

# VIGNETTES

## Beginnings

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*“And over our heads will float the Bluebird singing of beautiful and impossible things. Of things that are lovely and that never happen, of things that are not and that should be...”*

**Oscar Wilde**

### **Mouse...**

He crept to the corner of the tunnel and peered around. He ducked his head. *Lights...voices...people!* He gasped with consternation, crouched and scurried backwards into the shadows where it was safe. They wouldn't see him in the dark. He looked for an escape route, he wanted to run. His limbs trembled with the need to be gone. *Bad mistake to be here. Not good...* Then a larger shadow loomed over him.

“It's all right. We talked about this, remember? No one will hurt you here. You're among friends now. It's only a few more steps. You can do this.”

Huddled into the smallest ball he could make of himself, he squinted upwards. His new friend Vincent was standing there, holding out his hand. He stared at it, unsure if he could still trust his friend's words.

People were dangerous. He knew that. They chased him, shouted at him. People tried to grab him, make him go where he didn't want to. And words—always words. Such noise in his ears. Hurt them; made them sore—made him flee to the dark places, the safe places, where he could be alone and unseen. He hid from words and the pain they caused.

Then Vincent came with new words, soft words. Words in books and letters. Teaching him, showing him. Spending lots of time in silence, just watching and waiting. Vincent was good at waiting. Vincent tried to make him listen, tried to make him understand. Sat with him many, many days now. A very long time.

Again and again he brought more words and new things like food, clothes...he touched on the thick, new shirt he wore now. It kept him from being cold. He glanced down...trousers and boots too. He

patted them lightly, wonderingly. Vincent said Mary had made them for him. He said she was waiting to meet him. Father too, Pascal and Winslow—lots of names, lots of people. There in those lights, with all those others...

Vincent crouched down beside him. “I have told them all about you. They are my friends. They would like to be your friends too. You just need to trust us. I will be here beside you always. I won’t leave you alone again.”

*Trust*...there was that word again. Vincent used it a lot. Like it was a magic word. Like it would help to make things better. He sighed. He really didn’t want to go there, to those lights and those people. It was better in the darkness, he was safe there. No one could see him, catch him. He had a whole world of caves and tunnels to hide in. He knew even Vincent wouldn’t find him, if he didn’t want him to. But then he would be alone again...

He crouched, staring at Vincent’s hand, still open and out-stretched, still beckoning. Asking him to trust. He thought again of running, but his chest hurt when he was alone. That was the difference in him now. Without Vincent around, his chest hurt, made it hard to sleep, to think. With Vincent near him, he felt better and he didn’t hurt anymore. He felt safe. He knew Vincent was different too. Like him. He said he understood the pain. He said he could make it go away.

Slowly he unfurled his body. Tentatively, jerkily, he reached out and took his friend’s hand, allowed him to draw him to his feet. He bobbed his head in acknowledgement. He dragged in a steadying breath and released it slowly, tightening his grip on his friend’s strong fingers. Together they walked down the tunnel towards the lights and the people who were gathering now...*waiting and smiling*...

**END**