

See Me, Feel Me

Lincoln, he called himself. Born two centuries ago, his full name, once etched in finely-tooled gold lettering on his spine, was now faded and forgotten, his pages stained with foxing and watermarks where damp had entered. The pale autumn sun highlighted motes of dust floating in the air, though they failed to reach the bottom shelf where he lay, in a forgotten corner of a gloomy attic of a secondhand bookshop.

That afternoon, he awoke to a voice drifting in through the half-open skylight from the music shop next door, 'see me, feel me, touch me, heal me'.

It's too long since I've been seen, felt, or touched... he mused. And I've never healed...

And his mind drifted back fifty years to another autumn afternoon. By then, already somewhat tattered, he was relegated to a dusty garage. But his friends, the old man and the girl, had loved him, he knew. Whilst the old man told her stories of their ancestors, who'd lived in the landscapes of Lincoln's pages, she'd traced her fingers gently over the hills and valleys of his pictures and maps, turning his pages so lovingly, Lincoln would remember her touch for ever.

We should have stayed together, he sobbed. But it was not to be. On the old man's death, the garage was cleared, the debris of a past life disposed of. Lincoln had mistakenly been bundled together with other old and musty, dusty books, and a collection of stamp albums, and sold, in a job lot, to a local 'antique dealer'. And Lincoln and the girl were lost to each other.

The dealer had believed in a quick profit. And Lincoln could still feel the agony as his most picturesque engravings and finest maps were ripped from his body, still hear their pitiful cries as they'd vanished from his life, to be reincarnated as framed prints.

Profits made, he'd been discarded, passed dealer to dealer, shop to shop, until he'd come to languish here, in this dusty attic...

As the song's words continued to haunt him, over them came another sound; the creak of the stairs. Someone was coming.

A woman entered and started to browse the shelves. She came nearer, and nearer.

There's something about her...

The song still thrummed through Lincoln's mind, louder and louder, and he called out, pleading; 'see me, feel me, touch me, heal me.'

She gave a start, and looked around.

Could she have heard me?

The gentle rays of the sun had moved to the shelf where Lincoln rested. The woman spotted him and knelt down by his side, and gasped. She fumbled in her bag for a tissue, and gently began to wipe his dust away, before lifting him and placing him carefully on a nearby table. And Lincoln reeled in wonder as he recognised her loving touch... the touch of his friend, the girl in the garage. And as she turned his pages, she whispered, 'Lincoln, I've found you at last!'

And Lincoln began to heal.

Author's note: song lyric from the album 'Tommy' by The Who