We Are Not Even

by greyfire

Summary

In which Eve and Villanelle discover that taking a bullet for your should-be sworn enemy is a surprising no-brainer.

Love and hate are two sides of the same obsession. Eve knew this, so she wasn’t completely surprised when her body tightened, then sprang between the bullet and Villanelle, who she’d been tailing through the bustle of London’s streets. The crowd scattered, screaming. Eve fell to the ground, the pavement hard at her back and the realization slow to trickle into her brain. Though she’d been focused on tracking the tan trenchcoat ahead of her as it wove through the masses, the periphery gleam of a weapon had somehow snagged her subconscious. What had followed was pure instinct.

*****

The instant she heard the gunshot, Villanelle whipped around, drawing her own weapon in the same fluid motion. She moved as an unstoppable force through the thicket of humanity, her hazel eyes sweeping the crowd for the shooter.

She spotted him almost immediately -- a bald man pushing his way towards her.

He raised his revolver to shoot, but it was too late. Without slowing, Villanelle leveled off a couple of shots into his stomach. The man dropped his weapon, doubling over in pain.

Closing the distance to her new target, she felt the familiar rush that proceeded a kill -- her breathing heightened, her pulse thrummed in anticipation.
Not yet, she had to remind herself. She forced a deep breath through her nostrils. The bald man -- amateur that he was -- had been aiming for her. This interrogation was going to be exquisitely personal.

“Who sent you?” Villanelle shouted at the man. When he didn’t respond, she delivered a swift kick to his stomach. The man collapsed, groaning. She kicked away his gun in case he got any bright ideas.

That’s when -- with a jolt -- Villanelle noticed the bleeding body lying supine behind him. She’d recognize that amazing hair anywhere.

******

Eve felt strangely numb. It was like her vision was being filtered through the tinted waters of a slightly muddied creek. She wondered why she couldn’t have chosen a better place to have gotten shot. The view here was terrible, the buildings stretching above her were ugly stone structures -- drab and rigid. She could also make out what seemed to be an incoming meteor spewing a string of Russian curses.

The meteor was Villanelle. Of course. Eve knew Villanelle was perfectly capable with English explicatives, so slipping into her native tongue was probably of significance, although Eve was too tired to pick through it at the moment.

Suddenly, there were hands over the wound just below her ribcage, hands that tried desperately to staunch the sticky flow. It was Paris all over again, this time with the roles reversed.

Eve grimaced at the added pressure on the wound. “I thought you promised not to kill me.”

Villanelle shot Eve a perplexed look, as if she hadn’t been expecting Eve to remember her promise -- much less validate it -- but she was quick to recover.

“Very funny. Did you just take a bullet for me?”

“I -- uh… maybe?” Did she? God, where was her brain.

Villanelle sighed. “That is very naughty of you, Eve.” She took Eve’s hands in her own and pressed them over the wound. “I am going to go kill the bad man now. Wait here, okay?”

“Like I have a choice,” Eve grumbled.

******

By now, judging by the smear of blood on the floor, the bald man had managed to drag himself halfway back to his weapon. Villanelle paused to acknowledge his efforts, then stalked towards her wounded prey, jaw clenched and a bitter taste in her mouth. With the toe of her boot, she flipped him over unceremoniously onto his back. He flinched away from her cold gaze, hands up by his head in surrender, his mouth working like a goldfish’s -- no doubt promising anything in exchange for his pitiful life. Well, unfortunately for him, what little patience Villanelle had to begin with had evaporated as soon as Eve had entered the picture.

She put an end to his noises with a clean shot to the head. There was no itch to draw it out, to watch the light drain slowly from his eyes. The lack of urges might have surprised Villanelle herself, had her mind not been steeped in rage.

Maybe she should have been more concerned that somebody wanted her dead. And if that somebody
knew anything about her, there were certainly more like the bald man headed her way, even at this very moment. Instead, Villanelle found herself reeling with thoughts about Eve. Only when she noticed the tremors in her hand did she realize she was still squeezing the trigger, weapon pointed at a corpse.

*****

Eve felt the heaviness of a coat being placed on top of her, signalling Villanelle’s return. She felt newfound feelings of relief wrestling with a months-old guilt. Guilt that had been bubbling and building like magma under a volcano. Guilt for stabbing Villanelle, for feeling guilty about stabbing Villanelle (because Bill). Back and forth, she’d roam between the two, until the imagery of Villanelle bleeding out in some alley arrived to shock her senseless.

Screw it, Eve thought, as she finally let the relief win out.

Besides, she’d already decided that given the chance, she would take the bullet all over again, bygones or whatever.

In the meantime, Villanelle was busy tearing up her shirt into the world’s most expensive bandages.

***********

“What?” Villanelle said, frowning. She couldn’t quite make out what Eve had mumbled.

“I said ‘God, I have a migraine.’”

Villanelle laughed, then stopped with a furrow in her brow. She noticed a strange tightness in her chest. Her eyes stung with salty droplets even though she didn’t will them there, like that time she had dinner with Eve. Now, Eve had a bullet in her gut, but she was complaining about a headache. Villanelle didn’t know what to make of any of it.

A weak cough interrupted Villanelle’s thoughts.

“So...” Eve said, gesturing at the bullet wound. “Now we’re even?”

“We are not even,” Villanelle growled. She leaned down to kiss Eve on the forehead.

“Sorry, baby.”

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!