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Lovers Dance
by Samantha O’Grady
He’d expected this. He’d even hoped for it. But he still felt a twinge of — pity. She’d been stood up. Again. Here she sat, alone in an upscale restaurant, dressed in her favourite little black dress.

Kevin watched her reflection in a mirror and saw the sigh that gusted out of Catherine’s mouth and ruffled her hair as she sat back in her chair, closing her eyes. It was time to make his move.

Before she became aware of his presence behind her, he cupped the back of her neck, his thumb caressing her just under her left ear. He felt her pulse leap, saw a smile burst across her face as she turned to look back over her shoulder. Kevin stepped up beside her and watched as her smile died.

Yanking herself away from his touch, she frowned at him. “What’re you doing here?” Kevin just gave her a long-suffering look. Then, jerking his head, he said, “Come on. Let’s go.”

Catherine hunched a shoulder and turned her head away. “Get lost. I don’t need you to rescue me.”

He glanced at the two empty water bottles sitting before her and pulled a bill out of his wallet to leave on the table. Then he stood there for a moment, gazing at the top of her head, his mind juggling the usual spank her or kiss her debate. Under his breath, he said, “Yes, you do. And this time I’m going to do it right.”

In one way or another, he’d been rescuing her since they were kids, and she’d always resented it. Whether as a pre-pubescent tomboy, or the swan she’d evolved into, she’d been diving headfirst into catastrophes and he’d been reeling her out. And though until just recently — he hoped — she’d viewed him as nothing more than a bothersome big brother, he’d never considered her a sister.

Kevin’s problem was that every time he’d tried to tell her how he felt, he’d muck it up, the result being she’d never believed him.
Take this kiss upon the brow! And, in parting from you now, Thus much let me avow— You are not wrong, who deem That my days have been a dream; Yet if hope has flown away In a night, or in a day, In a vision, or in none, Is it therefore the less gone? All that we see or seem Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar Of a surf-tormented shore, And I hold within my hand Grains of the golden sand— How few! yet how they creep Through my fingers to the deep, While I weep—while I weep! O God! can I not grasp Them with a tighter clasp? O God! can I not save One from the pitiless wave? Is all that we see or seem But a dream within a dream?