

Do Ghosts Have Regrets?

Episode expansion of: **Chamber Music**

By Cindy Rae



Miss Kendrick? Can you hear me? Do you have a soul, that you can hear me? Or read this?

Do I?

Do ghosts read letters? Ones written on the back of scrap mail, dug out of the trash? Do they?

I'm fighting to keep the ink flowing in this damn pen. Banging it on the pavement.

I remember when you said I had to take care of my hands. That pianists were always careful with theirs. That that Beethoven guy was careful with his, even when he made big, banging sounds on the keyboard.

He made that music talk. He made it talk, didn't he?

Rolley Parrot. When we used to talk, that's what you used to call me. I didn't talk much then, did I?

No other way but the piano, anyways.

I can't play now. I'm so sorry.

So sorry...

Sorry for Anthony and sorry for what he done. Sorry for Father, and Vincent, and all the rest of them. Sorry for old Eli in that stupid shop full of junk. The only thing

in it worth a damn was that piano, and it wasn't worth much. Sorry for the day he found me. Sorry for all of it.

I seen Vincent, tonight.

Vincent, and a woman who gave me half a hundred dollar bill.

I want the other half.

I want it so I can go get smacked up, go numb, not think, not feel, and not remember. I want that so bad. I know I ain't supposed to. But I do.

The way Vincent looked at me. All full of memories. Full of regrets.

Do ghosts have regrets?

No. No, ghosts wouldn't have that. Ghosts wouldn't need to. Ghosts don't need regrets, second chances, or forgiveness. . .

Or a wish.

I wish it all never happened. I wish that so much.

It's cold out here. Can't go back to that men's shelter. Can't go back to that bed that smells like puke. Probably mine, from when the sickness hits, and rides you like a . . . like a crescendo. You taught me that word.

My fingers go numb, inside my coat pocket, on the hand that ain't holding this pen. No gloves, don't ya know. Just pockets. Mostly with holes in 'em. No good coats for me.

Good coats get sold for drugs. Thin ones get picked out of the donor box, at the church.

I got a thin one.

I flex my fingers on my hand, trying to get the numb out of the knuckles, even just for a minute.

Cold hands don't play no scales, Miss Kendrick. Cold hands don't play no Beethoven. Rolley Parrot can't play no dead guys, on Broome Street. Rolley Parrot can't play nothing, no more. Not with cold hands. Not out here.

I got half a hundred. And a jacket fit for spring.

Vincent says "Come back." But how can I? How can I, Miss Kendrick? How can I, ever?

Damn pen. It skips. Running out of ink. Running out of things to say.

Just like me.

Miss Kendrick? I can't play them songs. Not the ones I used to hear. Not the one you taught me how to read. I can't play them. Not anymore.

But I wanted to tell you...

I can still hear the Moonlight Sonata. And I'm thinking of you...

Rolley Parrot