

# Waltz

a *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* fanfic

for ivyscribbles

by Rodo

“WHY DO I always have to play the fiancé?” Illya complained under his breath as they waited for their car to arrive at the gala. He kept fidgeting and checked his watch again. It was wholly unnecessary, of course. Solo would be exactly where he was supposed to be – dressed as a waiter who would slip away to get to the safe once the toasts were made – until everything went pear-shaped, of course. It always did. And Illya still sulked like a little boy because he had to wear a suit and tie. Gaby sighed and smacked him on the arm.

“You’re better at it than he is,” she told him.

Illya shot her an incredulous look.

“You are,” she insisted.

“I’ll stand out like a sore thumb, and you know it. All those rich people ...” he sighed and shook his head.

“Oh, you will. But at least you’re a defected nuclear physicist this time. No need to impress people with your architectural knowledge. Nobody likes to talk about nuclear physics unless they’re a nuclear physicist.”

“Then why—”

Their car drew to a stop.

“Later,” Gaby promised him.



Illya did stick out, of course. He might be capable of looking exactly as debonair in a suit as Solo did, and his smile was even more charming because there was always something a little too earnest in it. But the moment he opened his mouth, no matter how much he tried to seem like a man who spent most of

his time among the jet set, he sounded just a little off. Like a nuclear physicist would, in fact. Across the room, she spotted Solo nodding at them before he slipped out through the kitchen.

“Shall we dance a little, darling?” she suggested as the orchestra started playing.

Illya frowned, of course. “I don’t think—”

Gaby took his arm and leaned in close. “Do you want me to make a scene *now*? I thought we’d save that for later.”

Illya grit his teeth. “You know I don’t like dancing.”

“Well, the baroness does, and so her fiancé will have to humour her.”

Illya stared at her. Gaby stared back. Around them, couples were starting to make their way to the dance floor as the first chords of a waltz rose around them. Finally, Illya offered her his hand with a resigned sigh. Gaby took it with her brightest smile and together they joined the dance.

He took the lead without hesitation, moving to the music as if he’d never done anything else and drawing Gaby along. His steps were precise, his back straight, and he drew her to him tightly as they swayed to the music. Gaby had to smile.

“You *can* dance after all!” she told him gleefully. “You’ve been holding out on me all this time!”

Illya scoffed. “Of course I can dance. Do you think they wouldn’t teach us that? I just don’t like to. Especially when working.”

Gaby shook her head as they turned, letting her eyes roam over the waiters and security guards to keep an eye on things. Then she turned to Illya, who looked more than a little smug. Another turn, and the grip on her waist tightened a little. He looked down at her like the adoring boyfriend he played.

“This,” she said, “is why you’re better at it than Solo.”

The smug little smile turned into a frown. “I’m sure he can dance just as well.”

“Yes. But he would keep staring at every attractive woman in the room. He’d make a good fiancé for a rich widow who yearns to live a little. He’d be perfect if the engagement is supposed to look like it will never go anywhere. But the adoring fiancé?” Gaby snorted. “Not in a million years. He’d try too hard, or he’d try to little. You, on the other hand, do adoring very well.”

Illya blushed a little when she told him that. It was a little unfair, she knew. He didn’t really need to act that much when they were together. But she still enjoyed how she could get him on the wrong foot when she said something like this.

Another turn, and he opened his mouth to say something, but then his eyes grew hard and the blush disappeared.

“I think it’s time for that scene you mentioned,” he said, all business-like. On the next turn, Gaby could see the security guards moving as well.

With a sigh, she dropped out of Illya’s arms and slapped him.



Solo wasn’t back at the safe house yet when they finally arrived. Gaby was limping a little – high heels were a health hazard on a mission – and Illya was pressing what used to be the bottom of her dress against his left biceps. He let himself fall onto the sofa while Gaby looked for the first aid kit. She found it under the kitchen sink and it was better stocked than she expected.

When she returned to the living room, she found that Illya had struggled out of his jacket and ripped off the already damaged sleeve of his shirt. He was inspecting the gunshot wound with the air of someone who had seen his fair share. Gaby was not one of those people and felt a little faint when she approached him with the disinfectant and gauze.

“It went through,” Illya told her casually. Still, his voice sounded a little too measured to her and she could see the sweat on his forehead.

Gaby sat down next to him and carefully started to clean the wound. Illya flinched, but he didn’t make a sound.

“Solo better have the files,” he muttered under his breath.

Gaby didn’t bother to reply. Either he did and they’d be gone in the morning, or he didn’t and they’d have to mount a rescue mission. No matter what, Illya needed his wound taken care of, so she did her best to bandage him up. It looked a little crooked to her, but at least it was tight and seemed to get the bleeding under control. Solo still wasn’t back.

“You know,” she said in an effort to lighten the mood. “We should do this more often.”

“Get shot at? Get chased through half the city? We do that more than enough, I think,” Illya replied with that slightly confused look on his face that Gaby found absolutely irresistible.

“No. Go out. I thought we were having a nice time until everything went wrong.”

For a moment, Illya stayed silent and motionless, like a marble statue. “Are you asking me out on a date?”

“Yes,” Gaby said. Or yawned, more like. She let herself fall against the back of the sofa and tilted her head so that she could look at him. He looked older in the harsh light of the lone lamp hanging over their heads.

“In that case, I agree. On one condition.”

“And that would be?”

“No dancing.”

*Fin*