

# REMEMBER LOVE

by Katrina Relf

*Today, Catherine, when you came to me, I felt your joy, your anticipation – feelings I had shared only hours before – but now I feared that happiness was about to be destroyed by the words I was loath to speak. You ask for so little and give so much, and I was certain that for once, just once, our dream could come true. Perhaps a desperate longing for something impossible can sometimes make the impossible seem within reach.*

*I refused to listen to Father, to Mouse and Pascal, until something inside me – perhaps an instinctive fear – made me see the dangers that we would face. Gradually, came the realization that maybe, in some way, they could sense that which I was denying. It was a dream, Catherine, a beautiful, impossible dream, that, just for a moment, we let ourselves believe could come true. But dreams must end, even though, for us, they are all we have.*

*As you left me I saw the tears in your eyes and felt the pain in your heart, and I knew those tears were for us, for all that can never be and for that deep chasm that lies between our dreams and reality.*

*Although unbidden, I felt a darkness rising within me as I ran through the tunnels. My Chamber was empty, dark and unfamiliar and I was afraid, afraid of what was happening to me, to my world. But then you appeared – a beautiful, ethereal vision. You bade me follow you and you led me into a world I didn't know, filled with people who had been my friends, but were now strangers. It was a place of darkness, a place of evil, but it seemed unreal, you were unreal, and I realized just how much I had lost. I longed to return to the safety of the tunnels, to my family, to once again be held in your arms.*

*But, even as I thought of you, a cold fear ran through me. Where were you in this strange, lost world? Were you just that beautiful apparition now standing before me again? I begged her to let me see you. She led me to your balcony. I stood where I have stood so many times, and I watched you. But the Catherine I was seeing was merely an imitation of the woman I love. Your spirit was gone, your courage, your determination, and all that was left was a shadow. I tried to hide from you, knowing that my appearance would frighten you, but*

*you saw me and you were afraid, as a stranger would be afraid. I tried to reassure you, to calm you, but your fear of me tore at my heart. That fear eventually brought an end to all that had gone before – with death – my death – there on your balcony. There could be no other way.*

*It was all so real – and yet unreal – as though I had been transported to another place – another time. A time when there was no love, no beauty – just darkness and hatred. But now, at last, I was awake and yet I was afraid to open my eyes, afraid of what I might see. Perhaps there was no escaping from this nightmare. No returning to that world that I had cursed so many times as my prison, when I had longed to walk in the sunshine. Now I knew, beyond doubt, that those tunnels are the only home, the only family I will ever need, and the world above is just as beautiful in the moonlight as by day.*

*Gradually, I felt a gentle warmth steal over me, calming my fears, and I felt soft lips pressed upon mine. Was I still dreaming? I opened my eyes to the most beautiful vision – your face before me. Your voice calmed me, your touch soothed me. I was home at last. The darkness had gone and I was safe in your arms.*

*And now I know, Catherine, with every part of who I am, that there can be no darkness when I am with you, and that our brief hours together are worth everything, everything. Every moment spent with you is a gift to be treasured, and, in our hearts, we will never be apart, just as long as we always remember – remember love.*