

Vignettes – Passion

by Angie

1. Once Upon a Time in New York

I am changed. I feel fortunate - and frightened - by turns. I know the reason is Catherine, although I do not understand why. I must consider this and write my conclusions in my journal.

I witnessed a woman being thrown from a van, discarded in the Park, my Park. I was appalled, but grateful that Catherine mended under my care. The cuts on her face were terrible, but I felt her strength and her will to live. She told me she had been mistaken for someone else, but did not elaborate. There was something she did not understand, but I sensed she had suspicions.

When she saw me for the first time and screamed, then threw the dish at me, I was devastated. But, almost immediately, I felt her remorse and guilt. When I returned, I talked to her and she removed my hood. Those moments lasted an eternity. I felt her compassion, her acceptance of me as I am – and something I had never felt before, something deeper. I do not yet want to name it, because I fear to be wrong.

When we stood at her threshold, she put her head on my chest and hugged me. That was the sweetest moment of my life. I could have stood there for ever, basking in her affection, holding her close.

I felt emotions rise in me that I had never thought to know - and felt my body respond as it has never done before. It was sensation that frightened me as much as it thrilled me. I was glad of her thick coat and the dim light.

I was not able to restrain a sigh, then, or when Catherine hugged me again after we returned below, only a short while ago. She noticed it both times and the last time promised that we would meet again.

What am I to think of our friendship? I am not naïve. The men I know talk and joke, but self-deprecatingly. Women in our world are our equals and we respect them. I have also read books considered ...salacious ... but they do not do justice to my state of mind and body. How could they? There is no one like me!

When I arrived to save Catherine from the thugs, I knew I was taking a risk. What would she think of me as I revealed that other side of me? Yet, I wanted to do it. I knew that those men were the ones who had injured her and thrown her in the Park. I could sense their confidence that they would kill her this time. That drove me almost to madness. I wanted them hurt as they had hurt her. I wanted them dead. I roared and slashed them, gloried in their fear as they saw me.

But afterwards, I was afraid. I saw Catherine's reaction - but I misinterpreted it. She was not sorry I had killed her attackers, but grateful, exultant. Her touch and her words brought me fully back to myself and together we went below into the safety of the tunnels.

Does Catherine truly want my friendship? I felt something stir in her and evoke a response in myself. Dare I name it? I must restrain such thoughts, for my own sanity.

I realize now that if I had truly not wanted to see her again, after she returned above that first time, I would not have visited her balcony. What would I have done when she was in danger? I could not have ignored that.

Catherine's flame has drawn me to her like a moth. I am changed. I cannot go back to what I was – nor do I wish to. It is too sweet to be in her thoughts.

I can still feel Vincent's arms about me, even here in my apartment, those strong arms and the solid body I pressed against. I can smell the candle smoke, feel him breathing. His hands were around me. They were so gentle - yet they can also kill. He is educated and his voice is soothing, resonant – yet he can also roar like a lion and be something else - something primal, yet more than human.

So many contrasts in one man.

I know I hurt him deeply when I screamed. He had cared for me all those long days, read to me, fed me. I will never hurt him like that again.

He is such a unique man, one who shows his emotions, even though he's ... different. His face is intriguing. I would love to spend hours examining it, stroking it, coming to understand the man beneath it. I want to give him more.

I'm curious about his life, the community I glimpsed below. I know he is loved and respected. He could not be who he is otherwise. That calm, the compassion and strength I sensed in him, gave me the courage to return back here. The reaction to my face gave me some understanding of his plight, his aloneness.

I felt something more between us, like the flutter of a moth's wing, as if our souls had spoken to each other. I have never felt anything like that before with a man. Something resonated in a deep place.

Vincent told me we were linked, somehow, that he could sense my emotions. That was how he had known I was in danger. Perhaps I can feel something too. I know I want to see him again, and told him so.

I need his courage and friendship. He inspired me to look at myself and my life - and find it wanting. I am a different person. I want to use my legal skills to ensure justice for the least among us. I have a lot to learn, but for the first time I feel ... inspired, committed. For that alone I thank Vincent. He showed me the way.

I do owe him everything.

END