

# The Magic In The Rain

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*Note: Certain dialogue was taken from the episode 'Chamber Music' from the series 'Beauty and the Beast' written by Ron Koslow.*

*I'm going to be so late!! Of all nights exactly tonight!!*

Catherine cursed silently, using a word she normally never would, when looking at her watch after having finished her last report for the day. She hastily took her coat and handbag, grabbing the report file as well and headed to Joe's office.

Without even knocking, she opened the door and hastily put the finished case report file on Joe's desk, informing him about it and wishing him good night before turning and walking quickly back towards his door. She had just reached it when Joe spoke.

"Any plans for tonight, Radcliffe?"

Catherine turned around and replied with slight hesitation. "I'm going to a concert."

Seeing Joe's expression probably suggesting she could use a company, she added. „I'm meeting someone..."

*Smile, smile at him,* she quickly reminded herself.

"Oh, so a date," Joe said and flashed a smile of his own.

"Sort of," Catherine replied and turned towards the door again when she heard another question.

"Who's playing? Maybe I'll go too." Joe wasn't giving up yet.

She turned around to face him again, one hand on the door handle, ready to close it any time. Her eyebrows frowned lightly as she was tried to remember.

"I think tonight they're playing Schubert.... Haydn maybe."

Joe's facial reaction was priceless, she thought in that moment. She was aware for some time, that her boss had a little crush on her, but she never teased him or encouraged him to anything more personal than just friendly chats. They had each other's back in tough times and she loved him dearly but only as she would love a brother if she had one.

"Oh, when you said concert, I thought---"

"No, Billy Joel is next week." Catherine grinned.

Joe shook his head and chuckled.

"You really are attracted to these cultured types, aren't you?"

Catherine waited a second with her response, trying to conceal a bemused smile. "I don't think you can call what I'm attracted to....a *type*."

Joe kept on grinning.

"You know, those types, knowing the right kinds of wine, taking you to the right places..."

"Not exactly," she replied with raised eyebrows and a smile.

It was getting really difficult for her not to start laughing at this conversation now. Joe couldn't even imagine just how far he was from the truth.

"I don't know, there must be a reason why you haven't hooked up with one of those guys yet... Maybe you're not getting what you need," Joe said thoughtfully pretending to be serious.

Catherine withheld a laughter and stepped closer to him with a cheeky smile on her lips.

"Joe, I hesitate to ask but I'm dying to know.... What do you think I need?"

Her boss frowned in thought. "Radcliffe, you need someone who's more..."

"More...??" Catherine teased him with raised eyebrows.

"More solid, a more down-to-earth kind of guy, you know what I mean?" Joe concluded with satisfaction.

After a moment, Catherine replied dreamily, with an enigmatic smile, her eyes looking down to the ground.

"I think I do..."

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The rich yet calm sounds of strings were echoing in the tunnel below the concert stage in Central Park. It was the calm before the storm, as the music was gaining and losing on intensity regularly. The night was warm, and the moonlight was shining through the grate above their heads.

Vincent and Catherine were sitting on large old cushions on the tunnel floor leaning against its wall listening to the music played by the orchestra above them.

"I love this part...," Catherine said with passion closing her eyes when the melody of the symphony had changed.

"Yes, it's beautiful," Vincent replied with interest.

He looked at Catherine, eager to study her face in the moonlight, and noticed a blissful smile on her lovely face.

He tilted his head slightly. „What makes you smile?"

Without opening her eyes, she spoke. "Everything..." Then she turned her head and looked at him still with a beaming smile.

"This is a wonderful spot! It's like we're in the first row." Catherine couldn't contain her excitement.

Vincent smiled and confirmed. "We're just under it."

"The sound is remarkable."

"I've spent many an evening here."

Catherine continued looking at him dreamily. "I've been coming to concerts in the park all my life. It's strange to think there might have been times when we were listening to the same music, that you were so close..."

She shivered lightly at the thought. *So much time wasted...* she thought, in slight melancholy.

Vincent looked up towards the grate lost in his own thoughts and emotions.

"I come here and the music engulfs me... And then, you'll see, when the music stops and people start leaving, you'll hear footsteps and fragments of conversations echoing in the chamber. And then.... all goes still again."

Catherine's smile faded from her lips. "Stillness... Didn't it make you feel---"

"---alone?" Vincent finished for her focusing on her eyes again. "Sometimes... but sometimes I found wonderful peace in the stillness."

She saw him smiling and couldn't help but smile too before leaning back and looking up again. Vincent's ability to see a bright side even in darkness never ceased to amaze her.

Suddenly, a lightning flashed in the night sky and the sound of thunder followed it straight away.

"Lightning??" Catherine asked in awe.

"I think it was," Vincent replied still smiling.

And then, as if somebody had just turned on the shower, heavy raindrops started falling through the grate above them.

"Vincent, it's raining!" Catherine exclaimed in excitement and started laughing.

The gentlemen in him started taking off his cloak to offer it to her but she stopped him straight away with a wave of hand and a huge smile, awe on her face, reminding him of a child seeing snow for the first time.

"No..." She raised herself up to her knees, right under the grate where the raindrops were penetrating to the tunnel with the heaviest force.

She couldn't stop laughing, her sparkling eyes looking once up to the sky and then back at Vincent again. It was as if some long-lost childlike innocent part of her had come to light, after being dormant for far too long. She couldn't get enough of the joy it was bringing her, embracing it fully. It created such a contrast to the sound of people above them rushing to get away from the rain.

Vincent relaxed, leaned back against the wall and watched with a wide smile. The sight of her was simply beautiful, and the fact she didn't care how wet she got within a few seconds, made him see how free and relaxed she felt with him. Water was dripping from her untied hair, her nice but not too fancy emerald evening dress was half-soaked already, and with raindrops falling on his face, too, Vincent suddenly felt something stirring in him.

The more he was watching her, the more her image and excitement was moving something in him, something he had for a long time tried to push to the back of his mind. Suddenly, it was forcing its way forward like never before, right to the centre of his thoughts and his body. His look turned a bit more serious, although still reflecting the wonder and beauty of the moment. Vincent saw the woman he loved through the eyes of his own desire...

Then, Catherine looked at him again and exclaimed overjoyed, still laughing, falling down into his arms hearing his brief quiet laugh and putting her arms tightly around his neck.

"Vincent, this is wonderful!"

She buried her face in his shoulder like an excited child, and then, while resting her head on it still, looked up again, the beaming smile never leaving her glowing face.

Vincent smiled at her and being deeply moved by what he was seeing, his look at her turned soft reflecting the indescribable feeling of love in his heart.

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They were slowly walking back to the threshold, hand in hand, smiling all the way. When they stopped, Catherine said with a cheeky smile.

"I don't think I'll ever be able to hear Schubert's Unfinished Symphony... in *quite* the same way..."

Vincent lowered his eyes and smiled. Then he looked up at her again.

"I wanted to... share that place with you." His voice was deeper than usual and his gaze pierced Catherine's eyes.

Catherine smiled again and just nodded, never leaving the intense look of his blue eyes. Wet strands of hair were falling over her forehead and eyes, but she didn't put them away. Suddenly, she felt a hot flush rising to her cheeks. She tried to compose herself and looked down for a second before looking into Vincent's eyes again.

"Thursday night they're playing The Brandenburg Concertos..."

Her voice trailed off and the smile on her face turned to an expression of an unspoken question. Her mouth half-opened, her big eyes piercing Vincent's, he could see her thirst for an answer, see the fast pulsing vein on her neck betraying the quickened beat of her heart.

"Then I'll come for you.... Thursday night..." he replied, with the same deep voice. His gaze was even more intense, mirroring the feeling of heat rising within him.

Catherine felt weak in her knees. The sound of his voice, the wet hair lining his leonine face, the fire in his now darkened eyes, something was different in him... She felt her heartbeat in her mouth and was transfixed by his face and the powerful aura surrounding him. Something like a magnet was pulling her to him and she didn't know whether to try to resist or to give in, so she waited - *what if he would... ?*

After a moment, when he didn't move, she almost whispered with a shy smile. "I'll be here..."

Then she carefully stepped close to Vincent and hid herself in his arms, embracing him gently. She could feel his cheek leaning against her head, the heat of it making her tremble slightly with pleasure.

"Be well, Catherine.." The whisper of his gravel voice resonated in her ear and her whole body and a shiver ran down her spine.

She pulled back slowly, very unwillingly and her smile faded. "And you, Vincent..."

Catherine almost felt like crying - the thought of parting from him cut through her like a sharp knife. One last bitter sweet look and then she let go of his warm hands and turned around walking towards the ladder.

She turned around one more time to look at him and saw him leaning over the threshold with his head slightly down and tilted looking at her intensely from below his eyebrows, almost like a predator watching his prey...

*Dear God, don't... don't look at me like this if you don't intend to do anything, or I will never be able to leave....* Catherine thought and let out a sigh before turning back to the ladder and disappearing in the light coming from above.

Vincent watched her vanish from his sight and rested on the spot for a moment. He could feel so strongly how physically painful it was for her to leave him. He felt the same pain too, especially since his desire was coming forward so strongly tonight. Yet, he couldn't bring himself to say it out loud, even if he sensed in her that she could feel it too.

Every fibre of his body was literally crying out for her physical closeness, and the force of his own will trying hard to resist that cry was mighty hard for him tonight. He knew they would eventually come to a point when their love would grow too strong to stay innocent.

No matter what perception Vincent had about himself, deep inside he knew they were both just human beings and human beings are filled with passion and desire, something that was forbidden to him. How long would he be able to fight it, to deny Catherine what she longs for yet knowing it could never be?

He began walking back to the tunnels.

*Those pleading eyes...*

Still, that barrier, his own fear of hurting her, was standing and restricting his own feelings and passions.

How many times by now have their faces been so close when embracing? How many times had they shared each other's warmth, felt the nearness of their bodies, each other's breath when being close?

In his mind, he remembered the scent of her hair, the feel and every curve of her small body in his arms, the soft touch of her hand when holding his or stroking his hair. And he remembered the brief tender kiss they shared after she had returned to him from Westport...

Vincent closed his eyes for a moment and held his breath before letting out a sigh. No, he couldn't leave her just like that, he didn't have the strength, not tonight...

*I miss you so much...*

Those words were sounding in his head since they parted and he knew where they were coming from. In a second, he turned on his heel to change the direction.

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When Catherine entered her apartment, she felt cold, but not because of her wet dress or hair. She was feeling cold inside herself, as if robbed of the only fire she had, leaving her heart bare and alone. It almost scared her how her body and soul was aching – for Vincent.

*I have never felt like this before...*

Catherine sighed and walked towards the balcony door hoping the memory of him resting at the balustrade of the balcony looking over the city could bring her at least some comfort.

She pulled back the pink drapes, opened the balcony door and stepped out, looking at the night lights, her face mirroring the melancholy she was feeling. The early autumn air was a bit cooler after the rain and she embraced herself and closed her eyes as if imagining someone else doing it, someone who she had just parted with a few moments ago but was already missing painfully and couldn't shake off that feeling.

Just when a soft breeze began playing with her still damp hair, she felt strong arms embracing her gently from behind. For a second, she shivered but recognized the feel and his scent immediately.

"Vincent!" she cried quietly and turned around quickly, as if afraid it was only a dream.

But he was there for real, those blue eyes she would dream about for the rest of her life, resting on her face lovingly, but also full of passion. He was visibly battling between his conviction and desire, not knowing whether he was allowed to cross the line and fulfil the wish of his and her heart's desire. His breathing was shallow, and he could feel her quick heartbeat as his own.

"Catherine... I just couldn't..."

Her name sounded almost like a whispered prayer coming from his mouth. Her face was alight with a perfect smile when his voice trailed off. She saw his fear, still hiding somewhere behind those deep eyes reflecting the bluest sky, and knew how much coming back to her tonight had cost him.

Catherine slowly raised her hand and stroked his cheek, overwhelmed with emotions and her desperate yearning. Transfixed, he leaned into her hand lightly sighing softly. He saw her smiling and when she pressed a kiss on his cheek, he forgot to breathe for a brief moment with his eyes closed.

Then Vincent felt her arms around his waist pulling him close, and her body hiding in his, her face resting on his chest. When he put his own arms around her, he kissed the top of her head and his restless mind and heart were finally at peace again. For now...

The End