

When She Was Gone

A meandering set in Season 3 by JessicaRae



Stillness.

That is all he can hear as he perches atop the balcony of his Catherine's abandoned apartment.

She hasn't been there for a long time.

It's been a month already.

He knows that.

He hadn't technically lost her. Losing someone happens when you let them go. He had never let her go.

She had been taken from him, stolen, ripped from his heart.

With her disappearance, the Bond had also shattered, leaving an aching void, much like the chill that replaces the touch of someone giving a hug when they let go.

"Dearest Catherine," he whispered, head bowed, two strong hands grasping the wrought iron balcony in a death grip, trying desperately to not roar into the night. New York needed no more monsters. "Dearest, dearest Catherine."

"Vincent?"

His mind begged for it to have been her voice, as he turned to face the new arrival.

It took a lot of strength to climb up so high, and he had not expected anyone to follow him. A shaggy mop of hair appeared at the corner of the metal, and he instinctively moved quickly, extending a hand to the newcomer to help them clamber over the railing.

"Mouse?"

The young man dropped lightly to the surface of the balcony, flashing Vincent a crooked smile.

“Mouse does not want Vincent to be alone. Not on the one month – ann-anniver-anniversary. Not good to be alone.”

“Mouse, I appreciate your kindness. But I wanted to be alone.”

“I know.”

Mouse’s voice was matter of fact, and he turned away to look out across the street, the twinkling lights of the skyscrapers looking down in blinking silence.

“Vincent always alone. Especially now. Mouse know what alone feels like.”

Vincent couldn’t respond. His heart was full of emotions, full of pain, full or darkness. Full of the Other.

His light was gone. His rose, his lifeline, was lost to him. He had lost sight of her smile in his mind’s eye, and the touch of her hand upon his was fading too.

Vaguely he realized that Mouse was speaking of the Silence.

Surely it couldn't hurt as much as this.

“I miss her too.” Mouse spoke timidly, looking sideways up at the still lion-like man.

Vincent half turned to glance at Mouse, as he moved away from the night view and seated himself on the patio in front of the sliding glass door. He glanced up at Vincent with wistful eyes, peering through the shaggy hair that framed his typically passive, gentle face.

Vincent could not speak, finding the tightness in his throat growing stronger, a roar elbowing at the insides of his lungs, begging to be released.

How could Mouse possibly understand what it was to miss someone the way that he missed Catherine.

To have had someone so deeply entwined into the person that you were, only to have them ripped from you without warning....

No. No one could understand.

Stillness.

That's all Mouse hears too as he leans back against the cool glass doorway. He had expected more of a reaction from Vincent for having intruded in this sacred feeling place that Vincent had so often retreated to.

Mouse was worried.

Many nights he had seen Vincent leaving the tunnels to go Above since Catherine

had gone missing, and he felt sorry for the gentle giant of a man so broken by the loss of the one he loved.

Love.

A terrible, frightening, painful concept, one Mouse was sadly quite familiar with. No one had ever seemed to think that he understood love and loss, but he did. The past hung at the very edge of his consciousness, but he had learned that a quick smile and silence often drove it back.

“I miss her too,” he offered again, hopefully, praying his feelings would not be misunderstood. Vincent glanced his way, and he could see the lack of effect that his words had.

“Vincent,” Mouse tried again. “Mouse - sorry - about Catherine.”

He winced as he saw the broad shoulders stiffen, and the great cloaked head bowed.

“Why did you come up here,” Vincent asked, his voice gravelly, and deep. “It is not safe.”

He shoved his weight off the balcony, and began to pace, his cloak swirling around him in a troubled sea of darkness. Instinctively, Mouse pushed himself as far back against the glass door as he could, making himself seem smaller. He wasn't sure if what he was doing was stupid or brave.

“Seem safe – at the time -” Mouse muttered, flinching when Vincent stopped abruptly right above him.

“No- no one up here but Mouse and Vincent. That's safe, right? No one – no one to see?”

“I wasn't talking about 'safe from anyone else'.”

Vincent's hands clenched into fists, then fell to his sides.

“I mean it's not safe – from me. You should know better than to follow me. What if someone sees? It is risky enough that I come here.”

“She would have been here,” Mouse responded, in a sudden wave of courage. “If it was you, alone, she would have been here.”

How true the boy was! Vincent felt the words like knives in his already aching heart. But she wasn't here.

He was pacing, as he had so many times on the stone balcony, but the door was not opening this time. She was not, in a moment, going to be stepping out in her

robe and bare feet to greet him.
They were not sharing Hamlet by the light of the moon. Because she was – gone.

A snarl rose in his lips, and Vincent fell to one knee. “Leave me,” he growled.

Mouse shook his head. “No Vincent. You need someone.
Catherine not here, so Mouse be here.”
“I said. Leave. Me.” Vincent replied, his tone rising with each syllable, his hands
clenching and
unclenching at his sides. The Other was here. Waiting, beckoning, coaxing.

Throw yourself off the balcony, Vincent.
There is nothing left without her.
There is no joy.
No light.
No peace.
There is no Vincent...without Catherine.

Vincent shook his head, vaguely hearing ‘no’ from Mouse again.
He raised his eyes in what he hoped was a formidable glare,
finding Mouse looking right back, calm, his nervousness only betrayed in the
slight wobble of his body from side to side as he tried desperately to not be afraid.
He wasn’t afraid of Vincent.

He was afraid of what the Other might do.

“I am a monster,” Vincent replied softly.
“You must leave, Mouse, for your own good. I do not wish to
harm you, but I cannot guarantee what the other side of me might do.”

Mouse nodded, his childlike eyes widening at this confession, but he made no
attempt to move.

“Vincent, Mouse help – like Catherine would. Sit down and talk.
Talk about Catherine . Tell stories like Father.”

“Hurts too much,” Vincent replied, his voice broken,
falling to the stone surface of the balcony.
“Mouse, please.”

“Vincent trust - Mouse?”

At the gentle pleading of the young man, Vincent’s eyes closed. Flashbacks
poured into his memory of a woman he did not yet truly know, reaching to touch his
face for the first time - the fear and curiosity in her face blending into an awe he
had never experienced before. Her own pain, her own sorrows, poured over him
and he remembered how he had reached out to shoulder those burdens in a

compassionate sacrifice. That sacrifice had created their Bond, and although it was now broken, it was a sacrifice he would gladly make again.

“Okay,” Vincent breathed, lowering his head into his hands. “But Mouse, if I make any move to hurt you, leave, please leave me then.”

Mouse smiled, neither agreeing or disagreeing and rested his elbows on his knees.

“Alright - Vincent begin story. Feel the love – focus on it. The Other will go.”

Vincent nodded, catching a glimpse of his own forlorn figure in the glass window. He had fallen so far, he thought, as the draw of the balcony railing called to him with its whispers of death.

He shook his head to clear his thoughts and began.....

“One dark night, I was out for a nightly walk in Central Park ...