

## Orlane Sebäi - Vincent, behind the spotlight

In his bedroom, Vincent sits on the edge of the bed, his back slightly hunched, his bare feet barely touching the floor. In his hands, a stuffed dog. The fabric is worn, yellowed with time. At the crotch, a crude tear. Stitched. Then torn open again. Every stuffed animal in his room bears the same tear at the crotch. Vincent strokes the dog with an almost religious slowness. He briefly presses it against his chest, the way one would hold an injured animal. Then he looks up. Not to seek compassion, but to make sure he's being heard. His voice is calm. The voice of someone who has repeated this sentence hundreds of times, alone.

VINCENT

— I've always been fascinated by the world  
of the little white-gloved mouse...

He smiles. A smile learned in front of cameras. A smile that no longer protects him. For a moment, Vincent spins around. He dances. Not really out of joy. More like a child being applauded for obeying well. Then he stops abruptly. His gaze hardens.

VINCENT

— I had no idea I would be humiliated.  
Raped, over and over, in that beautiful world.

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The word falls. Without emphasis. Without tears. He isn't trying to shock. He states it. He kneels and slides a hand under his bed. He pulls out one last stuffed toy, a famous white-gloved mouse. Perfect condition. No tear. No mark. Vincent stares at it for a long moment. Then his fingers slowly close around its foam neck.

VINCENT

— I'm not the only victim. There are thousands of us.

His hand barely trembles.

VINCENT

— As a child star, you're just ground meat. For cinema. For television. For other people's dreams.

He tightens his grip on the stuffed toy. He stands, still holding it, and starts pacing.

VINCENT

— My father knew.

He falls silent for a few seconds.

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VINCENT

— He knew... but I was making too much money.

He laughs.

VINCENT

— So he told me to keep quiet. He had to finish building the house.

He lets out a dry laugh, almost strangled.

VINCENT

— A solid house built on rotten foundations.

Vincent stops in front of his desk. He grabs a small metal trash can and places it in the center of the room. Inside, crumpled paper: contracts, letters never sent, rejected scripts.

VINCENT

— Everyone knew.

He speaks faster now.

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VINCENT

— The makeup artists. The producers. The casting directors. The writers. The directors.

He pauses.

VINCENT

— A lot of them like children. No one wanted to lose their position. Or the prestige. Or the money.

He pulls a lighter from the drawer. His gaze is empty. He throws the famous white-gloved mouse into the trash can. Then flicks the flame. The fire catches immediately. The plastic melts. The fabric shrivels. The smell is acrid, unbearable. Vincent doesn't move. He stares straight ahead.

VINCENT

— The little mouse ruined my life.

His voice is almost gentle.

VINCENT

— What was done to me as a child has rotted my adulthood.

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The fire crackles. Light flickers across the walls covered  
in memories.

VINCENT

— So you must be wondering...

He takes a deep breath.

VINCENT

— What am I going to do now?

He steps closer.

VINCENT

— I'm going to destroy the little mouse's  
empire.

He stays silent for a few seconds.

VINCENT

— The only question is...

He looks into the camera, his gaze going past the lens.  
He's looking at someone behind it. Us.

VINCENT

— Will you stand with me?

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