A Late Encounter With Love
by Sweety_Mutant

Summary

Are you satisfied with the mess you’ve created out of me?

Notes

Answer for this prompt We All Secretly Love Angst on Tumblr, asked by Mad_Amethyst
The prompt was a regular "ship + sentence" one, and the sentence here was "Are you satisfied with the mess you’ve created out of me?"

Oh, by the way, I do not own Penny Dreadful.

Enjoy reading!

See the end of the work for more notes.

Everybody in the house knew that they needed to leave Ethan alone with Sembene after everything that had happened. It was all too obvious, the blood and the stains and the marks, the teeth. Vanessa, Sir Malcolm, Victor… they had all gone to hell and came back that night in the witches’ den. Yet, it was worse for Ethan, they could smell it, they could see it.

They had all lost something, gained something else maybe? He had lost someone, and himself in the
process. So before the consequences of their actions came crashing down on them, they let Ethan grieve. It was all a matter of time before he would leave the safety of Sir Malcom’s house. Vanessa could feel it, and without words, she understood very well why.

So Ethan was left alone then. Alone with a corpse, and how that word was painful and ugly on his tongue!

At first, he did not speak. Walking on eggshells in the silent room, he could barely breathe. There was no blood on the dead man’s clothes, but Ethan could smell it. Oh that smell! A few hours ago, he had tasted it and never wanted it to stop. He breathed, shivered. He put his head in his hands, trying to calm the wolf inside. Force the beast to look at the result, force it to feel remorse. A strangled sound left Ethan’s throat, even he could not decipher it.

He wanted to weep, to hold Sembene, no, no, to cradle the body in his arms in a hopeless, foolish attempt to heal what was already dead. Inside, the wolf wept too, but not for the same reason. It was furious, always furious and never sated. It smelled blood.

Ethan wanted to tear at his clothes. There, in the silent room, he wanted to open his own body in an attempt to birth the creature that ate him inside, that dark part of himself… It would be pointless of course, it would not bring back Sembene to life. Through his tears, Ethan looked at the relaxed, almost wax-like features.

He could not bring himself to say sorry, half of him was not even sorry. He wanted to go back in time, make a deal with the devil, anything! Anything to protect the man he… to protect Sembene from him. Ethan got closer to the bed. He had never thought about his relationship with Sembene before. An easy enough camaraderie in the middle of this crazy household. A few smiles and even fewer words. Ethan had thought he had loved Brona, he liked her for sure. Her death had hurt him, yes… Ethan still thought, a few hours ago, that he loved Vanessa. He could have seen a future for them? No… No. She was so dear to him though… But Sembene. Sembene was different. Could Ethan say that he loved Sembene? He did not know. He had not thought about it, he had never thought… he would need to. Between them, it had always been silent and instinctive. Now there was only a void. A black pit all around him, and if Ethan took a step forward he would fall. If he took a step backwards, he would fall. Was he not already falling?

For long minutes, Ethan stayed doubled over beside the bed, sobbing, not trusting his hand to touch Sembene, not trusting his eyes… Yet he looked up. He looked at the dead face, as if Sembene would answer, would wake up and guide Ethan back to the light. Ethan touched his hand. No tremor of life, nothing. He touched the hand again. Took it, shook it. Ethan grew bold with grief then, and another hand found its way to Sembene’s face. Ethan did not know if he had meant to caress, to ascertain the cold of the skin, but his fingers gripped viciously the jaw. He moaned, angry and bereaved:

“Are you satisfied with the mess that you have created out of me? Look at me, answer me dammit!”

No tremor of life, no answer. As if he just realised his words, where his fingers were, Ethan pulled back. He jumped, crawling on the floor as if burned. It was not him who had talked! He could not!

Fresh tears were falling down his cheeks. He was the only one responsible, he knew it. He should have asked the wolf, his reflection in the mirror. Sembene… Sembene was above this. Whatever they had shared had been a mutual feeling, a thread to hold on. They had both left their handprint on the other’s heart, no need for responsibilities when they were still alive. Who had started, who was the one… who cared? Why did he care now that he, the monster, had put an end to it. Now that he, Ethan Talbot, had once again been the source of his own misery. Never ever could he have blamed Sembene. Their places should have been exchanged, screamed his heart, his soul, his brain. The wolf screamed anew, contradictory and painfully alive.
Maybe before, he had loved Brona. Maybe before, he had loved Vanessa. He had loved Sembene, he knew it. This was love, this pain.

Ethan fell even lower on the floor, brought down by the trail of tears. He fell below hell and, hands torn by his own nails, the wolf wailing inside, he fell unconscious. Unconscious, yet so alive here, in this lonely room.

End Notes

I hope you liked it! Leave a kudo or a comment if you want me to write more Sembene/Ethan! I need an excuse to write them :p

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