

The Crystal and the Rose

by Michaela Buzsaki Struchova



Note: This story appeared first in the "Together Forever Vol. VI: When You Whispered My Name" Treasure Chambers online in 2022.



The night befell the Tunnels under the streets of New York. No candlelight flickered in the cold breeze blowing through the chamber. With everyone sleeping, there was an almost sacred silence.

On a small table by the large bed, two lifeless (at least in human's eyes) objects were lying side by side. One was a clear, about a thumb-long, finely polished crystal, attached to a golden chain. The other was a beautiful ivory, intricately carved head of a rose, with a soft-leather pouch accompanying it. Both objects would easily fit into the palm of one's hand, and yet, lying side by side, they appeared much larger.

"I feel cold," said the Rose with a soft, somewhat tired voice. "I wish the spring would finally kick in properly."

"It has been a long winter," the Crystal remarked quietly. "But all the winters end one day." He lit up gently from inside, sharing his special light with his companion. "Here, take some of my heat."

The Rose felt warmer instantly and forgot about her wish to be tucked snuggly in her leather pouch. "Thank you," she said gratefully. "Your nearness always brings me comfort."

"Just as yours brings comfort to *me*," came the Crystal's truthful reply. "Sometimes, I wish we could stay like this forever. I wish we would never part at the break of every new day, having to wait until nightfall to be reunited again." His voice was touched by melancholy. "I don't feel myself when you're not near."

The little ivory heart inside the Rose was bursting with an emotion so common for living beings. "But we *are* together all the time," she said joyfully. "Can't you feel it? Every time He puts me in the pouch and hangs it around his neck, I feel your strength and light filling me within."

The Crystal lit up even more at her words. "You're right," he whispered, amazed at a sudden recollection. "Every time She hangs me around her neck, I hear your calm whisper echoing in my heart, and your warmth reaches the deepest part of me and lights it up," he added with bliss.

"Those who share something very strong, like us, can never be truly separated," the Rose proclaimed. "We are the lucky ones."

"Yes," the Crystal agreed. "She lost me twice, and yet, both times, I never felt closer to you. Strange... my hopes about being reunited with Her and you might have been diminishing as time went, but I could never give up, because the longer I was away from you, the stronger I felt you in me."

A brief, unintrusive tapping interrupted the silence of the night around them. "I've often thought of what it feels like to give up," the Rose wondered.

"I've heard it means feeling hollow, devoid of all emotions, deprived of all joy and thrill of life," the Crystal pondered.

"Is that what they call death?" the Rose asked.

"Not necessarily," her companion contradicted gently and explained, "but it often feels like it. When you see no reason for trying, for finding any delight and satisfaction in life anymore, you might *feel* dead, at least for some time."

The Rose felt a shudder running through her ivory petals. "I'm glad I never felt that way. I have never given up either. And I never intend to. Roses may wither in time, but they stand tall almost until the very end, holding their heads up, always hoping to find the light," she remarked proudly.

The Crystal smiled inwardly, the glowing heat inside illuminating every angle of his smooth body.

*"Over the land is April,
Over my heart a rose;
Over the high, brown mountain*

The sound of singing goes...”¹

A soft giggle resounded in the space. “There’s no denying it - you are your master’s gift. He has a poem for everything as well.”

A deeper chuckle completed the lighthearted moment. “We are mere reflections of those who held us first, before we found our way into someone else’s hands,” the Crystal pointed out. “Moreover, I may not have ears, but I *can* hear, and I do love to listen and pass on everything worth doing so.”

“It’s just a shame that no one apart from me can hear you,” the Rose remarked with amusement, though with a hint of pride in her voice as well.

“That is something I am more than content with,” the Crystal replied with satisfaction and a smile in his voice.

The sound of a light stir alerted them about the ever-passing time.

“The dawn is near, “ the Rose stated sadly, a slight shiver shaking her ivory body again. “They’ll wake up soon.”

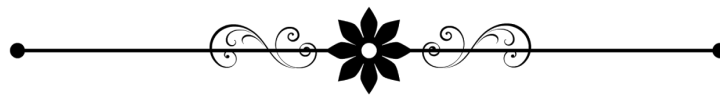
“Yes, a new day is coming,” the Crystal confirmed.

“Our time together is always so short,” his tender companion complained.

“That is true, but we’ll always find our way to each other. There is a great comfort and assurance in that.”

The Rose sighed but smiled inwardly; the cold shiver was gone again. Blissfully, she took in the last moments of the unique light radiating from the crystalline object resting beside her before it faded completely.

Not long afterwards, their voices grew silent, returning the chamber to the state of absolute stillness and peace, until two bodies on the nearby bed moved as one, waking up to a newborn day...



¹Robert Louis Stevenson: *Over the Land is April*