

THE UNSEEN VISITOR

By Gwen Lord

Looking out across the city as it slept, Cathy smiled as she thought fondly of Vincent, making his way home after spending the last four hours together. The time they shared was so very special to them both, but why oh why did it have to pass so fast, as though even the gods were against them, speeding time up to cheat them even more!

As Vincent made his way home along the familiar tunnels, his cloak swinging from side to side in a rhythmic way, he sensed yet again, Catherine's deep sadness, now that he'd left her. He sensed her need, her longing and he had to shut it out of his mind before it drove him mad, knowing the reason for her sadness was him. It now haunted his very soul. He started to walk faster and faster, until finally he was running blindly down the familiar passages.

At last he arrived breathless in his chamber, then leaning against the rough stone walls, he put back his head, letting out a fearful roar, which ended in a sob, from his breaking heart. How could he go on like this, knowing the sadness he caused her ... and himself?

Her pain was his pain. Something had to be done, but what? A solution had to be found, before there was nothing left for either of them to share.

With a sigh that matched her heavy heart, Catherine turned and entered her bedroom, closing the door behind her. Its click as it shut, sent a shudder through her, it was as if she was shutting 'him' out, when all she wanted, was to have 'him' share every single moment, of every single day ... and night!

Her steps dragged as she made her way to her inviting bed, the peach-coloured silk sheets already turned back. Slipping out of her robe, she let it fall silently to the floor in a heap then, climbed into bed.

She lay for a while with the bedside lamp on, but soon her eyelids became heavy, so she put out her hand to switch it off.

She almost knocked the lamp to the floor as she felt something touch her hand but, looking round the room she decided she must be overtired and in need of sleep.

Now in the first hint of early dawn, she lay looking longingly at the balcony doors, hoping to see his shadow appear. A tear spilled over her warm eyes and ran down her lovely cheeks. Why? Why, is it so impossible?

Cathy suddenly felt she was not alone. Panic froze her to the bed, her mouth went dry with fear, as she felt this awesome feeling enveloping her. She tried to gaze into the half lit room of shadows, caused by the moonlight filtering through the doors. There was no one there!

A hand touched her shoulder, she spun round.

"Aha-a!" She jumped bold upright in one movement. "Who are you? Where are you? What do you want?" Shaking with fear, she leaned forward and fumbled for the light, switching it back on.

Shaking her head in utter disbelief, she took in the entire room ... She was totally alone! How could this be?

"Hmmm, very strange," she mumbled, then turning out the light once more, tried in vain to settle to sleep in the short time left before morning.

Catherine must have fallen asleep, because she didn't stir until she was awakened by the persistent ringing of the alarm.

Stretching across to press the button to silence it, Catherine felt restraining arms holding her ... ever so lightly. But still being sleepy, she dismissed it without much more thought.

Cathy lay a few moments on her side, gazing still at the balcony doors and felt the powerful arms tighten their hold on her. Without thinking, she nestled up close, it felt so good. Then a sigh escaped her lips; soft feather kisses touched her shoulders, lips nuzzled her neck, the scent of musk tantalized her senses.

Then ... she realised it wasn't a dream, she was awake, so turning within the embrace, she saw...

"...Damn." She was alone!

"What's happening to me?" she spoke aloud to the empty room. "I'm coming apart. I know I wasn't dreaming, I know it!"

Looking around for clues to help her solve this mystery, her eyes came to rest on the pillow next to hers. She couldn't believe what she saw; a deep indentation of where a head had been!

Leaning over, she ran her hand ever so gently over the pillow, then leaning down, she was sure she could smell musk, the scent she associated with ... Vincent!

A gasp of disbelief escaped her lips. How could this be? Running her hands through her hair, she anchored it behind her ears then, pulling back the covers, she climbed out of bed. Stretching and yawning, she made her way to the bathroom.

Cathy put on the light, turned on the shower, then started to remove her nightdress, when her eyes caught an unfamiliar sight. There, on the top of the neat pile of fluffy blue towels on the stand, was a single stemmed red rose!

The work load was endless in the DA's office; Joe was away at a wedding and wouldn't be in until tomorrow. Escobar was off sick, so the workload landed on her desk in a never ending stream. Of course the interns were a godsend, but as 5 pm approached, Cathy decided nothing on earth would keep her longer than necessary in the office.

The hustle and bustle of the journey home in the rush hour had its usual nightmares, but at long last it was over, and she was in the parking lot, locking the car up for the night.

The lift was empty, and took her quickly to the 18th floor. The apartment door clicked shut, as she

pushed her bottom against it, then throwing her purse, coat and shopping in a heap on the couch, she almost ran to the balcony doors, flinging them open.

The noise of the traffic below and the lights of the skyscrapers in front of her, with their glittering cascade of colours offered her a safe haven. This balcony was theirs; hers and Vincent's. It was the only part of her world they could share totally together; she needed its welcome home.

As she stood, arms folded, taking it all in, Cathy felt two arms slip around her waist.

"Oh Vincent," she sighed. "I'm so glad you're early, I really needed you to hold me." Then pushing back, even deeper into his embrace, she could feel the strength of his body pressed against hers.

His kisses teased her hair, her neck; his arms tightened around her. Desire and longing started to mount inside her. Turning within his embrace, eyes closed, Cathy tilted her head upwards for a kiss. His lips sought hers and claimed them. Cathy felt she had died and gone to heaven, she felt so happy.

Opening her eyes to gaze into his lovely blue ones, Cathy caught her breath ... she was alone! ... Again!

"What's happening to me?" she sobbed, tears now running down her face.

After a leisurely TV meal, a shower, then a read, Cathy now waited impatiently for Vincent. He wasn't due until midnight. The clock on the mantelpiece said two minutes to go. She tapped her fingers on the closed book of poems.

Almost to the second, the familiar tap, tap, tap interrupted her thoughts. Getting up quickly from the couch, she made her way to the balcony. Vincent stood in all his splendour, like a warrior, a god, with arms out stretched for her, his hair and cloak moving in the gentle breeze. She rushed into his embrace.

"Oh Vincent, Vincent, I'm so glad to see you. Time has gone so slow tonight, I was impatient to see you." She tightened her grip on him, snuggling her kisses into his neck.

"I didn't return with Pascal and Mouse until nearly ten o'clock. There was flooding in the lower tunnels, we had to divert the water. Then on my return I had to wash and change. You sound troubled Catherine, what weighs so heavy with you?"

"The strangest things have been happening to me, Vincent," she spoke almost to herself.

"Tell me."

"It's the damndest thing. I feel your arms around me. I feel your embrace, I feel your kisses ... but you're not there! There was even the indentation of your head on the other pillow next to mine, Vincent. It always happens when I'm alone and need you so ... and suddenly you're there."

"You're dreaming, Catherine."

"NO, Vincent, I'm not dreaming. It happens when I'm awake." Catherine looked all frustrated as she tried to explain the incredible phenomenon to him.

"Perhaps, Catherine, you're overwrought. Why don't you have some time off work, allow yourself time to relax and unwind?" Putting his head to one side, Vincent studied her intently.

"I think that's a good idea, Vincent. I do have leave due me, I'll tell Joe. In fact, I'll ring him now," she said impishly.

"Catherine, the time, it's very late. Shouldn't you wait until morning?" he tried to reason with her.

"Nope, I'll do it now. I need to get my own back on Joe, he's always teasing me," she laughed, then quickly disappeared into the bedroom to use the phone.

Vincent waited on the balcony, he could hear her lovely, happy voice. It gave him great pleasure; her happiness radiated to him, he felt so blessed to know she was his and his alone. He sighed deeply with contentment

"That's fixed that. Joe's given me the week off. I feel better already and we'll be able to be together longer." Smiling, she let her hands encircle his waist, then lifted her head, waited with eyes shut, for the kiss she knew he'd give her.

The rest of what was left of their time together was spent sat on the huge pile of cushions and rugs, snuggled up close, with a traveling rug across them, chatting, laughing and loving, on their balcony.

As the first signs of dawn appeared on the horizon, Vincent hugged and kissed Catherine, then taking his leave, vanished the way he'd come, silently down the building.

It was noon when Catherine finally woke, her room was bathed in light. She blinked at the brightness, stretched and yawned, then lay on her back, contemplating her day of leisure and unwinding.

All of a sudden, she felt the bed on the other side go down. She turned her head in the direction of it, but her eyes were shut tight from fear. Then first one eye, then the other opened, to take in the scene. The bedding was moving, then she saw the indentation appear in the pillow. Cathy's eyes stared in disbelief. She reached down to grab the bedding to her, but unseen hands gently pulled it away from her, where it fell on to her lap in a heap.

"What do you want? Who are you? What do you want with me? Don't hurt me, please," her voice was trembling with fear.

There was no reply, but she now felt two hands on her shoulders, pushing her down against the pillow. Then she could feel a breath on her face; her senses were reeling. Lips found hers, oh, oh! Such unleashed passion. What love, what bliss, leaving her breathless ... Then it was gone and she was once more ... alone!

Catherine took a picnic, close to the tunnel entrance. It was so peaceful; little birds hopped close by, picking up the crumbs. The water on the lake lapped; it was all so perfect ... If only Vincent could share it with her, in the sunlight. She sighed.

"Oh Vincent, I wish, I wish you could share this with me, my love."

Over the next few days, Cathy was aware of this unseen person more and more; it's presence was with her through all the daylight hours, only leaving her as Vincent appeared. She was no longer afraid of it; she senses it meant her no harm. In fact, it truly adored her, sending her into a realm of ecstasy, with longing and desire, aimed at pleasing her. She felt quite guilty at the pleasure she experienced, she hoped Vincent wouldn't feel jealous, sensing it all through their bond.

The day before Cathy was due to return to work, it was late evening, the phone rang. She was already sat cross-legged on the couch, so leaning over, picked up the pale blue phone.

"Hello?"

"Hi Joe, what's this, checking up I'll be in tomorrow, my number one tormentor," she giggled.

"No Radcliffe, you're wrong. I just wondered if I could may be get you to come and join me over a takeaway, or something."

"Thanks Joe, but I don't feel like going out, then later on I have someone coming." Cathy could feel Joe's sadness over the phone.

"Oh come on Cathy," he pleaded.

"But we could talk ... Talk to me, Joe. Fill me in on all the gossip I've been missing," she begged.

They chatted away, none stop for ages, then suddenly, Cathy felt a hand stroke her hair ... she jumped, a panicked sound escaped her lips.

"Are you okay, Radcliffe?" Joe asked, puzzled at the sudden change in her voice. "Yeah, I thought ... I saw a spider," she lied.

Then the hands started to massage her shoulders, lips kissed her hair, a shudder ran through her whole body. Cathy moaned.

"Are you really okay, Radcliffe?"

"Course I am, Joe," she said dreamily.

Now the hands crept round her tiny waist, holding her tight, lips pressed into her neck, planting butterfly kisses everywhere. Putting her hand over the mouthpiece, she said, "Please don't go, don't leave."

"Radcliffe ... Cathy ... earth calling, do you read me ... anyone there? Did I call at a bad time? You should have said, see you tomorrow," he sniggered.

"Bye, Joe," was all Cathy could manage.

Putting down the phone, she closed her eyes, allowing the caressing to continue without hindrance, drinking in the raptures he was bringing her.

"If I open my eyes, you'll be gone. I don't want you to go, so I'll keep them tight shut," she promised.

Catherine felt the couch go down as he sat beside her, taking her hands in his. She could feel, yet again the claws, the tell tale sign of her mystery lover. His lips covered hers, his rough stubble brushed her cheeks, his hands weaving their way up and down her back. She couldn't resist any longer.

Slowly she opened her eyes. There, sat on her couch, making love to her, was Vincent. He looked magnificent and he took her breath away completely.

Throwing her arms around his neck, she hugged and kissed him.

"Vincent ... why? ... How?"

"Ssh, my love. I'm here," his velvet voice stopped her questions.

"But ... explain it to me, please."

"Catherine, we both wanted to be together so much, our longing and desire was so intense, that our bond opened up, allowing our longing and desire to break through, showing us the way, letting us

know, that with love, all things are possible."

"Vincent, dreams do come true. My heart wanted this so much. I love you, I love you.

"And I you, Catherine ... for always.

Then taking her in his arms, kissed her with a new passion, a new desire. From this night on they would truly be together.

The End