

Mona Morstein

The Watch

It was an unusual Emma Peel that Steed spent time with that night; if it had been any other women he was with, he might have even thought he was taking care of her. She seemed perfectly normal at Beresford's house, allowing him to knock over the cypernaut; but somewhere between Beresford's mansion and her own apartment building, to which they have driven separately in their own cars, she had changed a little. Maybe it was the way she had slowly climbed out of her Lotus; maybe it was rather limp way her arm lay in his as he escorted her into the building and up the elevator. Maybe it was how she silently stood by as he unlocked the door of her apartment with the key he carried and ushered her in; maybe it was the compliant way she followed his instruction to have a seat while he made the drinks. As he brought her a glass as she reclined in the sofa in her penthouse apartment, he couldn't avoid noticing a slight shiver run through her as she somewhat blankly took the scotch he handed her. Yet it all couldn't mean that much, Steed thought, after all, this was Mrs. Emma Peel in front of him. Her somewhat silent mood and reflective gaze out the window was merely a sign of fatigue after the completion of their latest case; Beresford and those pesky cybernauts. He was a bit tired himself. Steed rubbed his neck, again. Emma could just about whack a person as hard as one of those seven foot tall, automated steel monstrosities, and under the influence of a mind-controlling watch, that is just what she had done to him, knocking him to the ground, where an inconvenient rock had momentarily rendered him unconscious. He still had a bit of a pounding going on in his noggin, and hoped that his double scotch would soothe his pain. "Steed, is your head hurting? I'm so sorry I hit you," Emma said, obvious regret in her voice. He looked down at her and smiled. "Well, as long as you didn't enjoy it," Steed smiled, "that makes it hurt less." He grew animated and swung around the room in his typical manner of pacing, holding the glass up high. "I'm sure that this fine alcoholic beverage, or two or three of them, should afford me a relaxing analgesia. After which, no doubt my stomach shall be raising a hue and cry for food. Might I take you to dinner later, my dear?" Emma wore the slight curve of a smile that showed her amusement with Steed, but there was a wan quality to the rest of her face that detracted from the energy her grins often radiated. "I don't quite feel like going out tonight, Steed. I'm.....a bit tired." It was too long a pause, and Steed knew from years in the field that meant a person was previewing their thoughts, wondering what to say, wondering what lie would be right, would be safe. "Alright, my dear. I shall take a rain check. Often redeemable in soggy England." He was suddenly desperate for her to cheerily reply, but Emma turned back to stare out the window, sipping her drink. Steed looked down at her, a bit lost as to what to do, or say. His relationship with Emma Peel was one of mutual

convenience, mainly—it was convenient to both of them to eat dinner together, work together, and slide between sheets together. No obligation had ever been asked for or offered, and yet, over the year they had worked together, one had simply naturally arisen. It was convenient to have one; it simplified things. Without any sort of expectations of commitment, it was convenient for both of them to establish it. It made everything easier. Steed had never in his entire life met a woman with whom everything was so easy. Nor had he ever met a woman like Emma Peel. So beautiful, so intelligent, so competent, so confident, so...appreciative of him and his quirks. Their relationship was one of affection and trust, of lust and acceptance. He could count on one hand how many times they had had any sort of serious discussions outside of figuring out were who the bad guys, not because they were banal, facile people, but because they preferred to not focus on their pasts, on their previous troubles, on their occasional nightmares, on the violence that plagued their cases. If in any one way they were very similar people it was in their silent processing and their hidden depths, which both were loathe to share, to dredge up, as it would be like showing garbage pulled from a river. What made their relationship special was the fact that they were people who were not what they seemed; though most everyone else perceived only their outer natures, they both knew there was much more to each other and allowed those inner selves their respect and space. They didn't live together probably for several reasons—trying to hide their closeness from others the main one—but because they both desired to have time alone to regroup and balance themselves out, so when once more together it was all, conveniently...wonderful. He saw Emma sitting listlessly, and it was odd, what overcame Steed. In the past with women, he'd oftentimes bowed politely out of a woman's flat when she had seemed upset; he could not particularly relate to their troubles at work or with friends or their real irritation at merely having broken a heel of their shoes. With Cathy Gale, he had been able to have more serious talks, but they had often ended in pointless disagreement, and pointed judgment of each others' view, with invariably one or the other of them becoming very irritable. That continually ruined what microscopic chance Steed ever had to spend their time together eagerly caressing her ample bosom. He was, he was loathe to admit, in some ways just another man who had problems dealing with a woman who had problems. Therefore, in his hedonistic view of life he had simply not attempted to force himself to do so; a primary reason why his relationships never had worked out in the past. But, now, with Emma there, something bothering her, something arose in Steed he had never felt before. It was a need to know what was preying so heavily on her mind, a need to be someone she could share her troubles with, a need to be that person that could lift her mood and make her feel happy again. To listen. To be there for her in whatever way she needed him to be. "I'm sure there are some biscuits about we can nibble on later, if we need to," he said, and then, in his typical conversation changing way--usually done awkwardly to confuse his opponents, or deftly to appear witty to friends but now spoken quickly to keep him from running away instead--Steed sat down next to Emma and asked, simply and softly, "What's wrong?" She looked at him soundlessly, but he could see her eyes welcomed the question, even if she

didn't fly into an easy and complete explanation immediately. She took his glassless hand and sat back against the sofa, and Steed followed her repositioning so that they leaned comfortably backwards and shoulder to shoulder against each other, him patiently content for the moment, and her garnering her will to open up to him. It was quiet in the modern apartment, with no clocks ticking noisily away; that was too much a sign of the stately past for Emma Peel. Though everything was rich and fine, everything was also coloured red or white—no wood for her, no pastel tones; everything had a smooth, even edge; everything was no newer than 15 years old. Steed realized he was probably the oldest thing in her penthouse, but the way Emma nestled against his broad shoulder, and wrapped her lower leg around his, he took it as a compliment, not as an problem. Any other time with her shoeless foot rubbing against his leg, his scotch would have been put aside for a bit of kissing, touching, holding, but now, for whatever reason, Steed forced his libido to stay at bay until some sort of answer to his question was gained.

"I didn't much like that case," Emma said, rather matter-of-factly. "It's hard," Steed said, chancing to voice a touch of intuition, "being taken in by someone who turns out to wish you harm." She glanced at him and their eyes held each other for a moment, sharing agreement over his words. "Yes, it's hard. I...had no idea. Did you?" Steed scrunched his lips together in that way he did when temporarily thinking. "Oh...maybe just a bit of suspicion. But, certainly, nothing along the lines of what Beresford was really doing. Or who he really was. The Ministry is quite upset over not realizing he was related to Professor Armstrong. They like to keep track of relatives of criminals. To keep things tidy. This was decidedly untidy. And for us, very nearly..." Steed let the end of the sentence glide away from him. It was not death that Beresford had wished for them, but something much more dreadful. Almost inconceivably dreadful. To rule their will. To have them do whatever he wanted them to do. Both he and Emma suddenly shivered together. She was still so very silent; it unnerved Steed. He thought of the case and all that had happened. He knew every part of it and couldn't figure out what would so upset Emma...of a moment a chill ran through him. No, there was one part he was ignorant of—what had happened when Emma had been in the house with Beresford, with no ability to oppose his will, before she had come outside and struck him. He turned and looked at her full on, his grey penetrating eyes never more serious, never more focused. She responded with anxiety and yet, a clear willingness, even a need for him to talk. "Emma, what happened in the house when you were alone with Beresford?" Yes, that was it; her eyes grew watery but she blinked them dry. "How can you spend your whole life dealing with...people...like him?" she asked. "How can it not sicken you, forever, inside?"

"They aren't all like him. Just a very, very few. What did he do?" "What a fool I was, allowing him to play at wooing me. I just did it because it was fun to see you get so jealous. You were so sweetly jealous, and you never had to be. I feel like an idiot. A complete idiot." "You're not an idiot. We've all been taken in. I have. It's a terrible feeling; near to being betrayed, which is the absolute worst thing to experience. Now, what did he do to you?" Emma leaned back against

the sofa again, only this time Steed stayed sitting forward, rapt with attention. She took a deep breath and then began to speak. "As soon as I put that watch on it was as if a part of me had died; that very basic part of you that is you, your ability to express yourself, your individualism. It was as if I had suddenly found myself in a chair or a desk, as if my mind was now trapped in some inanimate object I could no longer control. But, I wasn't inanimate. I was told to leave, and I left. I was told to get into my car, and I did. I was told to drive away no matter who was in front of me, no matter if you were yelling for me to stop, no matter if in one more second I would run you over...I drove, torn into three separate mental parts. I was numb, following orders directed from elsewhere; I was calm, logically reasoning that Beresford's gift to me had merely been a trap to capture me, for some reason I was sure would be uncovered soon, and quite confident that you would come and rescue me; and I was shrieking in horror that I could not break out of this prison I was in, I could not even pound on the bars of the cage, I could do nothing, nothing, I was terrified. "I arrived at Beresford's house and was told to enter it; I did. They were very upset that you weren't with me. I don't know how you were supposed to have been captured to, but then they mentioned a watch. I saw you drive up on the camera and heard Beresford decide to use me to attack you. I felt nauseous. He took off my coat and then inferred what he intended for me and I inferred what he intended for you..." She closed her eyes but continued talking. "And he proved it when he began kissing me, his hands grabbing me all over my body...I really thought that then and there he was going to...but he stopped himself, to get you out of the way, to make you his slave as well..."

Steed felt rage devouring him inside and if Beresford hadn't been dead already, there was a very good chance he would have died that night by Steed's hands. It was hard to fathom, hard to state in words that Beresford had intended Emma to be his sex slave, whilst forcing a helpless Steed to stand and watch...and watch...and watch... "My God," Emma whispered, "when you somehow had the strength to break free of the cybnaut's grasp, and knock me down and remove that accursed bracelet, it was the most freeing moment of my life." Steed was really a much stronger man than people suspected, which more than once had saved his life. Combining that with the additional power of anger had enabled Steed to pull his wrist out of the way of the terrible watch he was supposed to have had placed on him.

"You didn't seem the worse for wear, then," Steed said. She lightly touched his cheek. "We never do, do we? But, then, driving home, when it all sank in to me...I fear I'm not good company tonight." "No, you're not. You're the best company." He stood up and began pacing again. "This is all my fault. You shouldn't work with me. It's too dangerous. I'm too selfish." Emma sat forward on the couch. "It's not your fault. I choose to work with you. I enjoy it. I'm good at it." Steed smiled at her. "You're very good at it. Almost as good as I am." She smirked. Steed came back and sat by her side. "That horrid invention is being buried as deeply as possible in the Ministry archives. Even the Ministry doesn't want anything to do with it. It'll never be used against a person again." He took both her hands in his. "I'm very bad at this, Emma. I wouldn't even try if it wasn't

you. I've never tried it before. But, tell me what I can do to make this all go away for you. I'll do anything, whatever you want. Or need. I want to help." Her eyes grew watery again and once more she blinked the tears back. "Oh, Steed. I'm pretty bad at this, too." "Almost as bad as I am," Steed grinned. And then there it was. A real, honest smile; one of Emma Peel's best yet most hidden features, a glorious expression that lit up her eyes and the room she was in, chasing all the dark clouds away. When a little giggle bubbled playfully from her luscious mouth, Steed's heart melted in his chest. Although nothing much had happened, really, nothing had actually been solved, no conclusions drawn, no statements finalized, it seemed to both of them that everything was so much clearer now, so much surer. "So, what do we do now? The usual after case stress relaxers?" she asked. "Drink too much, eat too much—"

"—Make love too much?" Steed finished for her. He sighed. "I suppose so. If we have to." "But, maybe not necessarily in that order?" She leaned forward and planted a kiss so forcefully on his lips that his breathing stopped and his whole body weakened, giving her the liberty to push him down onto his back on the sofa. She broke the kiss only long enough to murmur, as her hands began rubbing a singular part of him in a most pleasurable aggressive fashion, "Do you know what is the best part of you looking so fantastic in your suits? How fantastic you look out of them." Now, Steed may have been a little more enlightened and open-minded than the typical male, but he was still in many ways a typical male. Having a woman come on to him was very stimulating to him; having Emma Peel come on to him brought him immediately into a peak of arousal, and his zipper elevated an inch in proof.

"Ah, you pass phase one, very well," Emma said, loosening his tie and unrolling it from his neck as she kissed his lips, his eyes, his cheeks. "Let me help with phase two," Steed panted, starting to unbutton his shirt. She lightly slapped his hands away. "I don't need any help." "Ever!" Steed agreed. Their eyes met. Her head shook firmly once. "No, not ever. Tonight I did. Now, I don't." Steed wrapped his arms around Emma and pulled her tightly to him. Words not of his own conscious making poured out of him. "Emma, let me make love to you the way you deserve, the way a man should make love to you, honoring you, respecting you, pleasing you." She whispered in his ear. "Steed, you scoundrel. You're just supposed to make me laugh, pour me champagne and take me to the Continent. If you keep this up, I don't know what I'll do, what I'll say." She paused. "Now, let me get back to undressing you." He spread his arms wide, releasing her from his grip. "I'm yours." "That's better." She sat up on his groin, her legs bent on either side of him. It was exquisitely delightful to Steed how she went about removing his clothes. The waistcoat was gone in a second, thrown to the floor and forgotten. The slow unbuttoning of his shirt, however, which he would have just ripped off his torso, drove him crazy. Each slightly more opened skin space was treated to her tongue licking the skin, kissing and sucking upon the now available nipples. This was interspersed with her lips all over his face, and her strong, thin fingers caressing the back of his neck. Little sounds of pleasure launched in staccato manner from Steed. When his shirt was finally undone, she spent time rubbing his lean, muscular torso with her hands, feeling

the contours, the sheer masculinity of his form. Then it was undoing his cufflinks and placing them carefully on the floor under the sofa, where they would hopefully remember to look for them later. With help from him sitting forward a little, the shirt was removed and tossed over her shoulder. He was breathing deeply now, his sensual half-lidded eyes radiating sexual need. The lust was transformed into a pure animal lust when she undid his belt, whipped it out, and stuck the end in her mouth, stimulating fellatio for a few seconds. Seeing Steed just about ready to drool, she burst out laughing, dropped the belt also off the sofa and slid off the couch, kneeling beside it. She removed his Chelsea boots and socks and sucked on each of his toes. Then she stood and sat next to him on the sofa, staring down at him. His long body took up the whole sofa, but comfortably so. Without a word she undid his trouser button, unzipped the zipper and then with a bit of help from his hips, thrusting his erection skyward, she pulled his trousers down his long legs and off his body. She liked that he wore briefs; they were infinitely sexier to her than boxers. To see the exact definition of his groin drove her wild with desire. Repeating the silent process with Steed's eager help, off went his underwear and he lay in his manly glory on the sofa, his muscles defined, his manhood erect, his eyes waiting and very, very willing.

"Phase two is now over," Emma said, somewhat absent-mindedly caressing his genitals, which caused his eyes to widen. "Time for Phase three." She then lowered her mouth to his penis and began maneuvering her tongue and mouth in the ways she knew brought him ever closer to an orgasm. She could have continued until his release—she enjoyed giving as well as receiving oral sex—but after some minutes of Steed rolling his hips in time to the rising and lowering of her mouth upon his shaft, he very gently removed her from him and sat up. "Time for Phase four," Steed said in a deep voice, standing up unable to wait any longer. He grabbed Emma by her hand and led her into her bedroom. There, with her standing by the bed he quickly removed her clothes. He hugged her tightly then, moving his hands up and down her back, her buttock, as she grabbed him tightly. He pulled apart after a little bit and brought one hand around her front, feeling her vulva and vagina drenched with lubrication. He inserted a finger into her, moving it up and down, strategically hitting her clitoris on his upswing, because he loved the soft feel of her body, inside and out, and knew she loved this, too. He removed his hand and licked his finger, enjoying the taste of her. Quickly undoing the bed, they climbed in between the sheets and in a compatibility that was sometimes telepathic, Steed rolled onto her. She grabbed his penis and guided him into her; he slid in like a knife through warm butter. They began their movements, matching each other perfectly both in need. A need to remove this day from their lives, to remove that villain, remove that horror of loss of will, that disgusting misuse sex, sex that was for the sharing of pleasure, of attraction, of beauty, of closeness and...of love. They would end this day as they had so many others, plotting out their pasts, their troubles, their flaws and bringing them together as two people who were so very good for each other, who could stand against the world and come out with nary a wrinkle to show for it, who would, if need be, be there to rescue each other, and...help each

other, later, much later, after all the bantering was done. His thrusts grew urgent and landed deep inside her, hard, as her legs stayed wrapped around his and her hips rose into his pelvis with equal force. There were shattered breathes and exertional grunts and the sensations grew higher and higher and higher, until they leapt out in a shuddering outburst of shakes and contortions, semen and sweat, cries and kisses. There was a long post-coital time when the lay next to each other, caressing chest hair, breasts, cheeks and chins. "I guess that's why I work with you," Emma finally said. "I'd make love to you even if you didn't. I rather enjoy it." The understatement of the year. Emma playfully rolled her eyes, which was hard to see in the darkening of the room in the early evening hour, but she had faith that her cat-eyed partner would notice. "Steed, don't be daft," she began, about to explain what she really meant, and slightly resenting his apparent obtuseness at this, of all times. He covered her lips with two of his fingers. "I'm not. I know what you mean." He removed his fingers and kissed her, and indeed, as they held each other reveling in that physical link to the sharing of their souls, they both experienced a similar thought crossing through their minds...

"Beresford who?"

The End