

With Love Forever *(Vincent's Letter To His Son)*

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Dearest Jacob,

it's deep into the night as I'm writing these words to you. Our world is asleep, at peace, finally the peace we all have been craving for so long...

Time has passed and I still find it difficult to believe that I have not been living in some fantasy, created in my head by my deepest desires and dreams. I'm still learning - although with the greatest pleasure - to live in the wondrous, most beautiful and magical reality of being part of a family of my own.

For so many years, our Tunnel family has surrounded me with kindness, affection and love. Their acceptance, support and friendship helped me grow into the man I am today, and a large part of my heart will always belong to them. They were the first to give me, an outcast, a chance to live... to live a decent and honourable life despite my limitations, something that the world Above would never do. The greatest of them has been your grandfather... I owe him my life, my passion for learning, my strength and the joy coming from everything good that I have ever been given.

Yet, despite all of this love I have experienced in my life, I felt an emptiness inside me that no one in the Tunnels could fill, a void that kept me wandering in the world Above, shrouded in darkness, searching for my destiny. In my dreams, I was searching for what I saw all around me and yet, couldn't touch - I craved the feeling of belonging with another soul...

Life can often be strange, sometimes cruel, and never unmarked by pain, yet it can surprise you most in moments when you least expect it. It surprised me at such a time, on one dark and cold April night on my walk in Central Park. That night has engraved an eternal mark on my heart. It was the night I found your mother...

You are still too young to understand, but by the time you read this letter, if fate allows, your life will be full of experiences, joys and pains (for no one goes through life without either), friendships and memories. Above all, though, I hope it will be full of love, for that is the force that drives us onward, no matter how troublesome the road, and gives us new wings when our own have been broken.

Your mother rightly said that with love all things are possible; you being in this world are the brightest example of that. Thanks to love, I am alive and a father, and tomorrow I will become something that was inconceivable only a short time ago - a husband, binding my life with the woman who made me see the man inside me...

To describe what your mother has meant to me is an almost impossible task, for there are no words that could do justice to what she has done for me, my heart and my soul. She ended my aloneness and gave me the courage and strength to go to places I had never been able to before. Thanks to her, I finally know what it feels like to belong with someone... She saw past my imperfections, seeing the true me, with all the good and ugly that comes with it. She helped me fight my own demons and come out victorious, accepting my whole self without being afraid of its darker side.

Was she frightened? Oh, of course, she was. Those who love are always afraid, mainly for those they love. Yet, she persevered, never wavering in her determination to help me see myself as a man and not as a beast...

Once, long ago, she said, "I owe you everything". The truth is, I owe her much more than she could ever understand... but most of all her fearlessness to love a being that most people Above would banish from their world... or so I've been told all my life. Her love opened a new world to me; her hand that reached for mine, helped me to walk through fire and desolation when all hope seemed lost and buried in the ashes of despair.

I can only hope that one day, you will be as blessed to find a love as beautiful, powerful and liberating as mine, and that it will carry you through life with courage and strength, helping you to reach always higher than you think you are able to...

The clock on the mantelpiece is quietly ticking away the remaining moments before the most wondrous day of my life begins. You are still contentedly sleeping in your crib, while I glance at the bed where your mother is still dreaming her peaceful dreams of today, tomorrow, and the rest of our lives. I still cannot get enough of the sight of her, because the beauty of her heart gives special warmth to the beauty of her face. Remember, Jacob, beauty without a heart is empty and it fades away, but give it a compassionate, kind and loving heart and it outshines the sun forever...

The day will start soon, and although I can feel the excitement rising in me, I would like to freeze this moment in time for a little longer, to preserve this precious image of the perfect balance and peace before my eyes. You and your mother help me keep my balance. Thanks to you, I have found new peace within me that no one and nothing can take away from me anymore, whatever may come in the future.

Wherever your life leads you, be kind, even in the face of unkindness; be strong, even in the face of adversity; be honest, even in the face of deceit; be merciful, even in the face of cruelty; have courage, even in the face of danger; have faith, even when being confronted with doubt; and have patience, for whatever the stars have written for you will find you in the end.

Above all, please remember that you are dearly loved and that there is a truth I will always know: there is no life without love... love of any kind. Whenever doubts and worries trouble you, love will set you on the right path... it will lead you to where you were meant to be. It will lead you home...

From the one who will love and treasure you in his heart forever.

Your father