

TROPICAL ESPIONAGE PART 9

Title: Tropical Espionage

Author: Little Bobby Kenwood

Disclaimer: Scarecrow and Mrs. King is copyrighted by Warner Bros and Shoot the Moon Enterprises Ltd. Typical lines, situations, clichés, etc. are borrowed from SMK as needed.

Setting: Season 3

Rating: PG

Notes: Thanks to Those who came before me. And Kitty Holcomb for the beta.

Part IX:

Amanda snatched up a plush hotel bathrobe -- which matched the one Lee was wearing -- and pulled it around her. "I thought you were going to take a shower!" she accused.

"I- I- I need my toothpaste," Lee stuttered. His mouth and brain were unable to function properly when faced with the sight of Amanda's nearly naked body.

"Why do you need toothpaste in the shower?" she questioned suspiciously.

"I was going to brush my teeth first," he defended. "Why are you wearing that?"

"We're in the Bahamas, Lee!" she explained. "I thought I might possibly go to the beach at some point, and I had to make sure it fits."

"You're thinking of going out in public like that?!" Lee was stunned. Amanda always seemed so prim and proper; he never would have imagined her in a bikini. Although now, he realized, he no longer had to imagine it; he had seen it with his own eyes. The image of expanses of her creamy, white flesh, broken up only slightly by tiny

pieces of black fabric, was forever burned on his brain . . . not that he was complaining.

"There's nothing wrong with it!" Amanda defended. "I've seen much tinier ones."

"Fine, I just hope you have enough suntan lotion . . ." Lee was dropping what he realized was a pointless discussion, but mentioning suntan lotion caused his mind to start generating images of him applying the lotion to his partner's bare back.

"I *did* come prepared, Lee," she insisted. "Besides, I'm fairly certain I can buy more if I have to."

"Amanda, why don't you go ahead and shower first," Lee suggested abruptly. "I - um - I - um . . . need to get something . . ." he continued lamely, pushing her towards the bathroom. "Besides, women always need more time to get ready for parties," he persisted as she grabbed her cosmetics case, shooting him bewildered glances.

After the bathroom door shut behind Amanda, Lee shed his robe and pulled on shorts and a t-shirt. He grabbed his key and left the hotel room.

Passing through the lobby of the hotel, Lee was buttonholed by Loki.

"Mr. Stimpson, you gotta help me!" Mr. Lipschlitt insisted. "I know Yuwanna and Howard have been here. I found this on the beach." He shoved a small clump of dog hair in Lee's hand.

Lee unwittingly accepted the offering, but didn't hold onto it for long. "Ugh!" he exclaimed, flinging the offending object from his hand. "What is that?"

"It's Howard's hair," Loki explained, catching it before it could hit the floor.

"I thought you said Howard was hairless."

"It's his toupee. The sweaters only keep his little body warm. This is for his head!"



Lee shook his head helplessly. "Well, I'll be sure to keep an eye out," he promised, backing away from Loki and waving his hands defensively as he made his escape. Lee scrambled through the lobby and out the door to the beach.

When he reached the sand, he stood for a moment, staring out at the ocean and taking deep, calming breaths. This weekend was getting weirder by the minute. It was definitely not what he had envisioned when he had approached Amanda about making this trip with him. The scene in the hotel room hadn't helped things any. He mentally kicked himself for taking out his ire on Amanda. Sighing regretfully, he set off down the beach, walking parallel to the edge of the surf.

Where had it all gone wrong? He reviewed the past couple of days, from the moment he showed up in Amanda's backyard through their unfortunate initial seatmates on the plane: Phyllis, the fifty-something waitress from Jersey; Russell, the taxi cab driver from Seattle, WA; Loki, the dog breeder from Lapland; and Seymour, the bellboy with a hearing problem. In his mind's eye he could see the weekend continuing to deteriorate, encountering one bizarre individual after another. Not to mention that bikini!



"Amanda, I think you should put your bikini-top back on now."

The man's voice jolted Lee from his train of thought. He turned, letting out a strangled gasp as he thought of Amanda going out in public in that bikini -- unthinkably topless, yet -- when she hadn't even wanted him to see her in it. His eyes scanned the beach, searching for her lithe figure, but all he saw was a little girl of no more than four years running over to her parents.

"Miranda, you're getting to be a big girl now," her mother chastised. "Big girls wear both pieces of their swimsuit when they go to the beach!" Miranda's father held up a flowered swath of material.

Lee shook his head, this time in disgust at himself. His brain was working overtime worrying about the situation with Amanda, when he should be concentrating on the case at hand. Resolving to not let peculiar people get him down, he turned and headed back to the hotel.



Mr. and Mrs. Stimpson arrived at the Drake Estate shortly after the ball had begun. Security was plentiful, but their forged invitation gained them access to the premises. No doubt this was due to the fact that they looked the part of a well-heeled American couple.

Amanda looked just like Helen of Troy in a white, silk, Grecian-style gown. Her hair was upswept in a deceptively elaborate style, loose curls casually brushing against her cheeks and neck. She was adorned in borrowed diamonds: a necklace, earrings, bracelet, and rings. Lee was decked out handsomely in a perfectly fitted tuxedo -- black to offset Amanda's white dress.

They had barely crossed the threshold and collected flutes of champagne from a passing servant when Lee felt the urge to start looking around.

"Look, Amanda, I've gotta go find the library and see if there's a good place for me to hide out while this meeting takes place."

"What? Lee, we just got here."

"And we came here to work," he reminded her. "I don't know when this meeting is going to be, and this whole trip is a waste of time if I miss it. You just stay here and mingle, OK?"

"No," she refused. "I'm here to work, too. I'm coming with you."

"Amanda . . .!"

"I'll just keep a look-out, OK? Once we find the library and you get settled, I'll come right down here and wait for you," Amanda promised.

Lee sighed in frustration. He didn't have time to argue. He took Amanda's hand, and they strolled casually from the ballroom, abandoning their champagne glasses on a table. They hadn't gone far down the hallway when some doors opened and several voices could be heard. They quickly ducked through the nearest doorway, which happened to lead to a small, cramped, dark closet. They pressed tightly together and pulled the door shut behind them just before numerous footsteps passed their hiding place.

"I don't think this is the library," Amanda joked.

"Shh!" Lee shushed her. He was trying to listen for footsteps in the corridor, and it was hard enough concentrating in the close confines of this closet without the additional distraction of her voice. "I think they're gone," he reported, reaching for the doorknob.

"Wait," she hissed, grabbing his hand.

They heard approaching footsteps, which then stopped. The doorknob started to turn. Lee gathered Amanda in his arms. Divining his intentions, she returned the embrace. Just before their lips met -- before they had time to decide if this kiss was for real or for cover -- the door opened. They stared in shock at the man on the other side of the door.

"Don Ho . . .?"

"I guess this isn't the men's room," the embarrassed gentleman in the Hawaiian shirt replied to the couple he had inadvertently interrupted. "Sorry, please excuse me," he said, closing the door gently in their faces.

TBC by . . .

Kitty Holcomb, because I think you all expected Crystal to be next, and I feel like doing the unexpected. She has to include:

Person: The Bahamian Olympic Hockey Team

Place: A belfry

Thing: A cucumber

Phrase: "Get that thing away from me."

