



Deleted Scene from *Against the Tide* Courtesy of Author Elizabeth Camden

This scene takes place near the end of the book, when Lydia is in the midst of full-blown withdrawal and needs something to keep her mind off things.

Lydia was ten days into her treatment, the point at which Dr. Tindale said she would begin to feel better. She was no longer throwing up every hour, so that was a relief. After the admiral and his family left, she had succeeded in falling asleep for almost two restless hours, but by midnight her insomnia was roaring back to life, and Bane persuaded her to go for a walk with him under the stars.

A cold wind buffeted her skin as they trudged along the cliff line. She could see little of the sea except the whitecaps as they crashed along the shore below. Cramps made it difficult to keep walking, and Bane guided her to a bench overlooking the sea. All the retching over the past week made every muscle in her body ache and it hurt to even breathe. Bane sat beside her and stroked the tendrils of hair that kept tugging free in the ocean breeze.

“My mother used to do that,” she said in a low voice. Her parents had been loving, physical people, and she had thrived on their affection. At the Crakken Orphanage she had ached for such simple, human contact. Never once had she been hugged or held during her ten years at the orphanage.

It must have been the same for Bane. After he was abducted, there would have been no one to treat him like a normal child. “Do you remember very much of your mother?” she asked him.

His hand stilled for a split second, then he continued his stroking. “Not much.”

“You said you were six years old when you were taken by the professor. Surely you remember something.”

Waves crashing against the shore were the only sound to fill the vast windswept beach. In all the time she had known him and all the struggles they endured together, Bane’s early years were the only thing he held locked away from her.

Finally he spoke. “Nothing I care to talk about.”

She straightened and rubbed the abused muscles in the small of her back. For the first time in days she found something her mind wanted to latch onto rather than dwelling on her physical misery, and she could not stop the questions. "What was she like?"

Bane stood and began walking along the cliff line. She rushed as best she could to catch up to him. He stared off at the horizon, his face drawn in sorrow. "She was Russian," he said quietly.

Lydia's eyes widened. "Russian?"

"Her accent was so strong that she was embarrassed to speak in front of people. But I always understood her perfectly."

"If she had such an accent, she must have come to America as an adult."

Bane started walking again, and when he finally spoke his voice was so soft it was hard to hear over the roar of the ocean. "She was pregnant with me when she left Russia. I have no idea who my real father is. Probably some Russian potato farmer. She had to leave her home because of me." His voice was flat and unemotional, but that did not fool Lydia. Bane was normally so charming, and this remote, detached attitude was masking a very deep pain. She latched onto his arm so he would walk slowly enough for her to keep up.

"She worked in the dance halls of San Francisco, and I will always remember how amazing she looked. She glittered. There were rhinestones in her hair and spangles on her clothing. I used to try to stay up at night so I could be awake when she came home. *Ty ne spish, moe dragotsennoe?*"

She startled, not accustomed to hearing Bane speak anything but English, but the meaning was unmistakable. *Are you awake, my precious?*

He smiled. "That is the only phrase I remember in Russian. She said it to me every night when she came home from the dance hall." Now the pain in his voice was apparent.

She squeezed his arm. "What happened to her?"

"I don't know. I doubt she is still alive. Every night after she picked me up and hugged me, she opened a bottle of vodka, which was her preferred poison. She could drink a whole bottle before the morning. She was a good, loving woman, but she was always very weak. She could not stand up to my stepfather any more than she could resist the bottle. I remember wanting to grow up very fast, because she needed someone to take care of her. I knew I would do a better job than the corrupt smuggler she married."

To this day Lydia did not know precisely what had happened to her family, but she knew they were dead. Was it a leak that sank their boat? A mighty wave? Even pirates? Whatever the cause of their disappearance, Lydia knew her parents and Baby Michael died the day they failed to meet her on

the pier. She was not tormented with thoughts of them slipping into addiction in some boozy dance hall. She could not imagine the anguish Bane must feel whenever he wondered about his mother.

“Tell me how to say, ‘It has been a long time’ in Russian,” Bane said.

The request was so unexpected that it took her a moment to process. Then she smiled, knowing exactly where Bane’s mind was going. Now that the professor was captured, there was nothing to stop Bane from going wherever he pleased. Meeting whoever he pleased.

“*Eto bylo davno,*” she said.

Bane repeated the words back to her.

“No, put more emphasis on the last syllable. *Eto bylo davno,*” she repeated.

When he said the phrase again, he mimicked her perfectly. “How about saying good morning and good night?”

Lydia said the words, and immediately Bane parroted them back. They moved on to counting from one to ten, the days of the week, and then a few simple verbs. It was amazing how quickly he caught on. Was it because he was naturally smart or did he have some residual memory of the language? Either way, the sun was beginning to lighten the darkness in the east before Lydia realized that she had very few tremors for the past hour while she was helping Bane re-learn Russian.

*To learn more about *Against the Tide* and other novels from Elizabeth Camden, visit*

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