

# *One Year*

## *(Catherine's Letter to Vincent)*

*Dear Vincent,*

*I can't believe how time flies. It seems like it was only yesterday as I was lying on the cold ground of the benighted Central Park, and my life was slipping away from me. Beaten, unconscious, alone... And then suddenly, I wasn't alone. At that one moment, my aloneness had ended for good...*

*It's been exactly a year tonight, Vincent, a whole 365 days since you came into my life. Or since I came into yours? Either way, it has been the most wonderful year of my life!*

*It hasn't been an easy one; danger and pain followed us many times, threatening to destroy not only the beautiful bond we share, but also our lives. Yet we've endured and refused to take the easier path. With each little step, we took our connection further, deepened it, allowed it to grow stronger. At first with great caution, but soon after with great courage. I appreciate every single moment because each of them brought me closer to you, made me learn more about you (and about myself), made me love you more...*

*I'm sitting here restless, excited, impatient for the sun to set and make way for the darkness of the night, when you can safely find your way to me. It's strange... I've always loved the sunshine, the changing colours of daylight, the energy with which it fills me. But for a year now, I find myself unconsciously counting the hours until dark, finding it more exciting, more miraculous, more beautiful, for there is a chance that it might lead you to me.*

*In that year, I almost lost you, too many times that I can find bearable - either to evil people, that horrible cave-in, your noble heart wishing a better life for me, or the worst of all, my own fault when I misjudged my feelings... People often use the phrase, and sometimes it seems exaggerated and pathetic, but you taught me its true meaning - I can't imagine my life without you...*

*What are you doing right now, Vincent? Choosing another lovely book for us to read? Beating Father in chess again? Getting ready for our evening together?*

*Maybe you are reaching for your cloak right now. Darkness has already spread its veil over New York...*

*We haven't arranged anything for tonight, but I know you will come to me because I know you. That night from a year ago is very special for both of us. It brought us together and only proves that the worst events often lead to the best outcomes.*

*It's time for me to light the candles. I have lots of them, way more than it's probably safe on the balcony with all my plants, but I can't help it. I want to celebrate this day with light, for that is what you have become to me, Vincent - the light in my darkness...*

*When I feel lost, you are always there to find me.*

*When I'm sad, your voice and your words give me comfort.*

*When I feel hopeless, your belief in me gives me strength.*

*When I'm afraid, you show me how to fight my fear.*

*When I love... you return my love in ways I could never even imagine...*

*The world can be such a dark place sometimes, full of threats, prejudices and hatred. Sometimes we forget that empathy is not only one-sided; it reaches much further than only in one direction. Sometimes our hearts harden due to routine, lack of motivation, misfortune or our strong convictions. And sometimes, it causes irreparable harm in dividing us, filling us with anger and resentment.*

*When you came into my life, Vincent, for the first time in my life, I've truly learned to see with my heart, not only scratching the surface but wholeheartedly. I've learned to listen without judging; talk without overpowering; feel without being afraid. Thanks to you, I have learned that we can change the world for the better, without hurting others along the way, if we at least try to look at the world through their eyes.*

*For all that and so much more, I am in your debt forever... I may not have been a bad person before, but since knowing you, I have become better, wiser, stronger and more empathic. You've made me want to be the best version of myself that I can be.*

*One year... What will the next one bring? No one can tell, but I am looking forward to it with a smile on my face, thrill in my veins, and above all, love, filling my heart completely...*

*I'm here, Vincent, for all my remaining existence on this Earth, and no matter what happens, I will always be here for you and love you until a higher force calls me away one day. But I will not be afraid, because you'll be with me, in my heart...*

*Love,*

*Catherine*