The Postman Always Rings Twice

by danglingdingle

Summary

Arthur returns to receiver. Written for the inception100-challenge #23 on LiveJournal
Shifting his weight, the envelope in his hand soaking through, Arthur’s palm sweating, the words stamped on the paper burning holes in his mind, making him grit his teeth, inexplicably, alternating with a fond smile.

The words that weren’t spoken then were sealed, scribbled with all the haste of wanting to get it out there, for Eames to know.

The doorbell rang with determination.

A rumpled Eames was revealed, with a look of schooled, mild interest on his face.

Foregoing invitations, Arthur brushed past him, waving the letter in front of Eames’s face; “I take this as an open invitation.”
“You’re welcome to,” Eames bows Arthur in belatedly, a small smile playing in the corner of his mouth, eyes twinkling mischievously when he glances at the letter in Arthur’s hand.

“God, Eames, you can’t be serious—” The rest of the train of Arthur’s thought stops at its tracks when the truth dawns on him. “You opened it. You opened it, sealed it again, and sent it back, because you knew I’d come and find you, no matter what hell hole you’d managed to cram yourself into this time.”

“Well, it was either that, or a text, and I do enjoy doing things the old fashioned way…” The look of blatant amusement never wavers, not even when Arthur rips the envelope open and Polaroid pictures spill out, pictures of Eames, pictures which Arthur himself had taken over the years, along with a variety of photos taken by others.

Eames waves a hand at the pile with forced nonchalance, his uncertainty betrayed by the slight frown marring his forehead. “I refuse to take them back. Do what you will with them, burn them for all I care, but I’m not taking them.”

“Fuck you, Eames,” Arthur gouts out, exasperated, moving to close the door that Eames had left open behind them. “If you think that’s what I’m here for, to prove some kind of point you’ve managed to get into your head without consulting me first, then you got another thing coming.”

“Then what is all this, eh? You keep sending me things we had together without so much as a note attached. What am I supposed to make of it, then? Is this some kind of a settlement? As far as I recall, we never actually got married, darling.” Obviously livid now, Eames turned his back to Arthur who slumped in a nearby recliner, craning his head to see what Eames was doing; pouring two glasses of bourbon, since, according to Eames, that was what you do in Birmingham.

“Let me get this straight, Mr. Eames.” Arthur took a careful sip of his drink before continuing. “You think I’m here to break up with you. To throw our life together away like it never mattered? Hmm?”

“Well, that’s the conclusion I’ve deducted from the recent happenings, yes, and if you expect me to be gracious about it, you’re sorely mistaken.”

“I don’t;” Arthur chucked back the rest of his rink with a sigh, noting that Eames had hardly touched his. “That’s not what I’m here for. That’s not why I’ve been shipping our things over.”

The look on Eames face was unreadable, except for the sheer blankness that comes with him waiting for Arthur to drop a bloody hand grenade.

“You know I’m not good at this. You’re good at this, in fact, you’re fucking tremendous at this, which is why I figured you’d take the hint.”

“Are we still talking about the same thing here? I’m afraid you’ve lost me in one of your paradoxes…”

“I believe we’re merely looking at this from two completely different points of view, Eames.”

“Then,” Eames leaned forth in his chair, expectant. “Feel free to fill me in at any time now, as you please.”

Arthur closed his eyes against the soul-quivering sigh he couldn’t even begin to throttle down.
Then took a deep breath an looked Eames straight in the eye. “And how, if I may ask, would you have reacted had I just began to ship over my stuff? I mean, I wanted to, but since we never talk about these things, I figured more subtle hints might be in order.”

“Hold on a tick. Your stuff. Sent here, where I live, all by my lonesome.”

“Yes, well, I was rather hoping my plan would eventually change that. Not to mention the being married part, but it all seemed so rushed, and I never get my mouth open when I should, so…”

“So you, instead of spilling your guts to me in the way I tend to do to you, was somehow too intimidating - more so, than moving in, piece by piece? You don’t even like England!”

“I love England!” Arthur gushed, indignant, swearing that the bourbon had done its trick and now there was no brain-mouth filter to speak of. That, or this thing had been a long time coming, since, seriously, how long did Arthur *really* think he could keep his stealthy moving in-thing going without Eames cuing in. Suddenly, Arthur felt a flush creeping up his neck. He’d never thought he could be so thoroughly misunderstood by his actions. Clearly, Arthur would need to learn to talk about his feelings more.

“I love England,” Arthur continued at Eames’s look of disbelief, struggling to keep the eye-contact without fidgeting nervously, quiet. “It has you in it.”

Watching Eames rub his face with both hands, a quirk of a smile peeking through, unclenched something inside Arthur’s chest, making him feel soft and willing to do whatever it took to make Eames understand. “You don’t have to say anything. You can tell me to leave, you can throw me out, you can burn my heart an tell me you never want to see me again, but before you do that, I want you to know that I love you. Have been in love with you for years, and I know I don’t say it, in words, but that’s what I’m here to tell you. If you’ll accept it.”

“Jesus Christ Arthur…” Eames’s hands flopped onto his lap, his face bright and utterly butterly enamored.

Arthur cleared his throat, and shut his eyes for a spell, gathering himself for what he was about to do next; He got up and got on his knees before Eames, seeking his eyes, trying to find a thread there that he could follow, and upon finding nothing but encouragement, silence, so that Arthur could say what he was here to say, Arthur gathered Eames’s hands in his own. They were warm. As always with Arthur near.

“It’s just that… I’ve been thinking… Eames…You know how we’re forced to be apart for jobs?”

“Well, yes, I do, Arthur.”

“And I was thinking, maybe we could erase some of the being apart by living in the same place?”

The look on Arthur’s face was nothing short of hopeful.

Eames raised Arthur’s hands to his lips and kissed his fingertips, the look of fondness on his face mending Arthur’s only so recently cracked heart. The fear was gone. It, this, all of this, was easier than he’d ever expected, and it made him wonder why he’d kept it to himself for so long.

As for a response, Eames, always good with words, found himself speechless. The past months of burdening uncertainty unraveling into *this*, instead of turning into his worst fears, was truly something to render a man witless.

So, instead, he hauled Arthur from the floor and onto his lap, hugging him close like he’d never let go (and he never would, mind you,) and closed the gap between the men’s lips, licking his way gently inside Arthur’s mouth, his hand roaming against Arthur’s back in circles designed to soothe
himself as much as Arthur.

When after blissfully long minutes Arthur stirred and manoeuvred to straddle Eames, both the men were distinctly hard - a common, obvious, natural occurrence when they’ve been apart, enhanced by the beloved closeness of one another - Eames nipped at Arthur’s lip, murmuring… nay, growling; “Should we take this somewhere more comfortable?” And without waiting for an answer, pushed his arms under Arthur’s thighs, hauling him up and trudging toward the bedroom.

Because, afterwards, they would talk.

They would talk about shipping the rest of Arthur’s belongings over, they would talk about misunderstandings and heartfelt apologies, they would talk about all the times when they’d been miserable alone, and how that would change, and, apparently, since they’d somewhat already breached the topic, they would talk about marriage.

For if the sounds emanating from the bedroom were anything to go by, not even a pale sliver of moonlight could get between these two.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!