

SOLITUDE

by Katrina Relf

Tonight, Catherine, for the first time, you truly walked alone. I could not share my thoughts, even with you – this feeling of self-loathing and utter despair that will not leave me.

You came to me and I felt your love, but how could I look into your eyes when I was fearful of what I might see, and how could you bear to even look at me – knowing what that creature – my other self – is capable of? I sent you away, although every part of my being was crying out for the reassurance of your forgiveness, for the shelter of your arms.

I know that I am the protector of all who live Below and tonight I knew that they could live in fear no longer – the tunnels had to be safe again. The outsiders had to go. Their evil was destroying my family. But then, in that instant, I felt your fear. It tore through me like a knife.

Catherine – you could have died tonight. By what cruel twist of fate were you there – to witness the unspeakable carnage, to see for yourself the utter savagery of the beast that lives within me? The remembering those moments fills me with a shame I cannot bear.

Tonight I feel your tears, your sadness, and I know that I am the cause of that sadness. I long to hold you in my arms, closer than a heartbeat, to find the peace that only your nearness can bring, but my shame is such that I cannot come to you, cannot stay with those I love, until I have cleansed myself of the hatred that I feel towards this being who shares my every waking moment and haunts my dreams at night.

I must leave you, leave my world for the solitude of a place I know. A place of tranquillity where, perhaps in time, I will find a kind of peace, and even learn to forgive myself. It is a place of serenity where the deep waters will wash away the blood from my hands and the guilt from my heart. And, perhaps in the stillness of the night, sleep will come – a deep, untroubled sleep, where my only dreams will be of you.

I will return when the healing is complete. When I can once again look into your eyes and see only tenderness, when I can once again hold you close within my arms and feel your heart beating with love. When my only regret will be this parting from you.

Until then, my dearest Catherine, be well, and know that I love you.

- *Vincent*