

## Catherine: Going Home

**Hi, everyone! I am publishing three chapters today (plus the one I had missed between the Baard chapters, which is the new chapter 25), because as I published this on A03 I forgot to post here as well. Anyhow, there was a glitch in the chapters, which I corrected, so if anyone is still reading the story here, you might want to go back and reread it. Enjoy!**

I could vaguely feel Adela's presence by my side when I stormed out of the mall and towards the group of cabs parked by the entrance waiting for customers. Slipping inside, I shifted on the other side of the seats, allowing Adela to slide in as well, and provide the address for our destination.

Bård's words were ringing in my ears.

You can't sneak out of a relationship, Catherine.

My head snapped right, in order to hide the tear rolling down my left cheek from Adela. Given the fact she was entirely quiet, without any reprimanding lectures at bay, she was aware of what had happened between me and Bård more than what she was letting on.

I ignored the knowledge of the fact in order to gain control over the lump growing in my throat, before it managed to further overpower me. Another warm tear slipped past my eyelashes, burning at the top of my cheek and cooling in its rain down my skin, before it fell on my shoulder and continued a slow descent along my arm.

Was it that my desires didn't matter?

My fingers clenched around the door handle on my right, my nails digging in the plastic just on the verge of painful as I fought back a gasp.

I love you, too.

I closed my eyes, my wet cheek scraping against the leather as I slumped in the seat, defeated. Feeling the dampness of my lashes made me turn my head even more, raising my shoulder to wipe away most of the trail from the tears.

Remaining silent, I tried to return my labored breathing in control, showing the strongest of restraint against the new wave of tears battling my eyelids to escape. Adela seemed equally silent next to me, and I focused on her steady breathing to calm down.

Once I was sure I wasn't going to start crying again I opened my eyes, and without looking at Adela, fished my phone out of my purse and opened a new message. I typed out the text and added the recipient, breathing in deeply. My fingers hovered over the send button.

Reading the message once again, Mum, I'm texting to let you know I'll be coming home with the first available flight (will send details later).

I'll explain when I get there. Let Fred know. Love you. See you soon., clicked the button and sighed, when locking my phone.

The idea I had had of spending the weekend at the cabin with Bård, before asking him to drive me to the airport on Monday morning, was now gone. Bård had even agreed on my wish, without knowing the objective - but, it seemed the intention to invite him over with me back home had been entirely foolish.

When the cab stopped in front of the house, I stepped out and headed inside immediately, leaving Adela behind to take care of the payment. I slipped my shoes on in the hallway, and headed for the stairs right away, running up them quietly towards my room and huddling inside.

Once the door clicked closed behind me, I leaned over the wooden surface. My head was thrown against it, the weight of my bag sliding the girdle down my shoulder and onto the ground. I slumped even further, sliding down and crunching on the floor.

My heart was thumping dully in my chest, causing a discomfort so intense, that I had to gasp for air to ease it slightly.

A knock came lightly on the door, before Adela's voice announced her. "Kate, can I come in?"

Scampering to the side without getting up, I called out, "Yeah."

The door creaked open right away, and Adela walked inside, glancing around before her eyes snapped in my direction. She gave me a compassionate smile, and I barely managed to upli my lips in return.

Nodding mostly to herself, rather than to me, she stalked to the bed and took a seat. She provided, "You okay?"

Not trusting my words, I shook my head and chewed on my lower lip, averting my gaze from Adela's. "Did you hear all of that?"

To her credit, she didn't lie. "I did. Well most of it, the rest I filled out on my own."

I hugged my knees towards my chest, resting my chin on top of them and stated, "That's why I was afraid," and then, without waiting for her response, I provided, "I am going home right away."

With those words, I got up and stuck my hand underneath the bed, pulling out the suitcase laying there and unzipping it immediately.

"I know you wanted for us to go out and have fun until Monday, but -" I cut myself short, sure she would understand.

Indeed, she did, since she finished my exact thought, "You don't feel up to it now."

"Pretty much," I confirmed. "I am going to pack up and call the airline to see if there is a free seat on one of tonight's flights."

"Do you want me to take care of that for you?" Adela asked, motioning to the suitcase.

"Starting it would be helpful."

With that, Adela got up and headed for the wardrobe, and I picked up my purse from the floor and took out my phone to sort the ticket issue. I headed for the desk to sit down a moment, feeling dizzy, but stopped halfway, in order to, "Adela?"

She looked at me, questioning, "Yeah?"

Nodding, I provided, "Thank you."

By the end of the day, I was at the airport, saying goodbye to Adela as I waited for the call for boarding. I hugged my friend tightly, trying to convey all gratitude I felt. She seemed to sense that, and hugged back as tightly.

"Once I am done with the dissertation," I provided, when we broke apart, "you will come to stay in my home for a change, and since you managed to persuade me shopping was great and going out was fun, I am going to force you to see the whole of London."

The threat was light, and Adela grinned at me, "I would like nothing better. So, until then."

As if on queue, my flight was being called out.

"Until then," I responded in kind, stepping closer to give Adela one last hug, brief but no less honest and longing. "Bye."

I was going to miss her. And, Norway. And... well.

\*\*\*

The door opened before I managed to get the second ring in. I knew Fred was already asleep, as mum texted me she had threatened him into bed. So, just as she opened the door, I threw myself in her arms and let the gathered tears roll down my cheeks freely.

"Oh, Katie," my mother breathed out against my neck, and everything in me broke twice as much. "Come," she urged, "we should step inside."

So, I did. Heading for the living room, I deposited my weight over the sofa, sinking into it instead of sitting down. I bowed my head until my chin touched the sternum, and only then I allowed myself to exhale all the tension I had gathered in me throughout the day. I rolled my shoulders, running my hands through my hair, my fingers routinely and deftly sorting out the crooked strands.

I wiped the tears away with a flick of a wrist, knowing their ability to change things is virtually next to none. "When it gets hard, Katie, remember to fight it with the best in you. Remember the good, the positive, the honest."

My eyes snapped to my father's picture standing in its usual spot, and I asked myself in a whisper, rather than him, "How am I supposed to remember the good, when all I can think about is the broken?"

I swiped the new tears away, anger at my helplessness building up in me, and I looked towards the kitchen where I could hear mum ravaging through the cupboards, in what was most likely an attempt to find the kettle.

I pushed myself up and headed towards the source of the noise, only to step in the kitchen slowly, not wishing to give mum a scare. She seemed to sense me almost right away, and turned to throw me a small smile over her shoulder.

"I thought you could use a cup," she provided, raising the kettle slowly, so I nodded. I really could.

"Thanks," I croaked out, just barely audible.

I pulled up a chair and sat down, only to have mum join me by the table once she set the kettle on the stove. The whisper of the water burning up against the building heat was the only noise filling the silence of our kitchen. The window just in my line of sight showed the dark night gloomily, due to the light from the ceiling.

I sighed, sniffing once, remembering it was such a slow, dark night when I met Bård. It was on that night I had realized some people still had a little good in them, and it was Bård Ylvåsaker who made sure to show me that.

I bit my lip, guiltily glancing at mum for my spacing, only to find her staring at me with an understanding look on her face. I was pretty certain my expression mirrored hers faithfully from when we lost dad. I knew I remembered my mother's look from then, so I didn't need her confirmation to know the grimace on my face carried an enormous resemblance.

"You really did love him very much, huh?" she asked, tentative, careful not to breach the border of pain. Irony was, whether I spoke about him or remained silent, cooking thoughts without sharing them, it still hurt like the blazing fires of hell, or as I at least assumed they would.

Despite being aware she already knew the answer, I nodded, before shrugging. The words simply couldn't seem to form, thus inadvertently forcing me to remain silent.

Mum murmured, "Do you want to talk about what happened?"

I bit the inside of my cheek, debating. I knew it might ease the horrible feeling clenching my chest, but I also couldn't figure out where to start. I was aware of the intense desire to burn myself red under the shower's stream, before tugging on some old jammies and clutching a pillow to my chest while curling under couple of blankets, letting time take away every mixed feeling, every anxious crawling under my skin.

Instead, I provided, "I am not exactly sure. One moment we were shopping and joking around, and the next Adela is mentioning my coming back here, and everything went to hell."

Mum was looking at me, so I smiled, but it came out bitter and fake at best.

"I didn't tell him I was coming back so soon, even though I assume he knew, and was only unwilling to admit it to himself," I paused, finishing the thought there. My fingers curled behind my ear to wrap the strand of hair away from my eyes, before I proceeded, "And, we fought. Said things I didn't mean to say. I just childishly retaliated at his words."

Mum hummed thoughtfully, before inquiring, "What did he say?"

"He brought up the morning when I ran away. Accused me of being unable to share I intended on coming back home sooner. The, I snapped back, in a way." One of my eyebrows arched, his bitterness in my throat a sensation I was already getting accustomed to.

Mum sounded reprimanding. "He shouldn't have done that."

"I broke it off, because he had a point," I paused, sucking in a breath, "I should have told him the second I booked the ticket."

Silence set in the kitchen, the boiling water the only noise present. Mum got up to get the tea ready, and I remained seated, following her every step and every move. She busied herself, and I waited.

My heart skipped a beat as I remembered Bård's shirtling in the kitchen when he used to prepare food. How his eyebrows would furrow in concentration, whilst his fingers would deftly dance around, completing task after task. I could vividly picture Bård's body swaying around the tiled floor, his black sleeves rolled up to his elbows contrasting his pale skin, and his beaming smile as he would cast a gaze over his shoulder towards me.

"Here you go, Katie," mum's voice broke me away from my thoughts, and I was greeted with her up close, a blazing cup of tea being pushed in front of me.

We drank the tea in silence, an occasional mundane question here and there, before I finished the drink and headed upstairs to retire for the night. Mum remained in the kitchen to clean up after us, so I sneaked up the stairs and creaked the door of Fred's room open to cast a glance inside. Fred was soundly asleep, but I didn't want to risk waking him up, so I eased the door closed and headed to my room.

Throwing the garments of clothing on me, I dug out a pair of the floor and uncaring for the mess I had made, discarded them on a pair of jammies, got dressed and sank under the covers.

It felt awkward being back in my bed. I had just gotten used to the one at Adela's, so this time around it was my own bed which seemed strange. I hated that feeling, always, as it never let me sleep. This time around, it was no exception.

I rolled about in bed for a while, before I decided torturing myself further wasn't worth it, so instead I got up and pulled out my laptop from the bag, opening it and locating the folder full of my movies. There were a few there I still hadn't seen, but I wasn't looking for something new to watch. My wish was to watch something romantic, sad and painful, so I could cry my eyes out and pour my feelings in tears in order to feel a little better. So, my choice ended up being, 'Me Before You' as it never failed to make me cry.

Halfway through the movie tears were already sliding down my cheeks at the all too familiar storyline. I rolled the drawer of my nightstand open, pulling out the Kleenex I knew was there, and pulled out a tissue to wipe away the tears. They kept coming, as expected.

It was good, since once the credits started rolling, even though my face was all red and blotchy, my chest felt more relieved than I had expected.

I rose from my seat and deposited the laptop on the desk, before doing a quick check of my email and shutting it down. I returned to bed, covering my entire face with the blanket and lulling into restless sleep.

I was up before the sun managed to rise over the horizon. My phone informed me it was a little after five. I groaned as I buried my face in the pillow, but I knew any attempts at falling asleep anew would be pointless. So, I hissed once, before throwing the covers away from my body and changing into my clothes.

I left my room, with the dissertation on my underarm and torso.

I ran to the bathroom to wash off the sweat of my face, before I headed downstairs and went directly to the kitchen to make what I was certain would be my first, but not last, fix of caffeine for the day. I set the coffee in the living room and opened the document, deciding to read through the paper in order to locate any lingering mistakes.

What that mostly summed to however, was me blankly turning pages, thinking about Bård and what passed between us, until Fred woke up and held me in an embrace for five minutes, before pulling me out the door to shoot hoops in the backyard.

At the end of the day, I was grateful. Mostly because due to the excitement of the day, I didn't manage to find the time to think of Bård in the slightest. And, because that evening I retired to my room showered, exhausted and fell into slumber moments after settling on the pillow.

I did dream of Bård, though. And, I held on to that dream, unwilling to wake up in the reality.

[Continue reading next part](#) □