Actions Speak Just As Loudly As Words
by afteriwake

Summary

Anthea tends to Mycroft’s wounds after he defends her honour, and they have an interesting conversation.

Notes

And this is another gift for majesticlolipop to cheer her up for a subpar birthday! It's another fic based on a prompt from the nonsexual acts of intimacy list, with this one being "patching up a wound." I had a lot of fun writing it and I hope you enjoy it too, hun.
::hugs::

“I swear it won’t happen again.” He hissed slightly as she dabbed antiseptic to the cuts on his face, knowing he would not get a response out of her. Oh, she was quite put out at him. She was absolutely livid. He would be lucky if he could entice her into his bed tonight, let alone coax a few words out of her that were words of pity and love.

He watched as she went for the butterfly bandages and began applying them to the cuts. He knew there would be questions tomorrow when he went to the meetings he had scheduled. There was no way he could delay a days worth of meeting. They were too important to simply brush aside to hide the aftermath of his brief moment of stupidity. But he had acted on instinct. Surely she
realized that?

It was not as though their relationship was a particularly well-kept secret. It had been for a time, but the longer it had gone on the harder it had been to hide, and frankly, the less he had wanted to. There were days he wanted to say to hell with it all, to chuck away his position and retire to a small cottage in the countryside with her and retire. He knew they’d be frightfully bored without nine hundred different things to occupy their every moment, but he was sure that eventually they would adjust. After all, they would have each other. They could be content.

But that was a pipe dream.

After a moment he reached up and gently grasped her hand, cradling it in his. “Andrea, I do not care if it obliterated the last remnants of secrecy we had guarding our relationship,” Mycroft said quietly. “I would not let Waverley besmirch your honour by calling you a whore in the face of the Prime Minister without retribution.”

Andrea looked at Mycroft for a long moment and then blinked, as if she had just realized something. “Mycroft, did you think I was upset at you?” she asked, surprised. “No. I was plotting all the ways I could bring about Waverley's ruin.”

A slow smile spread across Mycroft’s face as he brought her hand to his lips and kissed the back of it. “I see.”

“If I remember correctly, he was a client of The Woman’s,” she said. “There may be incriminating evidence on her mobile. And I believe your brother, though he’s loathe to admit it, has a bit of a soft spot for me. Explain what happened tonight and I’m sure he’ll relish the chance to give Waverley a taste of ruination. And there are other petty things I can do. He’s an arse to his female staff. I’m sure when they hear about what he said about me they’ll be more than willing to get some petty revenge.”

“You are brilliant,” he murmured, his lips still pressed against her skin.

She pulled her hand away and gently caressed his face. “I’ve never cared that our relationship was an open secret, Mycroft. I mean, the Queen Mum herself has congratulated me on my taste.”

His eyes widened. “You never told me that.”

She gave him a slightly smug smile. “Every woman needs to have a few secrets. But I assumed if Her Majesty approved, even if it wasn’t officially, then it didn’t really matter what the underlings and toadies thought.” She pulled her hand away and went back to tending his wounds. “I suppose we need to make it official, though.”

“How so?” Mycroft asked.

“You’ll need to marry me. I can’t be a whore if there’s a ring on my finger,” she said, reaching for the antiseptic again.

“I suppose not,” he conceded. “Do you want a gushing, sappy proposal?”

She shook her head. “There’s no need. Fighting for my honour was honestly proposal enough. No man has ever done that for me before. I’ve always had to fight for my own honour.” She picked up a gauze pad and put some more antiseptic on it and then started to tend to his knuckles.

“I think the diamond and ruby ring that belonged to my grandmother might be perfect for you,” he said.
“Mmm, I’ve always preferred emeralds,” she said.

“You’ve never told me that,” he said, wincing when she began cleaning the wounds.

“I appreciate everything you give me,” she said with a smile. “You have such terrific taste in jewelry that I’ve never been disappointed.”

“Then I suppose we should go pick out something together,” he replied.

“We could do that in the morning,” she said. “I plan on rescheduling your early appointments to Thursday, when you have some free time. I apologize for that, but I thought you might want to celebrate with a late morning.”

“And part of that late morning will be spent in bed, I hope?” he asked, giving her a grin.

She nodded. “And not alone,” she said, very carefully pressing a kiss above the cuts and scrapes. “I do love you, Mycroft. I know you aren’t one to say the words often, but you show you care, that you love me, and that’s all I’ll ever need.”

He removed the medical supplies from her grip and then carefully pulled her closer. “But I’ll make it a point to tell you, too,” he said before kissing her softly, feeling completely content for the first time all evening.

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