

# **BLENDING TOMORROWS**

by Trisha Kehoe

Playing nervously with the belt on her raincoat, Catherine stood in the entryway to Vincent's chamber.

"Hello."

Turning from the mantle and his miscellany of treasures, he smiled, but it didn't quite make his eyes.

"Good evening, Catherine."

Putting both arms loosely around his hips, she looked up into his solemn face.

"How are you feeling tonight?"

"Better."

Vincent glanced at her for a moment then looked away, the sadness in his eyes contradicting his reply.

As she gathered him close, Catherine sought a way to ease his unrest. He seemed dispirited - isolated. These last days, Vincent appeared to be withdrawing further and further away from her, retreating within himself more each time she was with him. He'd been like this for days now, ever since his time of ... anguish in the cave. Would what she had to tell him help, or only make matters worse?

Before Catherine could voice her thoughts, Vincent stepped out of her embrace and motioned toward his desk.

"A parcel came earlier, addressed to both of us. I chose not to open it until you arrived."

She looked down curiously at the string tied, brown paper wrapper.

"Who sent it?"

"I ... I don't know." His voice was flat, filled with pain. "The handwriting is ... unfamiliar." Moving to the desk chair, Vincent sank down into it dejectedly. "Will I ever remember the missing parts of my life? There are so many things that I don't have words for, Catherine, so many faces and events that I can't ..." The words trailed off. As he stared down at his hands, his hair spilled forward to mask his face - and hide his distress.

"Vincent, the memories will return. I'm sure of it. But, it will take time." She touched his cheek gently.

"Have you had anything to eat today?"

"No." He sighed. "Mary was kind enough to bring me some stew, but I had no appetite."

"You must try and eat something. At least let me get you some soup, or perhaps some toast and a cup of tea?"

"I would like some tea." Feeling a sudden need to put a measure of distance between them, Vincent got to his feet. "I'll get it. Why don't you open the package while I'm gone?"

Before she could stop him, he was quickly out of the chamber.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Catherine moved her fingers over the small, square parcel and fought off the urge to cry. Why did everything have to be so complicated for them - for him? She stared down at the brown paper, then sighed and opened the note addressed to her. Then, recognizing the handwriting, she stiffened, her eyes hurrying over the words.

*Dear Cathy,*

*I hope that this helps. It's time for you and Vincent to find some new impossibilities. The old ones are gone forever. Have faith, okay? If you'll just keep on blending the colors, Vincent will fill in the empty spaces with you. Now he can. You've given him his future, and his destiny. From my 'vantage point', it'll sure be interesting to watch what he does with your 'gift' in the years to come. Smile, pretty lady, all of the pain is over - for both of you.*

*- Kris*

Tearing at the wrapping, she held the contents out, gasped, and started to weep for joy. "Oh, Kristopher, thank you." Hugging the portrait tightly, she rocked back and forth on the bed, unable to stop her tears.

Just then, Vincent came back into the chamber. "Catherine!" Alarmed, thinking that something had upset her, he quickly set the tea tray aside and sat down beside her. "What has made you cry?"

"Something wonderful. There's a note addressed to you, too."

Taking the folded piece of paper, Vincent scanned the words;

*Dear Vincent,*

*I'm glad you've finally learned to color outside of the lines. I told you that life would be more interesting once you dared to go beyond all of the boundaries. Now, you've got it made. Enjoy the future - you've earned it. I'll be seeing you.*

*Kris*

Folding the note, Vincent turned questioning eyes to Catherine. "I remember now, Kristopher Gentian was the one who painted the picture of ... us, wasn't he?"

"Yes, he was." Catherine could barely contain her happiness.

Vincent could feel her joy, but at the moment, he didn't comprehend the implications of that; he *felt* her joy. "But, he speaks in riddles. What do his words signify?"

"The future....our future." Putting on hand to the side of Vincent's face, Catherine turned the picture around so that he could see it - and *believe*. "It's everything I've ever wished for, for you, for both of us." Taking his hand, she kissed the palm then pressed it to the middle of her stomach. "It's what I was going to tell you tonight."

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