

## Consolation

By Carebearmaxi

Catherine sat on the bed in the guest chamber where Vincent had led her when she came below about an hour ago. She had attempted to return to work. Her effort was so authentic that she even opened the door to the Manhattan District Attorney's offices, but all at once panic and confusion set in and all Catherine could do was to run to the one person she needed more than anyone else since her father's sudden death a week ago.

Vincent had known she would come to him. He met her at the entrance in the Central Park at the old iron door. They talked for a few minutes before the gate. Then as she wandered from his embrace to incessant talking and walking in confusion around the small space she pleaded how she needed to be with him and live in his world wanting to be with him always. Feeling her need and knowing that his compliance could give solace, he acquiesced. With his arm wound tightly around her, he led her through the door on the way to the Tunnels. Vincent steered Catherine past Father and the others and directly placed her in the guest chamber. This chamber was around the corner from his, so he could be there in a short time if she needed him.

"Vincent!" Catherine cried in panic and need as he began to walk away.

He turned around and looked at her. Vincent could feel her yearning for him to just stay with her. He was not naive to the way people grieve. He knew plenty of Tunnel couples whether married or not who consoled one another with sex. Catherine and he had been tiptoeing around this subject for over two years now. Just a few weeks ago he had finally revealed the reason why he was incapable of that sort of loving.

Lisa, his teenage love, had appeared and disrupted his life all over again. Just when he and Catherine had finally understood what their limits were. Vincent would not prevent Catherine from finding that type of relationship but she had vehemently explained to him in many ways that she only loved him and wanted whatever was possible for them even if it was not a house and 2.5 children underfoot.

After a minute's pause, Catherine returned to herself. Vincent watched as recognition of the impossibility of their relationship returned to her eyes.

"Goodnight," Catherine said quietly.

Vincent tilted his head and smiled a little. "Goodnight," he responded.

He turned and walked from the chamber.

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Vincent returned to his chamber and wrote in his journal of what having Catherine so close to him did to him. Basically, he had his own yearnings and always had. At least he was able to acknowledge

that he wanted her like any other normal male. Father understood that but had always admonished him showing that side of him to any female especially after he had accidentally scratched Lisa when his desire for her was outweighing his male hormone-filled adolescent mind. Since that time, Father always was wary of any female coming too close to Vincent and wanting more than he was able to provide.

Of late, though, Vincent had been again questioning this desire. She felt his desire for her, too, and he knew she was more than willing to love him in that way. They were not children. He and Catherine were grown adults with a mature love which had withstood a lot of interference from the outside. Vincent knew Catherine longed for a husband and children. She had wanted to try to live in his world to be with him constantly to see if they could have some sort of everyday relationship. However, Vincent felt that Catherine would soon grow tired of living in the Tunnels as her life was Above and that was where she had made the most impact and influence on his Tunnel family.

It was rough right now, but Vincent acknowledged she needed to be here right now to grieve.

"I know having Catherine so near is hard for you, Vincent," Father said trying to comfort him having come to see him after Catherine was settled in the guest chamber.

"Yes," Vincent simply responded. "She understands that, too, Father."

"She does? What have you told her?"

"Enough but not everything."

"How long will she stay?" Father asked quelling the panic rising in his soul knowing the physical temptation so close for his son.

"As long as she needs," Vincent simply answered again.

The father/son conversation ended with Father claiming he was watching over both of them and wanted to be sure they both came out unscathed from this time of mourning.

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After a few days spent by herself and the afternoons and evenings spent with Vincent, Catherine really wanted to stay. She loved waiting for him as he returned in the evenings after his work whether it was helping with new chambers or teaching one or two classes of literature. One afternoon she spent in his chamber as he taught two groups of children. One group was the pre-teens thru early adolescent and then the other group was the older children preparing for college and the world Above. Vincent was only one of the teachers below, but it seemed to Catherine that he was the most beloved.

One of their evenings, Vincent grabbed a book of Lord Alfred Tennyson's poetry and led Catherine to the Waterfall Chamber. It was special to Vincent that he bring her there. The waterfall which spilled out into a lovely roaring body of water replete with spray and foam was always a place of solace for Vincent during his childhood when he was feeling exceptionally lonely or sad.

"It is something about the water sounds and smell in the air that always made me feel that his place belonged to me and only me," he had mentioned to her on the journey there.

As she sat on the rock with her feet dangling over the side, she examined the water and the current.

"It seems so odd that this is below the streets of New York City. The water is so unpolluted here. I wonder why that is."

"Without knowing the answer, I would say that it is untapped by the city. No one can come this far down and contaminate it with chemicals whether for good or bad."

"The air reminds me of the beach except there is no tang of salt. It is absolutely beautiful here, Vincent. I had no idea there were so many beautiful places in your world."

Vincent just smiled and dangled his feet over the edge of the rock where they sat. He began to read:

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the----"

"Stop, Vincent, please," Catherine said as he was about to continue. She placed a restraining hand on his arm with which he held the book.

"What's wrong, Catherine?"

"I don't want to hear any poetry as much as I love you to read it to me. Right now, I just want to sit here with you quietly," she sighed scooting back to lean against the outcropping of rock.

Vincent smiled and closed the book folding down the edge of the page a little to keep his place. He scooted back as well and leaned a little bit so Catherine could lean against him while his arm went warmly around her.

She suddenly said, "Vincent, I don't want to go back. I want to live in your world."

Vincent simply smiled and kissed the top of Catherine's head.

He could feel Catherine was on the brink of total grieving for her father and he wanted only to provide what he could to help her heal from the terrible loss.

Later on that evening after they said their goodnights, the tears poured down Catherine's face. With loud sobs and incessant tears, Catherine began to wholeheartedly cry out her grief for her father.

Hearing those desperately loud sobs, Vincent hurriedly walked the short distance from his chamber and saw Catherine sitting on the bed holding herself and crying out her grief. He swiftly walked to the bed and held her. She clung to him as she cried even harder.

"Just cry, Catherine. Cry," Vincent soothed.

Catherine looked up at him with all her heart and soul and kissed him fully on the mouth. She had kissed him maybe one other time on the mouth and that was in desperation as she thought him mortally wounded by The Outsiders.

Vincent, unthinkingly, returned Catherine's kiss as she held him tighter.

When he suddenly pulled back out of another soul searing kiss, he looked at Catherine's tear stained face and pleading green eyes.

"Catherine you know we cannot," Vincent protested as she had worked her hand underneath his many overshirts. Her soft hand lay on his warm skin underneath. He loved the feel of that hand, but he knew if he capitulated now and gave into his barely contained physical desire for Catherine that he could damage her permanently.

"Why not? You won't hurt me, and I need you so badly. I love you so very much. We're not 17. We are adults and all I know is that I love you and want you."

"Catherine," Vincent said as Catherine gave him a tender kiss on his mouth this time but so filled with emotion that it penetrated the bond.

"Don't you want me? I need you beside me all night. Please stay. You know what I'm feeling," Catherine protested.

With another kiss to her lips, Vincent worked his way down her neck leaving little bruises on her fair skin. Although he wanted to crush her against him, he kept his touch light so his nails would not dig too deeply into her soft parts. Without realizing it they were finally naked and in the bed together.

Catherine lay with Vincent on top and between her widespread legs. Her arms held his shoulders until she moved her hand to brush an emotional tear away from his face.

"This is not wrong, Vincent. We love each other. You won't hurt me. I trust you," Catherine reassured before Vincent pushed himself into Catherine.

He heard her moan and was afraid that he had hurt her, but she had to reassure him that she was fine and it was pleasurable.

Instinct drew Vincent on, he drove harder and faster into her as Catherine held him between her legs and held him with her arms. Faster and faster, Vincent held on and only lost himself in Catherine and not lost himself to the dark side after all. Sex was primal but there was a difference he found between passion, desire and love for a mate as opposed to the passionate rage he felt when being driven to it for protection and defense purposes.

Before falling asleep, Catherine's head lay on Vincent's bare chest.

"You are beautiful, Vincent. Inside and out." She lie there wrapped in his warm arms and made little circles tracing the whorls of hair on his chest. It was hair just like other men and it followed the same pattern ending in a bush around his genitals. He was well endowed. Catherine could never be

repulsed by his body because she loved him. She considered herself lucky as Vincent possessed the body of a Greek Adonis. Muscle toned and golden.

"I didn't hurt you," Vincent was concerned. In the dim candlelight, he had noticed some bruising here and there and more than a few love bites on the white alabaster skin of her breasts and neck.

"Not at all."

Vincent could barely sleep he was enervated by making love with Catherine. Her body was as beautiful as he had always dreamed. He had seen her body after she was attacked, but at that time his only concern was to tape her broken ribs, bathe her wounds, and lay her comfortable in his bed. This time was so different. She had not made him feel ugly or unusual in how he wanted to love her. She cried when he entered her body as did he because it was a beautiful loving moment for them. Borne of grief but also borne out of the tender and precious love they had for each other.

Soon, Vincent fell asleep as did Catherine.

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Sometime in the middle of the night, Vincent woke as Catherine had turned over to face the other side. She was still close to him but he decided he had better get dressed and return to his chamber lest Father find him in Catherine's bed and admonish him like he was that 17-year-old boy he had been with Lisa.

He carefully donned his clothing once again. He covered Catherine's naked body with an additional blanket and kissed her forehead before he crept back to his own bed.

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Catherine woke naked and cold. She knew Vincent had left her in the middle of the night. She had had a wonderful dream about her father who had told her he understood who she was now. He had told her she had had a rare thing with Vincent and he gave her his blessing. She collapsed in tears once again from her dream, yet she knew that her father's spirit would shine through now and again without having to feel recrimination or guilt.

"Vincent?" She whispered into the dark as she awoke. She knew they had finally made love and that had been no dream. Her body was filled with delicious aches and tender spots where Vincent and she became more ardent in their joy and eagerness to reach fulfillment. She had no idea when he had left and she had no idea what time it was now. She only knew she had better get dressed as her body was beginning to chill without the warmth of her large lover's body next to her.

Catherine looked in the mirror and smiled. She was at peace. She knew now what she had to do. She only hoped that Vincent would not return to his celibate ways once she told him what she had in mind.

Consolation

Chapter 2

Vincent walked Catherine to the passage from the Tunnels to just below her apartment building's basement. It had been a long, quiet, meditative walk for both of them as now Catherine's healing had

begun and she did realize that her place was Above. The day before which was began with the "morning after" their first making love Vincent and she had a long conversation about next steps in their life "together".

"I gather from the cold looks I received from Father this morning that he found out we spent the night together and how," Catherine said as they sat at their favorite place in the Waterfall Chamber.

Vincent smiled and silently nodded. "Don't look too hard on Father. He was always afraid what would happen if I was allowed to make love to a woman. He was looking out for both of us."

Catherine smiled a sarcastic smile then. "Well, I think it was well intentioned and I can understand this, but in a way he was not understanding who you really are."

"Catherine, I don't want to argue with you."

"Good. Because the last thing I want to do is argue with you," Catherine said and then kissed him and put her arms around him.

"Catherine. There are no words for how I feel now. How it felt to be one with you in that way. Everything was heightened...it took my breath away. I felt everything in the bond with you, from you, by you. It was intoxicating and something I never *not* want to know again."

Catherine smiled and nodded. "Yes, I felt the same. You were whom I desired and I want to somehow have a life with you, but..."

"You need to go back Above. Resume your life."

Catherine still held his shoulders and knelt within the circle of Vincent's arms. She laid her head on his large shoulder.

"Yes," she sighed heavily.

"There is no failure. I want you to stay, but you came her to grieve and heal. Now that you've done that I know you must live Above. But Catherine, you are a woman of both worlds."

Catherine raised her head and looked into Vincent's sky blue eyes to listen and ascertain the acknowledgment of the truth in his words.

"You stand for me. You carry our light. Just because it's not right now doesn't mean it won't ever be right. We'll know when that time comes," Vincent continued and kissed her freely as a man deeply in love would do sitting with his love in his arms.

"I can't help thinking I failed."

Vincent increased the pressure on Catherine's back coercing her to look back at him and truly understand his words.

"There is no failure. We are together. You carry me in your heart and yours in mine." He paused for a moment savoring all that she communicated from the bond.

"I feel this need to return Above in you."

Catherine smiled and kissed him again deeply.

They sat like that for most of the afternoon without any disturbances from the rest of Vincent's Tunnel family, for Father had seen what had happened and felt a little safer knowing that Catherine's safety was not lost and that Vincent could function in that respect like any other man deeply and unabashedly in love.

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Catherine had returned to work the next day, but she and Vincent had made plans to be together that night. That night he would stay at her apartment, hopefully in her bed, and would leave when evening took over the next night. Vincent had told Catherine before she went above to her apartment that he had let Father know what his plans were so as not to worry. He also told Catherine that he had reassured Father that if anything happened she could get a message to him from one of the Helpers.

Before walking into the light that shone down from the basement above, Catherine took Vincent in her arms and looked up into his face, "I'm so glad I came here. I love you." She then kissed him. She could not say how ecstatic she was to feel Vincent kiss her back and whisper "I love you" in her ear as he held her tight.

Later that night, after a grueling day spent between the office and the Tombs, she had arrived at her apartment. She hurriedly went into the kitchen to start preparing dinner. She knew from William what was Vincent's favorites and she decided to experiment on her own. As she prepared a simple salad for starters, she could hear her father's voice so clearly in her ears.

*"Love him, Cathy. Whatever comes don't let go. You are so lucky to have someone who loves you like I loved your mother...."*

Tears immediately filled her eyes and she looked toward heaven and said, "I will, daddy. Thank you for showing me the way."

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Much later that night, Vincent lay in Catherine's large bed. The bedsheet laid around his hips. He watched as Catherine slept her body warm against him. Her face was turned toward her large bedroom balcony window. The night was peaceful and the stars shined their shards of light just enough so Vincent could watch her breathe.

Tonight, only the second night that they had made love, Vincent was again overwhelmed with how special this connection was. Not only the specialness of their personal bond but the mysterious and wonderful communicative bond between lovers. He would be so grateful always to Catherine for trusting him and allowing him this chance to know within himself how to sexually love without harm. He had been so scared for so long.

Before he had left, Father had insisted that he speak with him before he spent time with Catherine above.

*"Vincent, I never thought I would have to have this talk with you again, but I feel you should know the ramifications of your behavior if you maintain this type of relationship with Catherine. There are precautions... Why are you laughing?"*

*"Father," Vincent said good naturedly placing his hands on Father's upper arms. "I am aware of the "birds and the bees". I think I have heard you give this talk to every adolescent that grows up here. However, I am a grown man, Father. I am well aware of what could happen."*

*"Wonderful, but sometimes you and Catherine are reckless. What if you conceive a child? I'm not sure it's possible, but what if?"*

*"Father, Catherine and I are adults. She knows the risks of any relationship and especially with ours. If it can happen and it does it will be a blessing, but it will be Catherine and mine's decision not yours."*

*Father swallowed then and smiled himself. "I guess this is a little late for you then. Go. Be with Catherine but be careful."*

*Vincent released his father and turning away said before leaving. "Always."*

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Catherine smiled as dawn's light poured into the open drapes. She could still feel Vincent spooned behind her and his arm warmly holding her close to his warm chest. She rubbed the light fur of his forearm. In response, she turned over still enclosed in his embrace and looked up at him.

"I never realized how beautiful you are. I think this is the first time I ever saw a sleepy Vincent in dawn's early light," she remarked smiling.

"You are the beautiful one here especially now. Waking with you is the most special moment in my life."

They talked together desultorily until Catherine finally asked the ultimate question.

"How did Father take it when you told him you were staying until tonight or not?"

"He gave me a lecture and then he realized that we were adults and our safety was always imminent in our mind. He then in his gruff and protective way gave me his blessing." Vincent laughed a short laugh.

Catherine snuggled closer into Vincent's chest. "I heard my father's voice and he told me to love you and never let go."

She looked up into the beautiful azure eyes of her love and whispered quietly.

"Looks like we have the blessings of both fathers."

Vincent gathered her closer and laid his head on top of hers as they laid in the bed just enjoying the dawn---together.