

# YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN

*(Down to a Sunless Sea episode expansion)*

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Catherine had been sitting at her dressing table, staring into the mirror in front of her, for almost an hour now. Her bedroom was only dimly lit by a warm yellow glow from the bedside table lamp. Yet inside, Catherine was feeling cold and lonely.

She was trying to analyse the events of the last week, especially the last approximately ten hours - ever since she'd left her apartment and sat in Stephen's car.

*How could I have been so blind?*

Her brain was one of a brilliant attorney, but right at that moment, it felt like that of a schoolgirl who forgot her homework. She should have revised her knowledge of Stephen Bass before ever getting in contact with him again. She should have and she had not. And it had almost cost her life and that of Stephen himself. There was only one person in this whole charade whose brain had been working as sharply as ever. And she let him down by not trusting his instincts and deep feelings *for* and *of* her.

*Vincent...*

She buried her head in her hands, leaning her elbows on the dressing table. Catherine was drained from the past hours, the journey back home after the police had left wasn't easy either. The cab driver wanted to chat all the way back to New York, and after a while she gave up and damped him out of her hearing. She had paid him well enough for him to be angry about it.

When Vincent brought Stephen, still unconscious, back to the house, he put him gently on the floor covered with a blanket Catherine found up in the bedroom. Stephen was not bleeding heavily, but Vincent suspected internal injury of some kind, so Catherine called the ambulance and police right away. When she put the phone down, she turned to Vincent and saw all the sorrow in his deep blue eyes. No hint of judgement though. Only the sad realization that if she hadn't stopped him, Stephen wouldn't be alive now. And she knew it was all her fault.

Vincent didn't say a word before he disappeared into the night, but the final look he gave her was a mixture of worry for her state, his own anguish, and a hint of the hurt coming from his heart. It was almost unbearable - and Catherine was unable to utter a single word, though her own eyes were speaking more to him than any words could.

*Please, forgive me, please...*

Catherine let out a big sigh when she raised her head again, and saw the reflection of her own face in the mirror - pale, worn out, a hint of black rings under her eyes, which started welling up.

She missed him so much... She knew their first encounter after that horrible event would be difficult for both of them, but she had never longed for anyone's presence the way she did for Vincent's now. For the almost otherworldly man, who knew her like no one else, better than anyone else. And the one man who never betrayed her trust, never lied to her, never misled her, never had bad intentions with her, the man who had absolute trust in her. Had she broken that trust this past week?

Catherine couldn't take it any more. She stood up and started pacing there and back, from the French door to the wardrobe. In her agitated state, she barely realised that she unconsciously imitated Vincent's habit when he was nervous. And then she heard it behind her. as the breeze blew it in as light as a feather through the open French door.

'Catherine...'

She stopped in her tracks and held her breath. Slowly, she turned back and saw his familiar tall cloaked figure standing in the doorway.

Catherine let out a sigh, and with blurred vision almost ran into his arms. She wasn't planning to. She had told herself she had to give him space, because she hurt him and had no right to ambush him like that. But her heart was aching for the safety of his hold, the warmth of his body and comfort of his voice. And most of all, for hearing the beating of his heart against her ear, as if she wanted to reassure herself it was still beating for her...

'Vincent...', she whispered into his chest with a broken voice, and her arms held him tight around his waist.

Vincent's arms held her steadily, yet she could feel a little apprehension in his hold.

*Of course... he's hurt...*

She pulled back and released her hold, her eyes stuck on an insignificant spot on his chest, unable to look him straight into the eyes. Those eyes which always saw right into her soul. What they would see there now would be huge shame and guilt.

Vincent sensed her unease and despite his apprehension, he couldn't and didn't want to be so insensitive to the woman he loved like no one else in the world.

'Are you all right?'

His soft deep velvet voice made her shiver. Again.

'I... I'm fine,' she said and walked past him onto the balcony, leaning against the balustrade looking over the city.

Vincent followed her silently and stood next to her mimicking her pose.

He was happy he'd got to her in time, that she was safe and unharmed, alive. But somewhere deep down inside, the hurt from her mistrust, though only momentary and caused by her kind-hearted nature, kept him at bay. Even so, trying desperately to hide it in his face, all he longed to do was to crush her against his chest and tell her nothing had changed in his heart towards her. He could feel through their bond how afraid she was of that.

'I hope... your journey back was without problems,' Catherine said quietly.

'It was all right.'

Vincent's reply was short, but not cold, just matter-of-fact.

After a while of silence, that seemed like hours, he decided to break the ice first.

'Have you seen him?' he asked, his eyes fixed on the city ahead of him.

'They wouldn't let me,' came a quiet reply from his side.

Catherine knew what hurting people in the hours of need cost Vincent. Her heart always ached for his torment over any killings or injuries he had to commit. Her own fear stepped aside, when she looked at him full of worry and love as she spoke softly.

'Don't be ashamed, Vincent. You only did what you had to do.'

Vincent still didn't look at her, his posture straight, head slightly up as in a silent defiance of giving into his own longing.

'I know that,' he said truthfully.

And then it came, as Catherine couldn't hold it any more.

'I was the one who was unfair,' she started, almost not noticing when Vincent looked in her direction at her words, almost in surprise.

'I just... thought that you were feeling... betrayed...'

Catherine looked at him and their eyes met for a brief moment, before he looked into the city lights again.

'I forgot for a moment how you trust me. I should have trusted you.'

She almost whispered the last words, hoping he would understand how deeply she regretted her actions and behaviour towards him. Then she sighed.

'How did you know?'

Her eyes were searching for any trace of emotion on that beloved face. Whatever it would be, anger, sadness, resentment... Should would accept anything, just to break through the blank expression he wore since his arrival.

Vincent took a deep breath, looking at the stars. His defences were starting to fail him.

'I knew because, somehow... somewhere deep inside of you....' He paused and looked at her finally. '*You* must have known.'

She held his gaze for a moment, feeling those incredible blue eyes piercing through her once again and her heart leapt - from love and acknowledgement of the truth.

She looked away from him into the city again, and with a sad smile nodded lightly in agreement. The guilt and shame from what she should have known long ago, and somewhere deep inside knew but tried to suppress, came over her once more.

Vincent kept watching her and he knew he couldn't stay away from her any longer. He felt her inner guilt, the fear of losing him, the shiver that ran through her from shock and exhaustion. Vincent knew there was no other way. She needed him and God knew, he needed her. He sighed in defeat as his long arms found their way around her shoulders pulling her close to him, nesting her head under his chin.

This time, Catherine didn't feel any apprehension, the warmth and genuine love was back in his embrace; in fact, he held her tighter than she ever remembered before. She let out a sigh and her arms gripped around his waist even tighter. His distinctive manly scent filled her senses once again and she was hopeless to hide the emotions boiling within her. Nevertheless, she tried to calm down before scaring Vincent off.

However, though Vincent felt the passion and love rising in her, he didn't pull back. He knew there was nowhere else he'd rather be, and that she would never do anything to make him uncomfortable. He trusted her with his life - and now he knew for sure, she trusted him with hers.

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