

# Vignettes – Webs

by Angie

## 2. A Children's Story

We are connected so many ways, Vincent mused, as he recalled the events of recent days.

The children, who went above more than anyone, were their eyes and ears, a link to a world the adults had left behind. No one above noticed them, so they moved freely, playing, exchanging news, visiting Helpers, carrying messages.

The pipes often carried news tidbits delivered by the children to the sentries. The pipes were their lifeline, a metal web that bound them, connected them, made their life possible below the streets of New York.

Yet, this network had been tested when he and Catherine had set out to save children from slavers linked to an orphanage. They had managed to rescue Eric and Ellie, who were now part of his family below. Without their children, this abuse would not have been discovered in the first place – and without Catherine's help, they would have been helpless to do anything.

How fragile it all was, Vincent sighed. So much happened above that they could not know about, much less address. Below it was different. They all worked together, knew each other well and in times of crisis, focused on what needed to be done immediately. Their connection was their strength.

His link to Catherine – the bond – was proving to be as important as the other networks in his life. To him personally, it was life itself – Catherine's life. He could no more ignore it than he could ignore a crisis below.

Thanks to Catherine, their web below was stronger. Her strength and position opened up new vistas for him – and for all of them.

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Catherine sat on her bed, tired after the stress of recent days, the fear that she would not be able to rescue Ellie after all. Vincent's presence had tipped the balance. He knew when she was in trouble and risked so much to help her.

How had the orphanage's activities gone unnoticed for so long? How had the cops not known about the pickpocket ring?

Something was wrong, she decided. Somehow children had gone missing and no one had checked. Ironic that it had been a tunnel child who had first reported a problem.

Even at Ridley Hall, there had to be records kept. Information was what powered her world. If facts could not be checked, or could be corrupted, what hope was there?

She thought of Vincent's world, with its pipes, messages, sense of community. A sense of belonging was often taken for granted in her world, where people worked together, played together.

But it was false. Outside those tidy circles - sometimes inside them too - people were in danger, and there weren't enough resources to help them. The human network in her world was broken.

The Attorney General's office dealt with the results of that broken system. Now she had a powerful ally – Vincent. His network of information was better than her own. She only saw the paperwork – he knew the reality.

Together, perhaps they could right some of the wrongs. It was the reason she had joined the DA's office. Vincent had inspired her to look beneath the obvious, to find the underlying truths.

She was learning. She had found her place and now she was linked to two worlds vastly different, but with one important similarity – the human connection that could still triumph. It made her job worthwhile.

She could never reveal the presence of the world below, but the fact that it existed – and Vincent in it – gave her strength. She was not alone. Vincent was with her, just as he had said, always. Now she understood.

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