

Shall We Dance?

Squadron Commander Kyle Argent arrived to the reception in the main Ballroom fashionably late. He was dressed in a uniform that was noticeably different from the regular Starfleet-issued monster maroons surrounding him -- black with silver trim and ribbons all the way up to his left shoulder. Most assembled in the ballroom thought it looked oddly exotic compared to the other uniforms.

Commander Argent thought that the reception was an interesting change of pace for him. The people on this ship were definitely adept in creating after hour's activities. Despite his cautions, *all* his 'nuggets' were there. He decided he wasn't going to spoil their fun this evening -- which he considered his day job, after all.

Kyle went over to the refreshment bar and requested his usual iced tea. He no sooner received the drink than Communications Officer Lieutenant Simone Templar sidled up to him batting her long eyelashes his way.

Simone was a lovely creature in her late twenties with large brown eyes with her blonde hair worn long and straight. Her complexion was immaculate and had the color of peaches and cream. Ask any male on the *Stellar Wind* and they would tell you that she was the loveliest creature they'd ever met -- a fact she was well aware of. She also knew that no man could resist her charms and as Kyle was the newest member of the *'Wind* worthy of her attention, she set to work.

Kyle chose to ignore her but she persisted. Simone finally decided she needed to take a much more direct approach.

"*Bon Soir*, Commander Argent, good to see you again," she purred seductively in her French-accented voice.

He looked her up and down and then finally asked, "Have we met?" He had forced himself to even say that much.

"Of course, you and Ensign Taylor discussed the comm panels with me the other day. Do you not remember, Sir?"

At this point, all Kyle really wanted to do was drink his tea in peace, but he was here representing the Corps so he opted to remain polite as possible under the circumstances.

"Oh, yes, how can I forget?" he growled with a tinge of sarcasm.

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Simone decided to ignore his sardonic remark and continued. "*Mon Dieu*. I expected pilots of the Fighter Corps to have better memories," she chided him, smiling as she moved even closer, putting her hand on his arm.

Kyle put his drink down and finally decided he really didn't care if he was here at the party as the ranking Fighter Corps Officer.

"Look Ms. Templar, why don't you take those claws of yours and snare someone else?"

Such women generally do not take such suggestions well. Furious, Simone briefly considered striking him but she knew that hitting a superior officer especially in public was likely to get her a reprimand if not subject her to a court martial. She calmed herself down and simply told him in a sniffy voice, "*Pardon*, Commander. In that case, I shall take my leave." When she was finished, she purposely turned her back on him and returned to the table where her date for the evening was sitting.

Having finally gotten rid of Simone -- barely -- he spotted an empty table and sat down. Before he could drink half of his tea, Ensign Skye Masterson and a few other flight personnel spotted Argent and wandered over.

"Commander," Skye cautiously ventured as his eyes swept the dancing couples, "as the ranking Fighter Corps Officer, you should consider dancing with a pretty lady to keep up the high standards of the Corps."

Kyle rolled his eyes at Skye's suggestion. This seemed to him to be a rather charming idea but was quite contrary to anything Argent felt like doing -- especially after having to blow off Simone Templar right after his first sip of tea.

"Mister Masterson, I'd consider it...." Argent paused to think, taking another swig of tea, "but only if a waltz were to be played."

Skye looked to the others in his group and grinned.

"Yes, Sir!" he replied as they all scurried off.

Satisfied that he had gotten rid of them, Kyle sat back to finish off his tea. Shortly thereafter, it was announced that the next selection would be a waltz by Johann Strauss. Argent didn't need to look behind him to see who was standing there.

"You are a wicked, wicked man, Mister Masterson."

"That I am, Sir!" the voice behind him replied.

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Now that he'd been caught by his own cleverness, Kyle needed to find someone to dance with. Fortunately or unfortunately, he considered the fact that there only was one choice -- awkward though it was. He scanned the room and then walked over to her table.

If I am to dance with a pretty lady, I'll do it in style.

* * *

"Captain Devlin?"

"Commander Argent. I am quite pleased to see you," she told him as she gave him a very warm smile. He responded by taking her hand and giving it a kiss. While she very surprised by his action, she quickly recovered and proceeded to introduce him to the rest of the members sitting at her private Captain's Table in the ballroom.

After the introductions, she turned back to Kyle who obviously had something on his mind.

"Mister Argent?"

While Kyle felt nervous -- an emotion he hadn't felt in years -- he opted to just come out and just ask her.

"Captain, may I have this dance?"

If Arcadia was startled by his suggestion, her face betrayed nothing. However as she was considering his request, she noted the faces of some officers sitting at the table across from hers as well as a number of other officers huddled together at one table in the far corner watching very intently at the scene being played out. With so much obviously riding on her response, she quickly made up her mind.

"I would be delighted Commander Argent," she replied in a voice loud enough so that those purposely listening in would over hear her, but then added *sotto voce*, "Mister Argent, I must warn you that I am tone deaf."

"I know, Captain."

If Arcadia showed any surprise, she kept it to herself and pressed on. "What are they playing?"

"The Emperor Waltz, Captain."

"Lovely, at least I *can* dance a waltz," she responded as he led her to the dance floor.

Those dancers already on the floor noted the Captain coming their way and consciously moved toward the side leaving the center of the floor for them. By the time the pair positioned themselves to begin their dance, the piece had begun the traditional three beat cadence indicative of a waltz.

"Captain," Kyle began, "are you ready?"

"Yes, Commander," she replied softly.

"On my mark, we'll begin," he told her quietly after they had positioned themselves to start. Kyle counted silently to himself, then told her, "Mark."

Once he gave the word, they slowly began to dance. Kyle opted to take small steps until Arcadia was able to naturally "feel" the tempo of the waltz. Their confidence in their growing skill became apparent to one and all as their look of concentration melted into one of mutual smiles directed towards each other.

As they continued their slow dance about the room, Arcadia started to realise how much she had missed dancing. Before she was married, most men weren't interested in dancing with her once they found out she was tone deaf. However, that didn't deter her late husband, Desmond. He took the time to teach her the steps that didn't require her to listen to the music and how to 'feel' the beat. The waltz was one and it was to become one of her favourite dances.

She paused to look up at the Squadron Commander as he watched where he was guiding her. He suddenly looked down at her and smiled. She thought his face glowed at that moment and she felt immediately drawn to him. She wasn't sure, but she instinctively felt that the feeling was mutual.

Kyle felt that they were becoming experts enough for him to lengthen his stride so they could begin to circumnavigate the dance floor. By this time, most of the other dancers had shortened their steps so they could remain in one place to better watch their Captain and the Squadron Commander give a command performance of the waltz.

Boffin Gateway was talking to Virgil Taylor when he motioned his attention to the dance floor. Boffin turned to look to see his boss and that new Pilot Argent in the midst of dancing. They both stared in amazement at the pair of senior officers whirling around the dance floor. Then they looked to each other in bewilderment.

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"*Cor Blimey!* Would you look at Mam'selle!" Boffin exclaimed.

Virgil replied, "And would you take a look at the Old Man!"

They both watched as the couple expertly continued to waltz. The music and their dance soon ended with Kyle bowing to her and she returning his bow with a graceful curtsy. This act resulted in a burst of applause accompanied by a general buzz of excitement, commentary, and speculation about the room. Virgil nudged Boffin and pointed to Argent's uncharacteristic smile as he led Captain Devlin back to her table.

Virgil and Boffin looked at each other again; then Virgil proceeded to tell Boffin what *he* thought might be going on. Boffin had already come to the same conclusion as they watched the Captain and Squadron Commander become engaged in a lengthy but obviously mutually satisfying discussion.

"Thank you for asking me over to sit at your table, Captain," Kyle informed her as he rose to leave.

"My pleasure, Commander Argent. And thank you very much for the waltz. I enjoyed it very much," she told him warmly.

Despite himself Kyle felt a smile coming on. "So did I, Captain."

He bade Arcadia and the rest of the table good evening and began to leave.

Virgil and Boffin watched Commander Argent leave the Captain's Table. Both men smiled as they observed Captain Devlin's eyes carefully tracking Commander Argent as he left the Ballroom. When Argent was gone, they looked to each other both sensing that this could be the start of something big.

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Next: *Mixing Pleasure With Business*

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