

Come Below Tonight

by Michaela Buzsaki Struchova



“Come Below tonight,” you say, and I follow you without questions. There is no reason why I should not. I trust you with my life.

It may sound unusual from you, as I know the anxiety that follows you at the thought of us staying alone together for the night. In the second year of our journey together, I’m quite familiar with your greatest fear... but I put that thought aside and decide to enjoy every minute more that you allow me to share with you – whatever the outcome.

We walk through the tunnels, dimly lit by the glowing warm light of the torches on the walls, casting dancing shadows, as you lead me to our destination. These tunnels have become my second home – sometimes colder than the deepest winter, sometimes hotter than the sunburnt Washington Heights in blazing July, and yet without a doubt, my *home*.

“Where are we going?” I ask when I realise I don’t recognise the way.
"To a place where no one will disturb us." You smile and hold my hand tighter.

I find myself drawn into the familiar feeling of comfort, exhilaration and rising heat. Surprises never cease with you, and I know you are aware of the effect your nearness has on me. It’s not just the Bond that surely speaks volumes and touches

your heart. I let myself be guided and forget that tomorrow, this will be only another beautiful memory to add to my very private and personal imaginary library, filled with moments shared with you, the man of my dreams, the love of my life...

"We are here," you suddenly say as you stop and look back at me, with a smile. Your warm hand brushes away a strand of my hair from my face - an unexpected but certainly not unwelcome move that makes my head spin.

You lead me inside a darkened cavern, illuminated by the light of a single candle, impatiently flickering in the slight breeze. The cavern is empty, and as I look at you, slightly confused, I can see the smile on your face - knowing and promising, leaving nothing to chance.

"*Why* are we here?" I ask, but at the same time, it strikes me, that I already know the answer.

"Because time passes too quickly, taking more from us than gifting us. And because with love, anything is possible..."

Your words make me shiver, even before you slowly step closer to me and let your skilled hands travel up my arm in one languid motion - cautiously yet boldly. I close my eyes while exhaling loudly. Is this even possible? Can this truly be happening? With all your fears and inhibitions, how come it suddenly seems so easy, so... natural?

I allow myself to believe... My arms wrap around your neck, probably too eagerly, afraid of losing the incredible gift that I was given. Our heads slowly move forward, driven by the so-long repressed but so long-desired need.

"Catherine...", you whisper hauntingly, and I feel your breath warming my lips when...

I open my eyes... You are gone, and I am trying to break the veil of darkness surrounding me. What has happened?

My hand reaches out for you, but the nothingness robs it of any pleasure. I blink, and then I realise the truth – I am staring at the ceiling above my bed in my apartment. All the excitement, the thrill and anticipation... All of it was nothing but... a *dream*...

I bury my head in my hands, then turn and embrace my pillow with desperation. I try to fight them, but the tears have their own will.

I knew nothing but shadows and I thought them to be real... (1)



(1) Oscar Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*