

# Tell the Nightmare to Flee

By Jessica Rae

*S3 Alternate Ending vignette*



*“Vincent?”*

*The room that Catherine awoke to was dark. The typical gentle glow of the stained-glass window was gone, leaving only grey shadows in its place. The stillness was deafening, leaving a slight ringing in her ears, as they sought for the typical sounds. Sounds of gentle snoring, a baby cooing*

*“Vincent!”*

*She rolled over, hands reaching beneath the blankets, finding only smooth, cool sheets. He was gone.*

*“Vincent!”*

*Throwing off the covers, Catherine swung her legs over the edge of the bed, grasping blindly for her robe. Drawing it on as she stood, she fumbled about in the darkness for the crib that rested beside the bed that she and Vincent both shared.*

*Her hands once again met with cool, occupant-less blankets. No. Jacob, their son, was gone too.*

*“NO!!” Catherine fell to her knees, feeling as if her entire world was breaking apart and crumbling into the very dust beneath her feet. Somehow, they were gone. She was alone.*

*“You really thought that he would come for you?”*

*She knew that voice. How many days and nights she had listened to that voice, hoping beyond hope that he would not speak of Vincent being captured or worse. She had grasped their son tightly in her arms,*

*promising the universe that she would protect him from harm at all costs, as if to protect him from that smooth, evil voice.*

*Now, she was childless, her arms empty, and a cold smile danced across her captor's face.*

*"I have taken him," Gabriel spoke sullenly, victoriously, gloatingly. "The child is mine. He will come to save the child, and I no longer need you. However, I will keep you around to see the action, and when he comes, he will get to see you die."*

*Her empty arms fell to her sides as despair flooded her heart.*

*"Give him back!" She wailed, both in sadness and anger. "Give me back my son! I will go with you – kill me if you wish - but give me my son! Spare my son!"*

*Gabriel smiled, a smooth, snake like smile and stepped back into the shadows. In the distance, she heard a lion roar and a lonely baby cry.*

With a gasp, she sat up, immediately feeling strong arms circle around her. A voice was already in the process of shushing the frightened yelp that escaped her at the sudden change of mental location.

There he was. His voice was warm and deep at her ear.

"Dearest Catherine, shh, it was only a dream. What happened?"

"You - you were gone." She managed to say between gulps of air. "You were gone, and so was Jacob. Oh, Ja-Jacob!" She half turned, half fell out of bed, reaching the crib, but Vincent moved quickly and restrained her.

"Shhh, breathe, Catherine. I am here. Jacob is well, he is resting. He is right here; we are all safe."

She caught the sound of Jacob's baby snores, and relaxed into Vincent's chest, sensing through their special bond that he knew their safety to be completely true, and she burrowed her face into the white shirt he slept in.

"Oh Vincent, I was sure that I was back – there. You were gone and they had taken our Jacob."

Vincent said nothing, and she felt his sorrow as well. "I could never live without you, Vincent."

"Nor I you," he replied softly, one hand brushing across her face. "You are my life, Catherine. My every hope and dream rests in your hands. You spoke his name."

"Jacob's?" She asked, brow furrowing.

"No," Vincent replied, and her throat constricted with bridled grief. She had spoken Gabriel's name aloud then.

"You are still quite afraid, Catherine. That is normal. It will pass in time."

"It has only been a few weeks, Vincent, but that time felt like decades without you. I was so afraid."

"You shut me out," Vincent replied softly. "Catherine, I would have come immediately."

"And he would have captured you and I would be alone, even now," Catherine replied with conviction, raising her head to look up into Vincent's shadowed face. "I could not lose you, Vincent. I could not allow him to make you suffer."

"Like he let you suffer?" Vincent's reply was quick and stinging, and she felt his sorrow. "In return for my safety, you have lost so much of yourself. The fear, Catherine, I wish I could take it from you."

His arms wrapped around her shoulders, pulling her close, and she felt the tremor of suppressed emotions running through his body. It was taking all his resolve to control his feelings, and for a moment, she was unsure what to do.

"Vincent, you are afraid," she said, pressing her face more firmly against his chest to steady the shivers running through him.

"I must admit you frightened me," Vincent replied. "When you spoke his name, I felt as if I could leap into your nightmare and -"

He did not finish the statement, but Catherine knew what he would have done, if given the miraculous chance. Those weeks ago, when the authorities had finally rescued her, she had half hoped that it would have been Vincent's lion roar that had broken down the door. Her slight disappointment that it had only been the SWAT team's arrival, had quickly washed away with the knowledge that she could now be free to seek the Bond, to let him know she lived.

But she did not think she could ever forget that first sight of his face. The terror, the haggardness, the pain in those eyes was etched into her soul, faded only slightly by his realization that there was a child, and it was theirs. Was it worth the pain to have denied his calls for so long?

"Come back to bed," Vincent gently commanded, feeling his Catherine becoming lost in thought again.

She sighed and allowed him to guide her back to her place beside him. She wound her arms around him, and he gladly accepted, resting his chin atop her head.

"I had to try to save you," she said softly, hoping he would understand. "He would spend hours telling me what he planned to do to you, and I just could not bear to see you in his hands. He would have broken you, Vincent."

"I would rather have died a thousand deaths than let him hurt you, dearest Catherine. Your strength is great, and your courage beyond that of most people. I feel that I have exploited that courage in your intent to save me. That would never be my intention. I will always put you first."

"As I recall, you have saved me many times as well at risk to your own life and discovery by others." She shuddered slightly at the memory of some of the close shaves she had endured, and he pulled her impossibly closer.

"Let us call it even then. No more saving. Now we save each other together, as one. Jacob will grow up to need us both. I cannot raise him without you beside me," Vincent spoke softly.

In the distance, the tapping of the pipes grew slightly louder, as the dawn brought new messages and chatter from the many tunnels. The world was waking, but Catherine felt as if her whole night had been sucked away in the one terrible nightmare.

"I will always protect you, Vincent. And our son. And I know you will protect me. I am so very tired, Vincent, the night seems to have taken every ounce of peace with it."

"Close your eyes and rest," Vincent replied. "I will keep watch over you both."

"What if the nightmares come back?" Her voice was small, and his heart fluttered with love.

"Then I will be here," he replied. "You will not be alone."

Within moments, she had fallen asleep, the quiet sounds of her and Jacob both snoring softly a gentle balm to his fears.

He had never thought he would get the chance to have his Catherine here in his arms again. With every passing day that the Bond was broken, he drifted further and further into himself and further and further away from his humanity. Now he had her back, and with her came the most beautiful gift he could have received – the little bundle they had named Jacob. Vincent's keen eyes made out the sleeping shape of his son in the nearby crib, and he marveled at the perfect little fingers and the features so like Catherine.

*"We have chosen a name, Father," Vincent announced proudly. He glanced sideways at Catherine, who held their son out for Father to take in his arms. Startled, the older man reached out and took the child with great care, glancing from his son to Catherine, trying to read their expressions.*

*"We will announce it to everyone at the naming ceremony tonight," Catherine added, looping one arm through Vincent's, and leaning against his shoulder. "But we felt that we should tell you first, just among us."*

*Father's brow furrowed and he shook his head in confusion, but his eyes reflected the joy in the faces before him. "You can wait till tonight, Vincent, dear Catherine. No need to break tradition on my account."*

*"We want to," Catherine replied. "It is our gift to you." She glanced up at Vincent and he smiled.*

*"We have named him Jacob, after you, Father."*

The sheer joy and overwhelming emotions that had flooded the older man's face was a thing of beauty, and Vincent took one last glance at his sleeping son then lowered his head to the pillow next to Catherine's with the scene from that special moment rolling over and over in his mind, soothing the fears of the night.

Somehow, they had gotten to this point of joy, after all the lost months. The days of terror were over, and bright hope for the future lay ahead, stretching onward as endlessly as the tunnels in which they lived.

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