked positions and raise your seats to their full, upright positions. We want to thank you . . ."

As the stewardess droned on, Lee looked at Amanda and shrugged. She rewarded his sheepish smile with a pointed glare, letting him know he wasn't off the hook yet.



Amanda had been strangely silent as they disembarked from the plane and made their way through the airport to the gate for their flight to Grand Bahama Island. Finally reaching their destination, Lee set their carry-on luggage next to a couple of chairs and took a seat. He checked his watch, noting they still had half an hour before the flight began boarding.

"Amanda," Lee began, turning to look his partner.

Amanda faced him, her large brown eyes piercing his. Lee hesitated. He checked his watch again and looked around at the other passengers. He looked everywhere except at Amanda.

She shook her head, and said, "Lee . . ."

Lee quickly stood and said, "I'd better go check in with Billy. I saw a telephone booth just down the hall." With that, he turned and strode off.

Amanda nodded in resignation. Typical Scarecrow evasion technique. She watched him walk away (wouldn't you?) and missed the approach of a woman, who now stood next to her.

"This seat taken, hon'?" the woman asked, gesturing to the chair next to Amanda.

"Oh . . . um," Amanda faltered.

"Good." The woman exhaled in relief as she lowered her rather large form onto the chair. "I need to sit down. I've spent most of my life standin' on my feet."

Amanda smiled politely at the woman, taking in her strange attire. She was wearing a pink polyester pantsuit and her red hair was shaped into a beehive style. Around her neck, she wore a necklace made of big pink beads. Drooping from her ears were long gold chains with equally big, pink beads dangling from the ends. Several large rings adorned four of her fingers. Her oversized, white handbag looked big enough to hold Amanda's entire suitcase.

The woman breathed a heavy sigh as she sat back in the hard seat, turning to smile pleasantly at Amanda.

Amanda smiled again and nodded, then turned her head to watch Lee at the telephone booth. She wondered if he would stay there until they called for their flight to begin boarding.

"That your husband, sweetie?" the woman asked, interrupting Amanda's thoughts.

"No," Amanda replied. Quickly she added, "Yes. I mean, yes, he's my husband. We just got married. We're on our honeymoon."

The woman's face broke into a wide grin. "That's wonderful. Ralph and I always wanted to go to the Bahamas. Never seemed like we had enough money to make the trip. Of course, my nephew always invited us to stay with him. Ralph always thought we would be imposing."

"Is your husband traveling with you?" Amanda asked.

"Oh, no," the woman responded, shaking her head sadly. "Ralph passed over last year."

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to --"

"It's all right, honey," she said, patting Amanda on the hand. "I still feel like Ralph is with me. We had thirty good years." The woman smiled softly as she remembered her husband. "By the way, I'm Phyllis Scheinkman." She held out her hand, and Amanda shook it.

"I'm Amanda . . . Stimpson. That's my husband, Lee," she said, pointing to the phone booths.

"He's very handsome," Phyllis said, cocking an eyebrow in Lee's direction.

"Mmm," Amanda agreed, nodding. She decided to change the subject. "So, you're visiting family on Grand Bahama?"

"Yes, my nephew. Every year, he invited us to visit. Ralph wasn't very comfortable around him; said there was something about him that rubbed him the wrong way. I decided to take him up on his offer this year."

"Well, good," Amanda smiled. "I bet you'll have a wonderful time."

"I hope so. I heard that Christopher's throwing some charity ball and it's supposed to be the social event of the season. It'll be quite a change from the diner I work at in Hackensack."

"Christopher?" Amanda asked tentatively.

"Christopher Drake. He's my nephew. Have you heard of him?"

TBC by . . . Aunt Lillian!

Here are the things that have to be mentioned in your section, Aunt Lillian!

PERSON: Russell, a taxi cab driver from Seattle, WA

PLACE: the top of a palm tree

THING: a banana split

PHRASE: "I didn't know you could do that."

