

A NEW CHAPTER

by Gwen Lord

Vincent and Catherine sat close together in their favourite place, far below Central Park. Here, the beauty of this place, could not be matched by anywhere Above. This was their special and private place.

Vincent sat, leaning against the cave wall, one arm holding Catherine very close, his other hand holding a book. His velvet voice gently filled the air. Catherine snuggled into his chest and his hold on her increased.

After a while, the story ended and Vincent put the book down. Then he put his head back against the wall and let out a deep sigh.

"What?" Catherine asked.

"If only we could make plans, like the couple in the story, plans that would give us 'A Happy Life.' It's what we both want and long for ... yet, fate has decided to cut us adrift; has decided for us that we are to remain as we are, never truly one," he sobbed.

"Then we must find a way to be together Vincent, and we'll show fate what he can do with his...decisions."

"How can this be, Catherine? We both know it is impossible, everything is against us," he whispered.

"No, damn it! I won't accept that - not for us, Vincent. What we have is too special. We are something that has never been. You said it yourself. There are no guidelines for us to go by, there are no limits. So, we will make our own," Catherine urged.

"Oh Catherine - if only it were possible," he sighed, both his hands in hers. The air hung with unspoken words. Then Catherine began.

"I, CATHERINE CHANDLER, PROMISE TO LOVE YOU AND CARE FOR YOU, FROM THIS DAY ON THROUGH THIS LIFE, INTO DEATH AND ON INTO ETERNITY."

Vincent let his thumb brush away a tear that ran down her face.

"AND I, VINCENT WELLS, PROMISE TO LOVE YOU AND CARE FOR YOU, FROM THIS DAY ON, THROUGH THIS LIFE, INTO DEATH AND ON INTO ETERNITY."

"Vincent, do you love me?" she asked.

"You know I do. I adore you."

"And I love you, with all that I am. I want no life without you," she whispered. "It is between you and me only; not Father, not Peter, nobody. We make our own rules, our guidelines, from now on."

"Oh, Catherine..."

"We will have a happy life, you'll see," she promised.

They clung together, as if to gain strength from each other. Then Vincent helped Catherine up, and together they stood, arms entwined.

A few moments later, Catherine stood in front of Vincent. Now it was her turn to wipe a tear from Vincent's face.

He pulled her to him, his arms holding her tight, and they kissed; a kiss so full of passion and longing and hope. At last, both were filled with a new inner peace.

"I love you so much, Mrs. Wells," he smiled happily.

"Oh, Vincent ... I adore you," she sighed.

"Come, we must go now - every marriage has a honeymoon, Catherine," he smiled mischievously, "and ours awaits us."

With that, he swept Catherine into his arms before heading for his chamber - and their 'Happy Life'.