**Amor Enim Vult Ch. 17 Omake**

It was with mixed feelings that I permitted Countess Irene von Engler into my office. While the woman was successful, charming, and intelligent, she was also a witness to the fool I'd made of myself during the Graduation Ball. And, much to my chagrin, it was that very ball she brought up once she was seated.

"It was a remarkable performance," she enthused.

"You don't say." I struggled not to grit my teeth. Did she come just to insult me?

"Yes, I do believe that was the finest example of the Argentine Tango I'd ever seen performed in my life."

"Oh!.... You're talking about my dance with Lieutenant Serebreyakov?"

"Well of course, my dear. What did you think I was talking about?"

I didn't buy her guileless look for a second. There was a definite twinkle of amusement in her eye that told me she knew I'd been three sheets to the wind.

"Well, that's very kind of you to say so, but I doubt you came all the way here to pay me a compliment."

"Indeed. I would like your permission to show the recordings. A performance like that needs to be celebrated!"

"Recordings?" I asked, internally horrified.

"You were in a hall full of mages, my dear. The performance was recorded from multiple angles. I had my people convert the spells to film, and edit it all into one twelve-minute picture. And even if I do say so myself, it came out amazingly well! I can assure you, many people would be interested."

Oh, I'm sure people would be interested all right. While I might not be as famous as I was during the war, I was still sufficiently well known that people would undoubtedly pay money to watch me make a fool of myself on the dance floor.

As I tried to find a polite way to refuse, the Countess picked up on my hesitation and said, "Don't worry, I've left out any hints of your fainting spell afterward. There's no need to publicize your illness."

Ah. My 'illness'. Weiss might have publicly put down my passing out to anemia, but only an idiot would believe that. It seemed if I didn't want recordings of myself dead drunk going public, I needed to permit the Countess to release her little dance comedy.

With enormous reluctance, I gave written permission to distribute the video. That's when the Countess put another contract in front of me.

"What's this?"

"Royalties, of course. I was thinking 10% of sales each for you and Lieutenant Serebreyakov, but if you want more we can negotiate."

Well, at least I wasn't doing this for nothing. And as I considered it, this was an opportunity to start apologizing to Visha for ruining her evening. "Fifteen percent. But I would like it all to be paid out to the Lieutenant."

"Done. But why to her, if you don't mind my asking."

"Her entire evening was spoiled because of my... illness. I have to make amends somehow. Besides, she was the one who invited me in the first place, without her none of this would have happened."

The Countess was now giving me a sympathetic look. "You shouldn't be so hard on yourself. I'm sure the lieutenant had a wonderful time, however brief."

"Nonetheless."

"As you wish. Oh, by the way, I will be having a private showing of the film this Saturday. Would you and the Lieutenant like to attend?"

"No thank you. I have plans for this Saturday."

And I did have plans. Amazingly, Visha had agreed to give me a chance to apologize by taking her out on the town. This time, everything was going to be perfect. The last thing I needed was to spoil it with a reminder of my atrocious behavior. Seeing the Countess out, I turned my attention to planning my apology to Visha.

---------------------------------------------------

"And the Colonel already said yes?"

At the confirmation, Visha sighed. "Well, in that case, I suppose I don't mind you showing the film."

"Thank you, my dear," beamed Countess Engler. "It really was a sublime performance. And might I say, congratulations on getting a second date?"

"Oh! How did you know?" asked Visha, her face going red.

"The Colonel might have mentioned having plans for Saturday."

"Ah, yes. Hopefully this time nothing will go wrong."

"Quite. Incidentally, 10% is fine for you?"

"Oh yes. But please, pay it all to the Colonel. After all, she was the one who led the whole dance, I barely kept up!"

Visha got the strange feeling the Countess was trying not to laugh, but the woman didn't say anything, instead agreeing to her terms and taking her leave.

----------------------------------------------------

It had been an excellent evening so far. I'd gotten Visha her favorite foods at one of Berun's best eateries, we'd enjoyed a delightful woke in the city's best gardens, and now that the sun was setting, we were trying to decide between going dancing or the movies.

Talking pictures were a recent development that had become all the rage, and even though Visha loved to dance she admitted some curiosity about this new art form. I replied that since neither of us had a curfew, there was no reason we couldn't go to the pictures first before heading to a night club afterward.

Happy with this plan, we made our way to the nearest cinema, only to pause in shock. An enormous line extended from the hall, and a 4-foot tall poster outside showed what was undoubtedly a photograph of me and Visha dancing at the ball, titled horrifically "The Argent and Her Wing".

Visha gave a faint whimper before saying, "When the Countess said she wanted to show it, I didn't expect something like this."

I could only nod numbly in agreement. "Isn't this Berun's largest cinema?"

"Yes," came the weak response. "....It looks sold out."

"Yes, and if I'm reading the poster right, this is the fifth of ten showings scheduled today."

By this time, some of the people in line had spotted us, and waves, cheers, and whistles were being directed at us. All we could do was smile and wave as we quickly vacated the area.

Once we were out of sight of our... fans?... Visha turned a furiously blushing face to me and said, "Colonel, I changed my mind. I don't feel like going out anymore. My apartment is nearby, would you like to come in and have a cup of coffee, and maybe listen to the radio?"

"That sounds wonderful, Visha. Lead on!"

Internally though, all I could do was call myself names for once more inadvertently spoiling Visha's evening. If she forgave me for this, I swore, next time I would blow all my previous efforts out of the water, even if I had to conscript the entire Ministry of Culture into running interference!