

I Need a New Face

Episode expansion of: **The Alchemist**

By Cindy Rae



I need a new face. That means I must seek out Tamara.

It will be quite the journey down.

I have one good eye left, and one rheumy one, one the fire got to. But oh, the things I saw, today!

I saw my son! My own, my only beloved son. And he nearly killed me.

“Nearly.” So much importance, in that word. So much relevance. As in “Vincent is nearly a man.” Except for the part of him that isn’t.

And so... I need a new face.

Which is to say I need my old face, but not like this, not all burned, and blistered, and scarred, as it will be, when it heals.

Tamara will do as I order. She always does.

I don’t want my old face for vanity’s sake, of course! Vanity is a fool’s master, and I am no fool. But I will need my old face, so that I can go Above, sometimes, to do business. The world Above hates a marred thing... on the outside. It fears it. And we always hate what we fear.

No, those who live the world I’ve long denied (and would cheerfully destroy) don’t like that which is marred, or scarred, or deeply flawed.

They don’t seem to care very much about what’s on the inside, however.

That, of course, is fortunate. For me. Even as it's unfortunate, for Vincent.

Vincent...

Fire purifies, even as it stings. My jaw aches. My cheek... throbs.

So, I'll need a new face, damn it.

No. Damn him.

Damn Jacob, for his sanctimony, and Vincent for his reflexes. But for both of those, I'd have the one as an impotent fool, (for who can order me?) and the other, dead on my floor, gutted by my knife.

Ah, well. It was a busy day.

A busy day, and quite the reunion I had. The boy I used to study, the boy I used to watch, and weigh, and measure, and test, and occasionally even poke with a needle, (just to draw blood mind you) sparred with me. Me! My son. My only boy. He's big, now, bigger than I thought he'd get to. His weak, mewling infancy didn't hint at such size. But he is large. And strong.

A casual observer might say he'd got the best of me.

He didn't. Casual observers are so often wrong. It's why they die, regularly. And often by my hand.

No, Vincent didn't get the best me, but the fire may have got a (flame) lick or two in. Ah, well.

Hmmm. My reunion with my son cost me my face. Perhaps I'll avenge myself on Vincent with another one. A different one. One he trusts. One he... loves...

Perhaps.

I'll need a new face.

Fire took this one.

But the fire didn't take what it couldn't have: It didn't take my gold.
Changed it some, (for nothing purifies like fire) but destroy it? No. Fire can't
do that. The gold was changed, but not destroyed.

Just as I am changed, but not destroyed.

My gold and I. My gold. My gold. My precious, precious gold. I risked much for
you. I killed, to get you. Ah, well. It wasn't like it was the first time, for that.

My gold...

So beautiful a thing, so shiny, so easy to carry, to hide, to change into
something else: Money, weapons, provisions, chemicals, UV lamps, food...

Or...

Or, wait a moment..... a new face...

Ohhhhhhhhhh.

Yes! I'll need a new face! Or two...

I'll see you in hell, my boy!

Your true Father

Paracelsus