

# Moving On

by Michaela Buzsaki Struchova

Vincent took off his cloak and hung it over the high-back chair.

"I hope you liked the walk," he said, turning back to his guest. "I'm glad that the time has finally come for showing you so much more of our world. The time of peace..."

A shadow of melancholy passed in his crystal blue eyes, but vanished quickly.

"It was incredible," Diana replied truthfully. "I would never imagine places like that could exist underground. And especially not under New York."

She was still in awe, trying to digest everything her eyes had witnessed in the past hour.

Vincent smiled, and his facial expression revealed pride but also humility.

"Time and nature create wondrous images, places we tend to read about in adventure stories, but never really believe they exist. We were fortunate enough to become a part of this place and to find shelter under its wings."

Diana nodded with her typical half-smile. Everything in this place seemed magical to her. Until that day, she had known only a fragment of the world Below, a few tunnels and Jacob's quarters. What Vincent had shown her that day though, was so much more. And there was still something special coming later.

"Thank you for inviting me today, Vincent; I feel honoured," Diana spoke seriously, her inquisitive eyes never leaving his face.

"It is we who must thank *you*," Vincent countered gently. "Without your help, we would have been in a much darker place right now..." His eyes glistened at the memory of only a couple of weeks back.

Diana finally lowered her eyes for a moment. "I only did the best I could to help. As I said before, you deserve a happy ending, both of you."

She lifted her eyes to the man in front of her. In an instant, he knew what he had always known...

*I wish you would find the happiness you deserve, too, Diana... Somewhere where someone will return your feelings, and you will love and be loved the same way...*

Yet, all Vincent did was smile at her and nod. "There is still time for tea until the ceremony. I'll be right back," he said and walked out of the chamber.

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Diana remained alone, so her eyes started wandering around the chamber. Her inquisitive nature, always searching for stories behind every object, was having a proper feast - antique furniture, old colourful lampshades above, a loaded bookshelf under the magnificent coloured fan window, curios and odds and ends from various times. And candles, candles everywhere she looked.

She also noticed feminine touches to the chamber - another hairbrush on the dresser, next to the wash-bowl; a vintage porcelain vase, filled with colourful dried flowers, standing on the ledge of the fan window next to

the small statue of an elephant; a white female tunnel night robe, hanging on the side of the heavy vintage wardrobe.

Diana could not only see, but also smell the female presence. It was mingling with the musky smell of the chamber, the scent of candle smoke and a hint of a masculine scent, unmistakably belonging to the man of the chamber. And there was also a sweet, light scent of something freshly-washed, lingering around the spot just a few steps away from the large bed - the spot where the cradle stood. Baby scent.

She took a deep breath, and a bitter-sweet half-smile appeared on her face. Her hand reached out to stroke the edge of the wooden cradle, but then quickly pulled back, as if caught in the act of doing something inappropriate, violating the privacy of the one who usually lay in it and those who lovingly put him there.

Finally, her look fell on the familiar long dark cloak, folded over the high-back chair. Her eyes longingly inspected it. She was rooted to the spot, and yet again, she found herself tempted to reach out and touch, but held back, aware of the fact that none of this was hers and never would be.

"I can never get enough of the sight of it either."

A soft but firm voice not far from her made Diana almost jump. She saw Catherine standing at the table, holding the most precious bundle protectively in her arms. The young mother was dressed in a cream-coloured tunnel dress, with long woollen sleeves, limning her figure in a way that made her look almost ethereal. She smiled warmly at Diana, offered her a seat and sat herself down on the high-back chair. Diana couldn't help but think how fitting she looked there - the queen sitting on her king's throne. And with the baby in her arms, there was almost an aura of something sacred around her.

"Vincent told me you like our world," Catherine said with genuine interest. "He'll be here with the tea soon."

Diana was surprised, hearing the words "our world". Her surprise must have been obvious to Catherine because she chuckled and lowered her eyes briefly.

"I know, it must sound strange coming from someone who had lived most of her life in the high society of the world Above," she said, raising her eyebrows, almost mocking her previous status.

"I didn't mean to offend you," Diana intervened quickly. "It's just..." She shook her head and chuckled. "I still see you as the D.A.'s assistant, that's all. It will take a little while to erase that."

Catherine's warm smile was working its charm on her. The situation was anything but comfortable for Diana. And yet, she was getting fonder of the woman in front of her each time their paths crossed. And though she barely knew her personally, suddenly she wanted to get to know her more. A real person can tell you so much more than the mere objects belonging to them.

"It's all right," Catherine replied. "It will take some time to erase that in my head, too." Her smile slowly faded, and her eyes drifted into space behind her companion.

"I still can't believe everything that has happened there since..." Her voice trailed off, and she remained quiet for a moment. "For almost three years, I thought John Moreno was someone who stood behind me... We never became close, but I always had a feeling he stood by his people. Not the way like Joe does, but still..."

Diana observed her with understanding. She knew what betrayal felt like from her own past. No one passes life without it at least once.

"When that elevator door opened back then, and I realised John wasn't there to help me..." Catherine sighed and closed her eyes briefly. "Only before twice in my life had I felt betrayed, but nothing can compare to how I felt at that very moment." She shook her head, still in disbelief, even after such a long time.

“Even the best people lose their way sometimes,” Diana spoke knowingly. “Something comes their way, a vision of profit, ambition, fear... They slip badly and often cause irreparable damage.”

“Yes,” Catherine agreed with a sad smile, absently caressing the top of her son’s head. “Fortunately, this damage was a reparable one. Thanks to you as well.” A genuinely grateful, wide smile replaced the sad one when she looked at Diana again.

“This place is truly from a different world,” Diana spoke, trying to change the topic.

“I had the same impression the first time I saw it,” Catherine smiled dreamily, her eyes twinkling at the happy memories. “And I fell in love immediately...”

Diana didn’t miss the ambiguity of those words.

*I know too well how you felt...*

She flashed a smile, lowered her eyes and observed the sleeping baby in Catherine’s arms. The baby who was more than a miracle - it was the proof of the truth that all things are indeed possible with love. A love as deep and pure as she would probably never know.

Diana wasn’t a dreamer; her life couldn’t have been more different from the life of the woman sitting opposite her.

After her parents divorced when she was 15, her life consisted of constant moving from her mother to her father and back, until she reached her full age. The endless arguments between them left her scarred for life.

It was difficult for Diana to form deeper friendships. Her quiet, though observant, nature was not exactly attractive to boys either. She was always pretty in her own distinctive way, but her almost reclusive nature, caused by her negative experiences within her own family, used to keep the opposite sex at bay. Even at college, her focus was almost entirely on her studies. It was this focus that made her one of the best students, though. It helped her to the career in which she had found her calling and herself.

When she met Mark, she liked the ease she felt when talking to him, his dedication to his work as a teacher. He was a very decent and kind man. Neither of them was thinking further than a relaxed relationship. At least that’s what Diana thought, until she realised Mark was really in love with her. The problem was, *she* wasn’t sure of her own feelings. And then she met Vincent...

Now, sitting in the almost fairy-tale chamber, within that strange but wondrous fairy-tale world below the city she had lived in all her life, and being a part of such dramatic events preceding that moment, she couldn’t help but wonder...

*Why am I enchanted by this, if I’m not a dreamer? Why do I suddenly long for having something like this as well? Why do I want to believe that this can happen to me as well, one day?*

Catherine was watching the red-haired detective closely. She didn’t know her as well as Vincent did, but from their brief encounters so far, she could feel that Diana was a decent and trustworthy person. She also noticed that behind the mask of a reserved, almost distanced person was something more - deeper and much more human than met the eye at first glance. And Catherine noticed the loneliness coming across from Diana’s eyes, the longing for something she must have had either lost or had never really known before...

“I’m glad you accepted our invitation to the Naming Ceremony,” Catherine spoke with genuine warmth in her voice. “It wouldn’t be complete without you.”

“I feel honoured; I wouldn’t miss it for the world,” Diana smiled and looked at the baby again.

“I know it must be difficult for you,” Catherine continued more seriously. “With me being here.”

Diana raised her eyes to the young mother, a question written all over her face. "Why do you think so?"

Catherine's look softened and was full of compassion and understanding at once. "Because I love him, too..."

After a moment of utter shock and with a suddenly dry half-opened mouth, Diana stood up and walked a few steps away, her hands nervously gripping the top of the nearest chair. She didn't dare to look at Catherine again at that moment. It wasn't fear or embarrassment, but the pure shock of being seen through so easily. Her own weapon of seeing the invisible was used by someone else, turned against her. Well, not exactly against her, at least she was hoping not.

"I didn't want to make you uncomfortable, Diana," Catherine spoke gently. "I just wanted you to know that I understand you completely and that I don't hold it against you. It's impossible to *not* love him..."

Diana turned her head slowly, slightly in awe. There was not a hint of jealousy or anger in Catherine's voice or face. She *knew* and yet, she didn't mind, it seemed. Everything people said about her was true - this woman was the epitome of empathy and understanding.

The detective did not know, though, that the woman of Vincent's heart had experienced similar situations before. Jealousy was nothing new for her, but her trust in Vincent's love taught her not to get overwhelmed by it.

"I... " Diana started, but words did not come easily. "I don't know what to say..."

"You don't have to say anything," Catherine's voice was soft and caring. "You are a dear friend and are welcome here any time, for as long as you wish or need it. All I want is to make sure that you are all right with us and feel comfortable around us. I don't want you to suffer; I can imagine what it must feel like."

For the first time in years, Diana felt her eyes burning. Not even during investigating the most tragic cases did she ever feel like crying - inwardly, yes, but never for real. She had built a barrier around her emotions, enabling her to distance herself from the cruelties she encountered in her job every day. However, nothing had prepared her for this moment - when the personal barrier she had built around her own heart would melt like ice, hearing those heartfelt words and recognising their value. And all she could do was allow a single teardrop to escape and run down her pale cheek.

Catherine saw the emotional turmoil in Diana clearly and smiled in encouragement. Then, she stood up slowly and moved her arms, holding the baby, slightly forwards, while looking at the detective.

"Would you like to hold him?" she said gently.

Diana quickly wiped away the tear and smiled, this time, truly from her heart. She nodded and stepped to Catherine, carefully taking the still sleeping baby in her arms. Awe and wonder overwhelmed her, and her smile widened when she very gently caressed the boy's cheek. Then, she lifted her eyes to Catherine, and her voice was barely audible.

"Thank you..."

Catherine only nodded, her face glowing with happiness and peace. She briefly squeezed Diana's arm before her eyes wandered to the chamber entrance behind Diana, where she locked gaze with the figure standing there.

Vincent was holding a tray with three teacups and a large vintage teapot. He was smiling.

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A lively banter was colouring the cheerful atmosphere in Father's study. The Naming Ceremony was over; everyone welcomed the newest member of the Tunnels family with nothing but love and joy. And it was

almost difficult to decide who was beaming more with pride - the young parents, or the fresh grandfather Jacob, whose name was the one Vincent and Catherine had chosen for their offspring.

Diana felt a strange wave of warmth around her heart, something she had not felt in a long time. In fact, she had never felt anything like this before. She found the ceremony very moving. It impressed her greatly that the whole community came together to express their well-wishes, support and love, not only for the child, but also the new parents. Yes, she had been to a couple of Christenings of her friends' children before. However, this had a much deeper impact on her.

*We welcome the child with love, that he may be able to love; we welcome the child with gifts, that he may learn generosity...*

Jacob's words were resonating somewhere inside of her, leaving an everlasting mark on her, awakening her almost buried faith in humanity and its kindness. This whole underground world was doing that, and she could not resist it even had she wished to.

Diana took a sip of wine from her cup with a sigh, as she continued watching the happy parents interacting with a group of children that gathered around them, admiring baby Jacob.

"Can I give you an advice, Bennett?" Joe spoke, interrupting the silence between them. They were both leaning against the wall, having a drink.

"Shoot, you know I can't resist advice from the celebrated District Attorney," Diana said, bemused.

Joe grinned but then, his face turned more serious. "Move on, Diana," he said.

"With what?"

"With your life. I know what it's like to love someone who doesn't feel the same way about you," Joe replied and glanced at Vincent, who was speaking softly to Catherine while holding little Jacob.

Diana sighed and shook her head. "I knew it... You *were* in love with Catherine..."

"All right, I get it. You don't want to talk about it, but just trust me on this. You *must* move on," Joe cut her off and refused to be silenced. He had got quite fond of the enigmatic detective in the time they had to join forces.

Diana dared a look at him before she chuckled sadly. "How?"

Joe smiled and spoke softly, looking at Catherine in the distance. "By accepting your feelings, admitting and not denying them. By acknowledging that you will be happier *with* them in your life than *without* them." He paused for a moment and looked back at Diana. "And by believing that there is someone special out there for *everyone*... Even for suckers like us."

His smile turned briefly into a grin when she looked into his warm brown eyes - they were smiling, but there was something more, something she was not sure about yet.

Diana couldn't help but smile back at Joe. "Yeah, even for us," she echoed, and suddenly, she believed him.

Joe's eyes didn't leave hers when he put his cup down on the nearby small table. "Care for a walk? I'm almost an expert around here by now."

She surprised herself by answering without hesitation - and without looking away from his softened look.

"Sure, lead the way..."

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