

FAMILY

(Promises of Someday episode expansion)

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Catherine and Vincent were in a discussion about the carousel horses they were sitting on, as Father and Devin started approaching them after their long and long overdue talk.

Devin noticed the gentle smile on his brother's distinctive face and the softness in his intelligent eyes, when looking at the face of the woman sitting on a horse next to him. She was leaning her face against the pole her horse was attached to, as if unconsciously leaning closer to Vincent. Her face was glowing with happiness as she was talking and the gentle yet intense way she was regarding Vincent's eyes spoke volumes about her feelings towards him.

Yes, judging just by this image in front of him, Catherine was definitely more than a Helper to Vincent. Devin could see it now and he had to admit no matter how surprised he was, most of all, he was happy for his little brother. If anyone ever deserved love, it was the man who was the pure definition of it.

"You two turtle doves can continue later - someone just told me it's dinner time soon Below."

Vincent and Catherine turned their heads to the two men joining them.

"All good in the house of Wells again?" Catherine teased lightly, with a smile.

Devin laughed and put his arm around Jacob's shoulders and looked at him. Seeing the glistening eyes and a heartfelt smile of gratitude on the older man's face, he said smiling, "I am pretty sure about it."

"Good," Vincent spoke in a quiet gravelly voice and his eyes were smiling. He dismounted his horse and offered his hand to Catherine to help her dismount hers.

She accepted it gratefully and then they descended the carousel platform to meet Devin and Father.

When all four of them started walking towards the drainage tunnel, Devin noticed his brother and Catherine were still holding hands ahead of himself and Jacob.

Devin found himself fascinated by their image.

He was thinking of the little *lion* boy he knew as a child. Even back then, Vincent was the most soft spoken, gentle, kind and polite one out of all the kids in the tunnels. He was no stranger to mischief though, nothing to get him in big trouble, but he was a good sport and the kids liked him. Nobody was really ever thinking about his *difference*, apart from when they were playing hide-and-seek because Vincent could never hide well enough not to be found first. It used to upset him, then he got used to it and accepted it, as he had to accept many things about himself.

Devin marvelled at his inner strength, and although he was jealous at times that the old man showed more love and care towards Vincent than himself, he never blamed Vincent for it. He truly loved him like a brother.

Seeing Vincent as a grown man impressed Devin greatly. Not just because of the sheer magnitude of his brother's physical presence, but especially because of the incredible aura surrounding him. The maturity, serenity and intelligence glowing from his face and eyes, the empathy, the gentle care and guidance of those he loved, was visible from miles away. When

they hugged that first night, Devin felt like being home again. That's how genuinely heartfelt Vincent's hug was.

Devin still didn't know much about Catherine Chandler, but he liked what he had seen so far. Impeccable at her work, fierce, non-judgemental and determined in her actions, a good listener, loyal - and as he learned just that night, devoted to those she loved and cared about. Oh yes, beautiful too. No wonder Vincent fell for her, though Devin was sure beauty wasn't the factor that prevailed most with his little brother. His heart and soul were appreciative of much deeper attributes. But above all, she loved Vincent and was concerned about his well-being and that spoke volumes about her character.

When they reached the Dining chamber, most people were already there and smiled when the quartet entered and sat down at one of the tables joined in long rows.

Jacob and Devin sat on one side of the table, Vincent and Catherine opposite to them.

Catherine was inwardly excited because it was actually the first time she'd been invited to dine in the tunnels. She didn't really care what was on the menu, but seeing familiar faces again, and above all, sharing table with the man she loved and his family, made her feel very warm inside. In contradiction to her feelings, she shivered - from excitement.

"Are you cold, Catherine?" Vincent asked quietly, leaning slightly to her.

She smiled at him gently, touched by his constant care.

"No, just... happy..."

His smile almost melted her inside.

"I can certainly feel that," he said, with a hint of pride in his velvet voice.

Catherine couldn't help it, and with a beaming smile, she wrapped her arm around his and put her head on his shoulder for a moment to feel him close, closing her eyes at it. Vincent lowered his head to hers and put the lightest kiss into her hair.

Devin was observing them. With a smile and an admiring look, he shook his head and chuckled.

Jacob looked at him inquisitively, but noticing what his son was looking at, he smiled.

"They are quite something, aren't they?" Devin said quietly, not to be overheard by his brother and his love. Mercifully, the chamber was buzzing with people talking, so it wasn't difficult.

"You have no idea," Father chuckled, and warmth spread around his heart.

"I actually can't believe *you* are okay with that," Devin chuckled again.

Jacob smiled and shook his head.

"I wasn't at the beginning. Actually, I was doing everything I could to make it stop..." His face reflected shame and regret.

"But with time and various events, I realized that Catherine is the best thing that ever happened to him. The light in his darkness. She loves him deeply and purely, is loyal and devoted to him, to death. She refused a better job in a different state for him, she saw him at his worst and helped him out of it, she helped to save both Vincent's and my life when we were trapped in the Maze..."

Jacob stopped as he saw the shocked look in Devin's eyes.

"That's a long story for some other time.... Anyway... I still think they will face problems in more than one ways, but more and more I believe, that if anyone can overcome them... it's the two of them."

Devin looked in amazement at his father (how wonderful those two words sounded to him now!) and smiled again before turning his attention back to his meal.

After dinner, they had retreated into Father's study and Devin offered a few stories from his adventures in the world, while Catherine asked for more stories about the mischief he and Vincent

got up to as children. She was rewarded with quite a few, and all four of them shared a good laugh, especially when Father mentioned how many grey hair he got from their tunnel adventures.

Catherine was glad it was Friday, as it was quite late when Jacob decided to turn to bed for the night and she realized she should be going back Above. It had been the most delightful evening and she felt like she was surrounded by family.

They had reached Devin's guest chamber on the way back up. Vincent and Father had asked Mary to prepare it before they went up to the Carousel that evening, in hope that Devin would stay for a few days. Their effort had paid off, as Devin told them he would like to stay for a week before he moved on to his next adventure.

"Well, Chandler," Devin said, as they stopped at his chamber waiting for Vincent to catch up with them. Vincent accompanied Father to his study as he wanted to pick up an interesting book for Catherine he found that day.

"I watched you all night and I have to confirm that my little brother is definitely, hopelessly, beyond life and death and utterly..." he paused for a moment and Catherine raised her eyebrows. "... in love with you."

Catherine's lips stretched into a beaming smile and her eyes glistened a little when she spoke quietly and dreamily.

"I know..."

Devin smiled back at her and added quickly.

"Needless to say you're head over heels with him yourself."

They both laughed and Catherine wondered how easy it was now to feel comfortable around him. Now that all secrets have been revealed, all burdens were lifted and everyone could give way to the best thing in their heart - love.

Suddenly, she felt a bit shy in front of Devin and lowered her eyes.

"No seriously," Devin continued in a more subdued way. "The old man told me how you two met and what you've been through... I cannot but admire you both... You know, I like you... I know it can't be easy, but trust me, if anyone is worth it, it's Vincent."

His voice softened when he spoke his brother's name and Catherine felt how great his love for Vincent was. And yet again, she was overwhelmed by her own feelings for the extraordinary leonine man.

"I know that, Devin... That's why I will never give him up, come what may. He is... my life."

She was looking at Devin now and the resolve and love in her expression made him believe her absolutely.

At that moment, Vincent caught up with them, holding the leather-bound edition of Matthew Arnold's poetry in his hand. He came to stand next to Catherine, with their sides almost touching. She gave him a glowing smile and the way they looked at each other for a moment made Devin suddenly warm. He chuckled to break the spell.

"Well, I think I'm gonna hit the hay, it's been... quite an adventurous day."

Catherine and Vincent both chuckled and Vincent gave his brother a bear hug.

"Good night, Devin, see you in the morning," he said.

Catherine could see how happy he was to have his brother back in his life. It truly warmed her heart.

"Night, Cathy. Night, little brother," Devin replied warmly. "And don't keep the lady up for too long..." He winked at them both and vanished in his chamber.

Vincent shook his head with a smile and took Catherine's hand in his.

“I don’t mind if you keep me up for long at all, Vincent,” Catherine whispered conspiratorially, leaning closer to him for a moment, a huge smile reaching her eyes.

Vincent felt like he was on a fire at once. His heartbeat quickened at Catherine’s words and her nearness to his face, and he had to gather all his strength to calm down and clamp on his rising desire. When he did, he smiled at her and exhaled loudly.

Hand-in-hand they set out to the threshold of her building.

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