

# ***A TRUTH REVEALED.....***

*by Allison*

The full moon cast its silvery shadow on the gates of St Cleo's Cemetery, as two shadows stood at the entrance.

"We don't have to do this," the smaller shadow said, as a gloved hand pressed the large bicep it was holding. "I can come tomorrow instead."

"I know we don't but i feel I must," the larger shadow whispered as the moon's light slowly brightened the area revealing tawny hair and a black cloak swirling in the light breeze. Vincent slowly pushed the gates open and allowed Catherine to precede him into the cemetery. "I couldn't be with you at this time last year, your pain was too new, the risk too great to join you at your time of need in daylight, and I wanted to renew my vow to your father and make a pledge to your mother as well."

They made their way through the darkened cemetery, until suddenly a shaft of moonlight glowed on the headstones just ahead of them. Two stones side by side, made of pale granite, the letters on one slightly faded, the other still fresh.

*Caroline Chandler*  
1927-----1966  
*beloved wife and*  
*mother*

*Charles Chandler*  
1926-----1988  
*beloved husband and*  
*father*

"Mr and Mrs Chandler, I wanted to ask your permission to marry your daughter."

Catherine looked at Vincent in shock, This was something she never expected.

"I know I promised, Mr Chandler, that I will love and protect Catherine with my last breath and that is one vow I am keeping with every breath I take. Mrs Chandler, I want you to know that I love your daughter with everything I am and I vow to keep her safe and to give her her happy life that you both wish for her."

Catherine's eyes brimmed with tears as she watched and listened to Vincent's speech to her parents. He then turned and knelt in front of Catherine.

"Catherine, you are my life and I want you with me for the rest of our lives and beyond, Before your parents I humbly ask that you become my wife."

"Vincent, this is all I've ever wanted, yes--oh yes--I will marry you and I know you will give me my happy life." She knelt down beside him and entered his embrace with ease. He gently took

her face in his hands and kissed her. "Now we just have to tell father," she whispered.

"Yes, this will come somewhat as a shock to him but not too much I should think. He knows how I feel about you."

"He will try and talk you out of it."

"He can try, but that will never happen. I want you with me always."

After a few minutes they rose to their feet and arm in arm they made their way back out of the cemetery not noticing two shadows holding hands behind her parent's graves, smiling at the couple then slowly disappearing in the silvery moonlight.

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"Well..." Father stated, as his gaze moved from Vincent to Catherine. She noticed a strange enigmatic look in Father's eyes and thought for a moment she saw a flicker of revulsion.

*'Revulsion? That's a strange look Father gave Vincent.'* Wondering at what she saw, she started when Father raised his voice slightly.

"Catherine?"

"Oh...um...did you say something?"

"I said have you discussed when this was going to happen?"

"No, Vincent and I haven't discussed anything as of yet."

"I see."

"I will let you know everything, Father, as soon as Catherine and I decide," Vincent grasped Father's shoulder and drew him into a gentle hug. "I must walk Catherine home. Good night Father."

"Good night Father," Catherine said as she too gave him a hug.

"Good night Catherine, I'll talk to you soon."

As Vincent and Catherine left the study Father pondered the upcoming events with both a sense of joy and dread - and he had no idea why he was feeling this way.

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When Catherine opened her door the next day, she found a folded note that had been slipped under her door. Smiling she picked it up, thinking it was from Vincent and was surprised to find

the note was from Father.

*Catherine,*

*At your convenience, could you come down Saturday morning. I'd like to talk to you about the wedding. Vincent, unfortunately, will be working in the lower tunnels and won't be able to join us right away. I'll expect you around 10am, if that is agreeable.*

*Father*

"I wonder what this is all about," Catherine said to herself as she tucked the note into her pocket.

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Catherine rose Saturday morning with a feeling of nervousness, wondering what Father had to say to her and what that look she had seen on his face meant. She made her way to her sub-basement where she found Geoffrey waiting for her.

"Father sent me to escort you down."

"Thank you, Geoffrey."

Slowly they made their way to Father's study, where she found the tunnel patriarch perusing a faded copy of *"The Great Gatsby."*

"Father," she called as she reached the top of the short steps leading down.

Father looked up. "Catherine, my dear Catherine, thank you for coming. Thank you, Geoffrey, for your assistance."

"You're welcome, Father." Geoffrey spun around and raced back down the tunnel.

Catherine made her way to the chair Father gestured to. As she settled in the chair, Father returned to his massive chair behind his desk. She saw the hesitant look in Father's eyes and wondered what he was thinking.

"Your note said you wanted to discuss the wedding. As Vincent told you, we haven't had time to discuss any of the fine details yet."

"I know. That is what I wanted to talk to you about. Catherine, other girls have come to me in the past, expressing an interest in Vincent. I told them the same thing I am going to tell you. Vincent is not a man, only part of him is, and shouldn't be involved in any relationship now or ever."

"Father, I love Vincent. I know we can overcome anything as long as we are together. I believe that with all my heart."

"Yes I know you love Vincent. The others have said the same thing, but Vincent is not some *"normal"* man who can give you a home, family. I cannot believe that you could seriously entertain something so foolhardy and possibly dangerous with him. Vincent is an unknown, a...genetic mistake..." Father let slip as Catherine gasped in astonishment at the comment.

A genetic mistake, Father? I don't understand..."

"Yes," Father raised his voice slightly. " *'Things'* like Vincent shouldn't reproduce or be given the opportunity to do so. It goes against the laws of nature and God."

"Vincent isn't a *'thing'*, he is the most wonderful man in the world," Catherine protested.

"Nonsense! You cannot do this. It would be a tragic mistake which you would eventually regret for the rest of your life."

"How can you say that? He's your son. You've always stood beside him in whatever he attempted to do."

"Vincent was never meant to be my son, or anyone else's for that matter. Vincent was never meant to live beyond his birth."

"I don't believe that. You raised Vincent, loved him, sheltered him. You've never shown any attitude like this before. I wish I knew how you can say such hurtful things." Catherine's eyes brimmed with unshed tears at Father's words.

"I can say it because I know Vincent's origins," Father shouted. "Vincent is a freak of nature and I am appalled that you would even consider a union with him. Vincent wasn't meant to be, and any *"human"* female to even think of joining with him is beyond my comprehension."

"I know him, and I know that, whatever he is, he's also the best part of what it means to be human," Catherine cried as she turned and fled up the stairs and out of the chamber.

Peter and Devin were standing outside the chamber entrance, unfortunate observers to the shouting coming from Father's chambers and they stepped aside as Catherine flew out the entrance and down the long tunnel towards Vincent's chamber.

"Catherine...what...", Devin looked at her fleeing form, anger slowly starting to show in his features.

"Devin, don't....," Peter attempted to stop him from entering the chamber

Devin pulled away and turned toward the entrance.

"What's gotten into you, old man?" Devin shouted as he stormed into the room with Peter following. "Who are you to call Vincent a freak of nature? Who died and made you king of the world? How dare you?!"

"Jacob, what did you mean by saying you know Vincent's origins? I thought no one knew how Vincent came to be. I thought Anna found him as everyone was told," Peter remarked, as he followed Devin into the chamber.

"Devin! Peter!" Father started as he realized they entered the chamber and started asking him questions. "What the devil are you two talking about? When did you get here?"

"You called Vincent a freak of nature, you hypocritical old fool." Devin's fists were tightly curled, for the first time he wanted to hit Father for the things he said about Vincent and Catherine.

"Devin, I most certainly did not! How dare you accuse me of saying such a thing, I love Vincent as if he were my own flesh and blood and Peter --- you know Vincent's story as well as I do. I don't know what you two think you heard, but I certainly said no such thing. What happened to Catherine? She was here a minute ago." Father looked around the chamber.

"She came crying out of here and ran towards Vincent's chamber. She was hysterical. After what you said to her, I don't blame her," Devin answered, his anger slowly building.

"Jacob, I heard you as well. You DID call Vincent a freak of nature? Is that what you truly think of him?"

"Because he doesn't fit into the mould you've created for him? Because you never thought he was..." *Human?*" Devin gritted his teeth in anger.

Father found his chair and slowly sat down. He went over everything he and Catherine said a few minutes ago and his hand flew to his mouth in horror, realizing what he said to her. *'Did I really say those things?'* he wondered. *'is that how I really feel about Vincent? My God, what have I done?'*

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Vincent flew down the tunnels to his chamber where his bond with Catherine told him he would find her. He wondered what had upset her so. As he neared the entrance, he could hear her crying. He whispered her name as he entered and stood by the bed. She was crying uncontrollably and did not hear him.

"Catherine?"

She looked up. "Oh, Vincent!" Quickly rising to her feet she reached for him. "Take me away from here please, take me anywhere, I don't care where, just away from here and...Father."

"Father? What did he say to you?"

"I can't...I can't..." She buried her face into his vest and held on for dear life. Vincent wondered what Father could have possibly said to make her so upset. Vincent led her out of his

chamber, his arm protectively around her and they found their way to the Great Falls. Vincent led her to the stone bench they always shared and just held her as she cried, waiting for the storm to finally calm so he can find out what upset her so.

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"My God, I never wanted anyone to find out..." Father hung his head in shame.

"Find out what? That you are a miserable old man who can't stand to see Vincent happy and would say anything to prevent that happening," Devin snarled at him.

"Peter, Devin, I swear to you, I never knew I had those feelings regarding Vincent. And Vincent's origins were never meant to be brought to light."

"So you did lie about not knowing where Vincent came from! Typical, old man, typical. So what...is he some genetic experiment you and Paracelsus were involved in?"

"Yes," Father whispered.

"My God, Jacob. Why?"

"John wanted the perfect human specimen. John found out he was sterile and asked me to supply the necessary material. Anna was willing to be the test subject – she loved John dearly. When Vincent was born, we were horrified. I agreed to let John and Anna take care of Vincent. I didn't think he would live more than a couple of hours. The rest you know."

"All this time, you lied... all this time, to me, the community, to Vincent." Peter was appalled at what Father had done.

"So Vincent really is my biological brother then? Not just my adopted brother?"

"Yes. John and I told the community Anna found Vincent as the story goes. We thought it would make things easier, help them accept Vincent. We didn't think he would live. After John killed Anna and he was banished I had to raise Vincent and you together. As much as I wanted to turn my back on him, I couldn't. I knew I would have to live with this for the rest of my life. That's why I always discouraged any girl from showing any interest in Vincent as he was growing up. I succeeded, until Catherine..."

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Catherine finally stopped crying and just clung to Vincent with all her strength. She raised teary eyes to him and Vincent gently cupped her cheek.

"Now tell me what Father said to make you so upset."

Slowly, Catherine relayed the conversation she had with Father. Vincent was stunned at what

Catherine was telling him. *'Did Father really feel that way about me?'* he wondered. *'Does he really know who my parents are? Why I am the way I am?'*

So many questions swirled through Vincent's thoughts. Slowly anger began to creep into his mind. *'How dare Father upset Catherine so? If he has a problem with me, he should have come to me instead of taking it out on Catherine.'*

"Come, Catherine, let's return to Father's chamber. I want to hear Father's explanation for his behavior."

"No Vincent, I can't face him. Not now, after what he said...," Catherine whispered.

"Will you at least wait for me in my chamber while I speak to him?"

"All right. For you."

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"You lied to Vincent all his life, You knew who his parents were, why he looked the way he does and you never had the balls to admit that you were his natural father, that you were the cause of why he is what he is. If he forgives you for this, he's a bigger man than I am," Devin stated as he turned to leave.

"Jacob, I don't know what to say. I thought I knew you and now..." Peter shook his head as he started to follow Devin out the chamber entrance.

"If there's something here below that's less than human, I suggest you look inside for it, that's where you'll find your monster, Father...in your own heart...not in Vincent!" Devin gave Father a dirty disgusted look as he reached the chamber entrance.

They both stopped as the massive frame of Vincent suddenly filled the doorway. A look of utter fury on his face as icy blue glared at grey. Father shrank from the stare and slowly sat down in the chair behind his desk.

"Catherine?" Peter asked.

"Waiting for me in my chamber. She wanted to leave – run away from all of this, but I was able to get her to wait."

"Vincent...I...," Devin stuttered.

"We'll go to her now and wait with her for you," Peter informed him as he gently pushed Devin forward.

"Devin...Peter..." Father started to go to them. They both glared at him with a look of disgust and then left the two of them alone. Father waited with dread as Vincent stood there.

"Vincent..." Father began. Vincent came slowly down the steps and stopped in front of Father's desk. Suddenly he slammed his fist down on the desktop.

"How dare you?! How dare you upset Catherine?! If you have a problem with me, deal with me, don't take it out on Catherine. She is with me and nothing you can say can change that. So, you know why I am the way I am, that you know who my parents are. Tell me. Tell me the truth now." Vincent's fury was blazing from his eyes as he stared Father down who suddenly shriveled up and sunk into the chair behind him.

"So who are my parents?"

"Anna and I are...your natural parents."

Vincent looked at him in shock. "You and Anna are my natural parents? How can that be? Anna was Paracelsus' wife."

"John was doing genetic experiments and decided to use Anna as one of his unknowing test subjects. I didn't know he was experimenting on her. Anna wanted to have a baby. After several attempts he realized he was sterile and needed someone else to provide the genetic material. He convinced me to help him and I supplied the necessary material for John to continue. We weren't even sure Anna could become pregnant. She'd had two miscarriages before they came below. I never thought anything would come of it. When Anna became pregnant, John agreed to stop the experiments and I held him to his word, but in reality he continued them in secret. Anna never said a word about any of the things John was doing to her. She was just happy to be pregnant with what she thought was John's child. She had no idea that John was sterile and that I helped him."

"I don't know what to say..."

"Vincent...please..., " Father begged.

Vincent turned to leave. "I must be with Catherine right now. You need to ask her forgiveness. I could never remain angry with you, Father ... but the others..."

"I understand, Vincent, I do. Thank you for that at least."

Vincent turned and made his way out of the chamber, back to Catherine and the others. He knew it would take a long time for the others to forgive Father for what he said and done and he hoped Father could forgive himself in time. That's all he could hope for.

All he knew was that Catherine wanted to be with him and that was all that mattered, the rest would work itself out, with time and patience.

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