

Sandpaper and Sympathy

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Rating: K+

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This is the third sequel to my DC Comics / NCIS / West Wing / Bones crossover The Return, which has been nominated as best non-Buffyverse crossover in the Twisting The Hellmouth Crossing Over Awards.

"Hello?" The woman's voice sounded uncertain. Gibbs couldn't quite place it.

He paused his sanding, shouted "I'm in the basement," and moved closer to the drawer that concealed his rifle. It probably wasn't a threat, but there was no point taking stupid risks.

He heard footsteps, saw a pair of red boots at the top of the stairs, and guessed the identity of his visitor before he saw the rest of her.

"I hope you don't mind my coming here, Agent Gibbs," said Supergirl.

Gibbs looked at her face, and realised that she'd been crying. "What's wrong?"

"We had a bad one this afternoon. A mud slide in a village in Bangladesh, buried a school. It took two hours for the news to get out; by the time Kal-El and I got there it was too late for most of the children. All we could do was recover the bodies."

"But you did save some?"

"Not many."

"But some."

"It should have been more."

"It's a big world," said Gibbs, "you can't be everywhere at once."

"I know. But we have to try."

"Kara, last time I looked nobody was paying you to do this. You and your cousin do amazing things, but you can't save everyone. And if you did, if you were there to stop every accident, what would that do to the human race?"

"But children..."

"Children die every day, all over the world. You can't save all of them."

"I guess."

"Why ask me, anyway?"

"I don't know, really. I think I thought you might have some answers."

"Abby told you about my daughter, didn't she?"

There was a long pause then Kara said "Yes. She mentioned it a couple of months ago. You're the only person I know who's lost a child. I thought you might..." She trailed off into silence.

"I didn't handle her death well," said Gibbs. "I'm the last person you should be looking at for insight."

"That was a long time ago. How do you handle it now? The bad ones, the ones you can't

save."

"I catch the bastards that did it, and make sure that they can't do it again. Apart from that, mostly I build boats."

"You can't really catch a mud slide."

"But I'll bet you helped to make sure the rest of the village was safe."

"Yes."

"Then you've done what you can. Want to help build a boat?"

Kara looked at the upturned hull and the tools. "I don't really know much about woodwork."

"I'll show you. One thing, though. I don't use power tools for this; I'd appreciate it if you don't use your powers."

"That's going to be very slow," said Kara.

"Sometimes that's the point," said Gibbs. "Now, the trick is to sand along the grain of the wood, not across it..."

End