

# Every Time I See Your Face

**Judith Nolan**



*“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty...”*

***Maya Angelou***

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Kneeling before the Mirror Pool, Vincent had never felt so lost and alone in every fibre of his being. His chin rested on his upper chest, his eyes staring unseeing at the moon's steady path across the surface of the pool. He'd come here to think, and to plan. To make some sense of what it was that plagued his sleep, and driven him to wander the tunnels alone.

But all his thinking and planning had only led to one inescapable conclusion. He could not live without seeing Catherine again. His single visit to her balcony, a week ago, hadn't slaked his need to feast his eyes on her beautiful face. A face

he would have known in a sea of ten thousand faces. So etched was her image in his troubled mind.

Earlier in the evening, he'd sought Father's wise counsel once more, trying to make some sense of these feelings that roiled within him. But all Jacob could offer was the same sad truth. "You are well aware any further association with her will only end in your ultimate unhappiness. I would spare you that, my son. You know it cannot be. It's impossible."

Vincent had responded tiredly. "Then I'm prepared to be unhappy. But I simply cannot forget her. She is connected to me in ways I am only just beginning to understand. I feel and understand all she is thinking and feeling."

Father had shaken his head sadly but forbade to comment. He knew all too well where this strained conversation was leading and he wanted no part of it.

Vincent's breath had rushed from him in a great sigh. "For your sake, Father, I wish I did not feel this way, but it is inescapable."

At a loss, Father had done his best to comfort him. "Vincent, your empathic powers are extraordinary. It's the gift you were born with. Do not allow that same gift to destroy you now."

Vincent had felt the weight of his whole being crushing his chest, making it difficult to breathe. "If it is to be, then so be it."

He had left Father's chamber before he said something they would both regret. There was no way back now. The die had been cast and he was tangled in feelings and emotions he had never known before, let alone had any control over.

He became aware of the angle of the moon's path. It signalled that it was already late. Soon it would be too late to go Above in time to beat the sunrise.

He rose slowly to his full height. His dusty cloak unfolded to swing around his ankles as he turned away from the pool.

He sensed Catherine had finally left her desk at the D.A's office and was heading for home. He would meet her there if only to see her again and speak with her for one final time.

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Catherine walked from the elevator to her apartment on feet that ached cruelly. She longed to kick off her shoes.

She needed to take a long, hot shower and then tumble into bed. She couldn't even think about food, even though her empty stomach growled a soft protest. It had been hours since she'd eaten.

"Thank God tomorrow is Saturday," she murmured, as she inserted her key into the lock on her apartment door.

The whole week had been a nightmare of continuances and long days and nights. She had no intention of moving from the warmth of her bed until at least midday. And if she spent the rest of the day in her old grey sweatpants and top, who was going to see or care?

She pushed the door shut behind her with her heel, turning to lock it before kicking off her shoes, uncaring where they landed. Her heavy shoulder bag got dumped onto the end of one of her dinky couches. She stretched thankfully, trying to ease all the kinks and knots from her aching spine.

"Shower and then bed," she decided, not bothering to turn on any lights as she made her way toward the bedroom.

It was then that she saw the large shadow pass across her balcony curtains before turning and walking back again.

"Vincent?" she breathed disbelievingly, not quite trusting the evidence of her grainy eyes.

She rubbed a hand across them, blinked and looked again. The shadow remained, now pinned like a giant moth to the very centre of the curtains as he became aware of her presence.

"Vincent..." Catherine's heartbeat picked up with gratitude and anticipation.

She hadn't expected to see him ever again. He had said he would not return. There had been no more books or messages. She'd thought of seeking him out but knew her efforts to find him would be in vain.

All she could do was wait and hope he would come back to her. And now he had.

"Vincent!" Her pulse rate increased as she flew across the darkened lounge to throw the curtains back.

He was there, on the other side of the windows, watching her with fathomless eyes, darkened in the fitful moonlight. Her fingers fumbled with the window catch, as she sought to reach the shelter of his embrace.

His impatience communicated itself to her as she finally managed to work the locks and shove the windows wide. She jumped up the single step and onto the tiled balcony, throwing herself headlong into his arms.

"Catherine..." His strong arms closed around her once more and it was like coming home.

"Vincent..." She breathed into the quilted grey fabric of his vest.

All thoughts of a shower and bed deserted her as she pushed even closer into him, trying to hold as much of him against her as she could. She nuzzled her face into the curve of his shoulder, turning her cheek to rest against him.

"I didn't think I would see you ever again...", she whispered raggedly.

"I had no thought of returning...", he replied pressing his lips against her hair. "But I could not get your face out of my mind..."

"I've felt the same way," Catherine murmured. "I kept seeing you in my dreams. We walked together in the sunshine."

"Yes...", Vincent sighed. "I know I must forget you, but..." He shook his head slowly.

"I've tried," Catherine replied. "I know we cannot go on meeting here, but what choice do we have? We have no place in each other's worlds."

"It seems we have no choice," Vincent told her, in a resigned tone. "Sometimes I think there are forces at work here that we can only guess at."

Catherine nodded. "I think the same." She turned her head to look out over the moonlit city. "Sometimes it seems as if there's someone or something out there smiling at us."

"Yes..." Vincent pulled back to look down at her, seeing her tired eyes and slumped shoulders. "Perhaps wishing us well."

"I would love to think so, Vincent." Catherine lifted one of his hands to her lips, kissing the back of it softly.

"You're tired...", he said softly, moving back further still but keeping his free hand resting on her slim shoulder. "You should sleep..."

"Yes..." Catherine sighed gustily.

Now she didn't feel like sleeping. She wanted to rest against his warmth and strength. She wanted him beside her and with her.

Her small fingers twined eagerly through his, clutching them tightly. "Come inside..."

"I... shouldn't..." Vincent drew back sharply. "I should go. I cannot stay."

"Yes, you can. Come inside with me...", Catherine persisted, her fingers tightening around his, tugging gently.

"You need to sleep..."

"I will sleep if you are with me to watch over me," Catherine persisted, her grasp on his hand becoming even more insistent. "Come inside with me, please..."

"I..." Vincent tried to hold his ground against her appeal for comfort.

He knew she was asking for no more than his warmth. His uncomplicated presence beside her. He was aware he could break the fragile contact at any moment and leave her standing there, alone.

He became aware he couldn't do that. He couldn't turn and walk away. He had looked into her face again and been lost to all caution. He sighed deeply as he allowed her small hand to draw him into the darkness of the living room.

He turned to push the doors closed with his free hand, twisting the lock back into place. Now the soft darkness greeted them.

"Come here..." Catherine encouraged him toward one of her small couches. "Sit down..."

"It's too small. It may not hold me..." Vincent complained worriedly as he eased his bulk down onto the tiny piece of furniture.

"If you break it I'll buy a new, sturdier one." Catherine chuckled as she followed him down.

She curled her legs beneath her as she nestled herself against him, burrowing deep into his solid warmth. Vincent lifted his arm around her shoulders, sheltering her beneath the vast wing of his cloak.

"Sleep..." he encouraged, resting his cheek against her hair. "I will be here when you wake up."

"Promise?" Catherine asked sleepily. "The sun might be up by then."

"I promise even if the sun is up by then..." Vincent sighed as he closed his eyes and silence settled in the room.

"Then you'll have to stay here for the whole day," Catherine breathed. "Father will not be pleased..."

"I think I could manage that..." Vincent smiled as her breathing evened out and he knew she was asleep.

Unknown to her, there was the small sound of her empty stomach rumbling. He rubbed his cheek on the top of her head, knowing she hadn't eaten all day.

He turned to kiss her hair softly. "And in the morning I will make you some of William's excellent pancakes," he promised with a smile. "It's just as well tomorrow is Saturday..."

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