

No Need To Fight

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Note: This story is set in the second season, sometime after the episode "God Bless the Child".



"I still can't believe that Luke knocked over the cake," Catherine laughed wholeheartedly, joined by Vincent's chuckle. "He's surely a strong boy for barely a one-year-old!"

"I'm so sorry, Vincent," Olivia apologised, exasperated. "I have no idea how he did it! I was holding him in my arms to show him the nice chocolate rose on top of it, and the next moment..."

The man of the day smiled, bemused. "There is no need to apologise. Children do have their ways to surprise us unexpectedly."

"Oh, just you wait, Vincent," Kanin added without thinking. "Once you and Catherine have your own ones, you'll..." He went quiet, suddenly realising that the prospect of the situation he had just mentioned might appear a little... complicated.

Vincent swallowed hard and averted his eyes from everyone, especially the woman by his side.

"I... I promised Father I'd check with Mouse on his latest project; it's... quite urgent. He will probably be in his chamber by now as I know him. I... If you'll excuse me."

Still unable to look at the people surrounding him, Vincent hastily retreated from Father's study, taking two steps at a time when climbing up the short staircase.

Awkward silence bound the tongues of the small group left alone in Jacob's study. Mercifully, everyone else was deep in conversation with someone so no one noticed Vincent's hasty departure.

Of course, Catherine understood immediately, and a sad smile on her face tried to soften Kanin's blow. "If you'll excuse me as well..." she said and started after the lion-man.

Olivia turned to Kanin, elbowing him gently but firmly. "Why can't you be more careful? You know how hard it is for him," she scolded her husband, who looked guilty enough even without her reprimand.

The father of her child sighed and shook his head. "It just slipped from my tongue," he apologised. "Sometimes I just forget that he is..." He looked into her dark eyes. "Different."

His wife's look softened, and a heavy sigh revealed her deep compassion for the man who had been their devoted friend for years.

"Yes, a little different..."



Coward! Running away again...

What else am I supposed to do?!

His head was about to explode as his long, quick strides echoed in the tunnels he was passing. Vincent hated himself for having left Catherine alone in such an awkward situation, but facing that problem in the presence of other people was too much for him; the problem was too personal.

I said you're a coward! Why can't you face it like a man?

Because I am no man!

You are no beast either...

His eyes were burning with anger provoked by the other part of him. For the first time in years, it had appeared at a moment where he didn't have to defend his loved ones or himself. The anger was accompanied by something else, though, something that he found difficult to fight at times - fear.

Go back to her, or she'll think you a weakling!

I can't, not with everyone present...

Is this all she deserves?! A coward who runs away to avoid a sensitive subject?? She would have been better off with Elliot...

"Enough!!" Vincent roared suddenly, silencing the Other in him and taking a deep breath. His feet didn't stop moving, though, taking him further away from the other part of his soul - yet not from the thoughts haunting his mind with persistence.



Catherine ran through the cold tunnels, trying to catch up with him. The sudden thundering sound of his roar made her stop.

Don't run from me, Vincent, please!

She listened for a moment, but hearing nothing more, she started walking again. Although his strides were longer and faster than hers, Catherine was lucky behind the next bend when she spotted the cloaked man before her.

“Vincent!”

For a while, he had been aware of her following him. There was no escape from feeling her inside his mind and heart like a heatwave, invading his system, gaining intensity with each step she came closer to him. And yet he didn't stop; his usual mental strength was gone like the last candle blown off on a birthday cake.

“Vincent, *please*, stop!” Catherine called after him desperately.

He wanted to, very much. Yet his feet had a will of their own and kept going. At least at a slower pace now, taking mercy on her.

She couldn't bear it anymore, and when she was finally within reach, Catherine grabbed his arm. “Vincent...”

His abrupt turn caught her unprepared, and she landed in his arms. They were gazing at each other for a few moments, breathing heavier than usual - a combined result of the quick pace and the fire ignited between them whenever they were physically so close to each other.

Vincent shook his head and released her. He retreated to the tunnel wall and bowed his head, staring into the dusty ground.

“Tell me what you feel...,” Catherine asked softly, regarding his tormented face partially hidden behind his bangs.

Vincent looked up to her, almost surprised, but then he gasped and leaned his head back, his stare pinned to the tunnel ceiling.

“You know what I feel,” he stated with a strained voice. “But I don't think you have truly understood the consequences of it yet.”

Catherine knitted her brows with concern. “What consequences?”

Vincent looked down at her, his eyes filled with almost unspeakable pain. “The consequences of what I am; *truly* understanding that there are... things that I will *never* be able to give you; that we will never be able to be like other...” He stopped.

“Couples?” she finished his thought.

“Yes,” he breathed and directed his look to the ground again. “I know we said that what we have is worth everything, but Catherine...”

His desperate eyes found hers again, and in the warm glow of the torches on the walls, she saw fear in them. “Are you *certain* that you can live with the knowledge that some things may never be between us and still be happy?”

The woman in front of him gasped and shook her head in disbelief. “Do you *still* have to hear it?” she asked incredulously, taking a few steps to get closer to him.

Vincent straightened himself up, almost as if trying to brace himself against a possible blow. But then Catherine did something unexpected - her gentle hands cupped his face and brought it lower to be able to look into his eyes.

“I *am* certain,” she spoke with unmatched intensity, and the look in her emerald eyes was fierce and resolved. “I am more certain than I have ever been about anything else in my life. Vincent... After all that we have been through; after we almost separated more than once, we are here,

stronger than before... wiser than before. We may not yet know how to do it, but I am convinced that we *will* learn it!”

His deep blue eyes glistened in the torchlight as she continued. “Yes, I know what you feel; I’ve known it from the beginning, that... longing... *wanting* of something that you don’t think is possible. I know that longing because I’ve shared it with you, right from the start... but I am convinced that it *is* possible, and we *will* find a way one day...”

He closed his eyes, deeply humbled by her conviction and love, though still unsure about the truth of that conviction. But Catherine was relentless on her mission to his understanding.

“You keep seeing the hurdles, troubles and pain that our relationship can cause to me, but Vincent, what I see is possibilities... Hurdles and troubles can be overcome, pain endured; after all, it pushed us forward, made us realise that however hard we may try to go our separate ways, there is the truth that neither of us can deny or overlook.”

His eyes focused on her face again, listening intently.

“You and I, Vincent,” Catherine continued, still holding his face in her small hands. “We belong together, no matter how impossible or unconventional it may seem. Time and circumstances have taught us that our journeys can’t go their separate ways. Whatever we do, whatever you call it, fate or the universe keeps bringing us together. We are two parts of the same being, completing each other, making each other grow and get stronger. One part can maybe exist but not *live* without the other. We were *meant* to be, and nothing and no one can ever change that, not even your fear...”

The heat burning inside of him was growing with every word she uttered, and Vincent found it very difficult to resist the flames of her feelings, of *their* feelings.

Love is the strangest of things. At the moment when you fear it the most, it gives you the greatest pleasure, and you can’t resist surrendering to it, try as you might...

“I have been living with that fear ever since I’ve known that you... feel the same way as I do,” he whispered into the chilly air, piercing her eyes, “I would do anything... *anything* to overcome it...”

Catherine’s smile brightened the space around them, her thumbs tracing the planes of his exotic face soothingly.

“You say there are things you will never be able to give me, but I say it’s not true. You have already given me the thing I want the most because what I want the most is *you*...”

He gasped.

“I want to share the rest of my life with you... and I don’t care how we get to the point of becoming one in every sense of the word; I know we *will* eventually. But even if we didn’t... The only thing that matters to me is you and I together, forever.”

She paused, and in the moment of silence between them, they both unconsciously noticed that the usual constant tapping on the pipes had gone quiet.

“There was a time in my past when I doubted myself,” Catherine said then, her eyes still locked with Vincent’s. “I thought of myself as a failure, someone who’s not able or worthy of finding real love. And then one day, after another of my failed attempts of finding the right one, I was walking in Central Park, searching for some peace of mind... I sat down on a bench and suddenly noticed the words that someone had written on one of its slats. It read, ‘*One day, someone will love you the way you deserve to be loved and you won’t have to fight for it.*’ “

She took his hands in hers, pulling them closer to her heart. “And one day... I found that someone... Well, technically, *he* found *me*.” She chuckled, making him smile. “But that doesn’t change the fact that he is *the* one for me...”

The expression in Vincent’s eyes changed - fear gave way to a treasured memory, doubt to hope, uncertainty to reassurance that Catherine’s words were spoken from the deepest part of her loving heart. His long arms enveloped her in a tight embrace, warming them both in the cold January evening air in the tunnels.

“You don’t have to fight for it either, Vincent,” she whispered into his chest, “not ever with me.”

The man with the lion face had always been a man of wise words at the right time, yet at that moment, his entire vocabulary contained only one word. All other words could not express the depth and intensity of what had filled his heart for almost two years now.

“Catherine...” His whisper moved a few strands of her silky hair. The way he said it moved her heart, again.

Her smile extended, a sigh of relief escaped her slightly dry throat. Time stood still, place was non-existing; they were floating on air, aware of nothing but the beating of each other’s hearts, synchronised to perfection.

“You still haven’t opened my gift,” Catherine spoke after a while, reminding him of the significance of that day.

Vincent chuckled, then pulled back slightly to look into her eyes. “You opened it for me,” he replied knowingly. “On that April night...”

