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When Hearts Collide

Written by BlueKittyTales as a Trust-Me commission for EternalZero as a gift for JellyDoeOpal.
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Sunday December 31st 2017, 21:25. Vincent is ready to make the ultimate request of his true love, but cannot decide on the perfect way to pull it off.

It felt like he was one step away from paradise. He couldn't imagine his life without the woman he loved being an integral fragment of it. On the mere thought of her, he could feel warmth wrapping around his beating heart. Any time he was away from her, he found himself craving her company, desiring the times they shared each other's minds and wisdom, yearning for her touch no matter what kind. Any time they held hand paws, any time they walked together, any time they spent their nights in each other's company, he never wanted to see them end. To him, she was half of the flesh, blood and fur that made him whole.

The moon glowed overhead on the warm summer's night. All around him, there were creatures enjoying the occasion in whatever way their hearts desired, and along the Sydney Harbour he saw an uproarious game of volleyball in progress with floodlights surrounding the makeshift court. He spotted several couples walking down the pavement enjoying ice creams with each other, finding himself smirking when he noticed one couple sharing each other's. Atop the Sydney Harbour Bridge, a Metal band was performing and he felt his ears flick when the band's frontwoman, a silver dragon, turned his way as she sang. *This city really is beautiful at night.* he thought. *So many things to do, but deciding on which one...how do I get there?*

This soon disappeared from his focus, her show of blue flames not enough to draw him away from his thoughts. Vincent was a well built white wolf of around six feet in height, with a light green head of hair and watery green eyes. His tail curved upwards and swept with his every movement, and that day he donned a pair of blue jeans and a black shirt that didn't do much to disguise his figure. In his trouser pocket was a small box, which contained an item he intended to wait until the very end of their time together that night to show her, and an accompanying card he would show her first. And sure enough, when he reached a restaurant sitting at the junction, *Il Lupo Più Dolce*, he saw his love waiting for him outside.

"Vincent!" she cried. "So good to see you!" Vincent rushed up to her and caught her in a tight cuddle.

"I've missed you, Opal." he said affectionately. Opal was a slender sunbear whose mane of long cherry red hair glowed in the light of the lamp post above them. Two tones of brown fur coated her being, while her gold eyes glistened like a pair of topazes. Clad in clothing as black as the shadows the buildings around them cast, Vincent looked over her as they parted and could feel his heart beginning to race.

"But it's only been a few hours, wolfy." simpered Opal.

"I know." smiled Vincent. "But it still feels like a few millennia."

"You come out with some of the silliest things, you do." said Opal. "I love it. Really, I do. You just wouldn't be the same without them." Vincent looked at the sign above the restaurant.

"I always wanted to give this restaurant a shot." smiled Vincent. "It's like you've read my mind."

"I'm getting the feeling I've been doing that a lot lately." said Opal, nuzzling against his muzzle. He rested his hand paw just above her left breast. He could feel her heartbeat start to rush just like his had, and that told him her words were as true as the moon in the sky.

"It's not like it's a bad thing." said Vincent, following Opal into the restaurant. Though there hadn't been a queue to speak of, there were only a few tables free, and much to his delight, one of them lay right next to the window. Vincent didn't think he'd ever object to letting the world know how he felt about Opal, whether it was through a loudspeaker or just letting others see them as they passed them in their walk. Before he could dwell on it further, one of the waitresses, a plump vixen, approached them, her blue and white fur

glimmering in the lights. And he thought he saw her smile as she looked them over through her rectangular glasses.

“Aww, it’s a shame we aren’t doing a special for cute couples tonight!” cooed the waitress. “You two would fit the bill perfectly.” Vincent and Opal couldn’t help but giggle at this suggestion.

“Oh, you!” grinned Opal.

“Just a table for two, just two for your table?” quipped the waitress.

“You got it!” smiled Vincent, and with that they chose the window seat. When the waitress brought them the menus, they met eyes before starting to read through them.

“So what are you thinking of getting?” inquired Opal.

“Not quite sure yet.” said Vincent. “But I meant to ask you – I know your restaurant’s in South Korea, but how did you get out of it with the New Year’s Eve event going on?”

“Oh that’s right, I completely forgot to tell you. Herschel agreed to cover for me tonight.” answered Opal. “He’s a good guy doing that for me. You and I already handled the one they did at Christmas, even if you did almost clear us out of the ramen.”

“Hey!” objected Vincent playfully. “I’m not that bad!”

“Nah, you’re alright.” smirked Opal. “I know you enjoy the ramen. I wouldn’t have missed tonight for the world. I mean, you did say you had something really special for me.”

“That’s right.” answered Vincent confidently. “But I’m saving it for a little later.” Opal smirked.

“Keeping me on edge, are we?” she said wryly. “You’ve got me all excited!”

“I like seeing my sunbear happy. You know that.”

“I’m not going to lie,” said Opal, “it is good to get out and about. When you’re running a restaurant, you don’t really get to venture outside much.”

“Yeah, I’ve seen how manic that place can get sometimes. But you’ve seen what my paintball arena’s like.”

“I have. I won’t trust your colleagues to paint our fence!” This made Vincent laugh uproariously.

“Neither would I!” he guffawed.

“But anyway,” said Opal, “I thought I might give the spaghetti and curd balls a go. And a couple of cans of limeade. They remind me of your eyes.”

“Aww, you say the sweetest things.” smiled Vincent. “But I don’t think there’s anything on this menu that’s better than you.”

“Well, bon appétit, wolfy.” crooned Opal. “I’m basted and ready to serve.” Vincent allowed himself an enthusiastic smile at the thought.

“You always are.” he simpered. “But on a more serious note...these do look good, sunbear.”

“What are you thinking?” asked Opal. Vincent pondered, scanning each option on the menu.

“Maybe the spinach omelettes with a cherry cream soda.” he said. “It sounds like a good combination.”

“It’s dangerous to go alone!” quipped Opal. “Take this!” She offered her forks, and Vincent couldn’t help but chuckle. “Our next big adventure is about to unfold. Will our hero rise to the challenge? Will he be able to conquer Fort Spinach? Stay tuned!”

“Onwards!” crowed Vincent.

"The only thing missing now," said Opal, "is this!" She pulled out her mobile phone and showed a picture of a scene from one of their favourite video games, *The Legend of Agnes – Harp of the Ages*. The protagonist had drawn his magic sword and was about to face one of the game's many bosses.

"You know something?" said Vincent. "I'd love to do that again. We had a lot of fun this Halloween."

"I'm so glad I talked you into joining in." smiled Opal. "You were really getting into it." Just then, the waitress reappeared.

"You two ready to order?" she asked with a smile.

"We sure are!" cried Opal. "Spinach omelettes and spaghetti and tofu with two limeades and two cherry cream sodas."

"Very good choices!" said the waiter enthusiastically. "They'll take only a few minutes to reach you. They're very easy for our chefs to make." As she left, Vincent turned back to Opal. The glint he saw in her eyes...he was sure he could see a touch of mischief emerging from the mind known only to the two of them. For a long moment they locked eyes. Vincent's heartbeat started to surge when Opal reached out for his hand paw and began stroking it tenderly, immediately arousing his attention. Looking up at her again, there was no way he could deny what he was thinking. *Sometimes, Opal, he thought, I wonder where you've been my whole life. You mean more to me than anything in this whole world.*

"So wolfy," asked Opal, "you decided how you're going to rain in the New Year yet?" Vincent went to reply, but found himself at a loss for words. He knew what he wanted to do, but he hadn't decided quite how to do it. Only a few hours of the current year remained, but that, he believed, would be more than enough time for him to make his decision.

"Not quite yet." he said. "But whatever it is, at least I'll have my favourite sunbear by my side."

"What's an evening without my favourite wolf?" said Opal fondly.

"I couldn't tell you." said Vincent bashfully. "But there will be plenty for us to do. There's going to be New Year's celebrations all over the city."

"And how." agreed Opal. "But we don't need any fireworks."

"No?"

"We've got all the fireworks we need right here." Her voice dropped in pitch, sounding inviting, sensuous, warming with her desire. Vincent couldn't get her words out of his mind, and soon he felt his heartbeat become even faster as warmth began to circle through his body, as though a radiator had magically appeared behind him somehow. *I love you so much, Opal. thought Vincent. I could express it any way I want, but there's nothing I can think of that could possibly trump what I'll do later on tonight.* Before he could give it any more thought, however, another of the waitresses, this one a slender rabbit, brought forth their dishes. Their noses twitched in appreciation and anticipation, and he couldn't deny it – these meals looked very appetising.

"Dinner with my favourite wolf." said Opal as she popped open one of the cans of limeade. "What could be more dignified?"

"You've got me there." said Vincent with a shrug as he took his first mouthful. "Whatever is more dignified, I haven't found it yet."

"Places to go, maybe?" suggested Opal.

"I'd say we're spoilt for choice tonight." said Vincent. They both took another mouthful each, with Vincent finding himself enamoured by the combination of savoury flavours. He'd never known spinach to be quite so good before. "And we made the right choice coming here."

"You like it?" smiled Opal. Vincent tightly shut one eye and stuck his chin and muzzle out.

"I'm glad I chose it, Olive!" he said. "But I'll need some reduskin' machines!"

"No you won't, Popeye!" laughed Opal. "I see you really like the omelettes!"

"You bet!" said Vincent enthusiastically. "How's yours, sunbear?"

"I wish I'd brought you here sooner." said Opal, by a way of answering his question. She took another mouthful, barely savouring it before she swallowed. "I'm really enjoying this!"

"All that's missing is a few candles, right?" smirked Vincent. Evidently, his words hadn't gone unheard, because the next moment, a waiter, a tall green lizard, brought several candlesticks over to their table and lit them one by one with a simpering expression adorned on his face.

"If a perfect evening is what sir desires," said the waiter, his voice sounding nasal but still gentlemanly, "a perfect evening we aim to provide."

"Great. Thanks!" chirped Vincent as the waiter left.

"Treat her well." said the waiter. *Oh, don't worry about that, my good man.* thought Vincent, stroking his pocket and feeling the small box and the card underneath his paw pads. *My aim is making sure she feels like a queen, though she needs no crown.* Opal wasn't slow to pick up on this, however.

"What have you, uh, got there?" she asked inquisitively between her next mouthful of her drink.

"Now now, not just yet." said Vincent. "Patience is a virtue." He gave a sly wink.

"Ooh, okay." she said. "My huggy bug knows I enjoy my surprises, doesn't he?"

"Opal, every day with you is a new surprise." said Vincent, each of them eating some more before he reached out and stroked her on the shoulder affectionately, brushing his claws along her forearm. "You did say that every day is another lifetime."

"Are you sure?" asked Opal, looking quite confused. "I don't remember saying that."

"It was some time ago now. But regardless of who said what, my life just wouldn't be the same without you."

"I know how you feel, sweetie." said Opal. "Whenever we're parted, it's like there's a universe between us." Vincent's ears twitched as he took a sip of his drink. He was sure he could hear her heartbeat between her soft breathing, the very threads of her thought patterns as she spoke. He didn't know how, but it felt like he was subconsciously entering her very mind without him leaving his seat somehow.

"The feeling is all too familiar." said Vincent wistfully, both eating another bite simultaneously. "Just the mere thought of spending more time with you is enough to get me excited."

"You have a gun in your pocket, hm?" said Opal wryly.

"I'm just happy to see you, is all." grinned Vincent. Once they realised the implication cast by what he'd said, they both burst out into laughter.

"We might just find out how happy later, in more ways than one." said Opal sensuously, leaning towards him and stroking his outstretched hand paw.

"One thing at a time, eh?" said Vincent, scooping what remained of one of the omelettes into his mouth with his free hand paw. "We haven't even asked for the bill yet. Although, I won't lie to you – that actually is very tempting." Opal mimed pressing buttons on his body.

"Just like that!" he chuckled.

"Just like that." she agreed, before they each finished the last of their meals. Indeed, this hadn't gone unnoticed by the passing waitress, the same vixen who had shown them in. Once she'd dropped her tray off at another table, she headed over to theirs with her eyes glowing through her rectangular glasses on sight of them.

"You enjoyed your meal, you two?" she inquired.

"Ramen can take a back seat for a while." said Opal.

“Popeye doesn’t know what he’s missing!” smiled Vincent.

“You have no idea how often that comparison comes up with these omelettes.” chuckled the waitress. “You ready for your desserts?”

“Oh yeah!” said Vincent and Opal, their voices perfectly together.

“Alright.” said the waitress as they studied the menus. These options all looked so amazing, but it didn’t take long for Vincent to decide.

“I’ll take the raspberry sundae.” he requested.

“And I’ll take the strawberry cheesecake.”

“Brilliant choices!” beamed the waitress. “They’ll be with you in just a few minutes.” As she left, however, he found himself wondering where the rest of the evening could go. He felt around his pocket again, his mind starting to whirl into a spin. He could feel his heart starting to tighten as he met eyes with the sunbear once more.

“Are you alright, wolfy?” inquired Opal.

“I’m fine, Opal.” answered Vincent, before he suddenly stood up. “I just need to answer nature’s call.”

“Ah, I get it.” she said. “See you in a few!”

“Promise not to eat my dessert for me while you’re waiting, okay?” grinned Vincent.

“Hey!” protested Opal, not able to help but laugh. “I’m not that much of a glutton!”

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Vincent made his way into the men’s toilets, but once he’d got inside, his nose twitching at the smells of the tulip urinal cakes, his mind was as frozen as the kitchen’s freezers. He felt around the package in his pocket as he approached the row of sinks and pulled it out, examining the small red box. He opened it up, revealing the gold ring encrusted with emeralds and topazes, and tilted it up to face the lights. The gems glistened, casting spots of yellow and green all around the room.

It wasn’t just the ring’s composition. The ring meant more than just the money spent on it – it meant the ultimate expression of the way he felt. He thought of everything they had shared since the very first day they had met. The memory of the first time they’d lain eyes on each other rushed back to him, and he found himself comparing it to a scene from a romantic film. From there on, their love had blossomed like the flowers of spring.

He wondered how Opal would react once he posed the ultimate question, and there was no way he could deny the way he felt. *She’s so beautiful. he thought. I’ve never loved anyone this much before. And I want to spend every last second I’m alive with her. And when I’m away from her...I feel like half of me is missing. I miss her kisses. I miss her touch. And that voice of hers...it’s like something out of the most wonderful song. There’s so many ways I could propose to her, but I...I don’t know how to do it.* He put the ring away again, and it was only after he’d used the urinal that the idea came to him. He showed the ring to the light again, allowing himself a chuckle to himself as his plan began to take shape.

“This’ll be the best thing imaginable.” he said. “Here I come, Opal!” *However she takes it, thought Vincent, I’ll always remember this night.*

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Vincent returned to the restaurant with a spring in his step, and the timing couldn’t have been better. The moment the door closed behind him, he spotted a waitress leaving his table and Opal’s ears twitching as he approached.

“Hey Vincent, over here!” called Opal. “Your dessert’s getting cold.”

“But it’s already cold.” smirked Vincent – the very moment before she took a spoonful for herself.

"Hey, you owe me!" giggled Vincent as he sat back down, in turn swiping a little bit of her cheesecake.

"Hey, that's mine!" chuckled Opal. "Oh, you're gonna get it now!" With that, she reached in with her spoon and took one of the wafers with it, while Vincent grabbed one of the strawberries atop her cake and brushed it with the whipped cream on top.

"Okay, I know you like your treats," smirked Vincent as he ate up the strawberry, giving a delighted grunt in response to its sickly sweet taste, "but you've had quite enough now, sunbear."

"Oh, no I haven't." said Opal. "Not now you're here again. I was missing my Vinnie woof." She stroked him around the jaw and muzzle, making him grunt and pant in appreciation.

"I was only gone for a moment." he said bashfully.

"A moment too long, wolfy." said Opal affectionately, her hand paw moving to his ears and ruffling through his head of hair. "This sunbear loves her wolf." *Oh, you don't know how much this wolf loves you too, honey bear.* thought Vincent when he in return stroked her on the muzzle and around her nose. *Soon you'll find out exactly how much.*

"And this wolf loves his honey bear." replied Vincent huskily, making Opal giggle before they made kissing faces at each other.

"I suppose you want more ice cream?" smirked Vincent, tentatively eating a bite. Its taste was astounding, fuelling his already alight senses even further as the mix of fruit and ice cream made a delightful amalgam. Opal's response to his question was to scoop up a mouthful of cheesecake, all the while staring at his ice cream sundae.

"Nah, I've had enough ice cream." said Opal. "This cake isn't a lie."

"Well, I can see it and you can eat it." quipped Vincent between his next scoop of ice cream. "What more proof do you need?"

"Another strawberry, maybe?" smirked Opal, pointing at his muzzle.

"You've had one of my wafers," said Vincent pointedly, "so I'd say we're even."

"Alright, Mr Accountant." said Opal dryly, drizzling chocolate sauce over her cheesecake and scooping up another bite. "Your figures add up. One strawberry for one wafer."

"Alright, then." proclaimed Vincent, his tail starting to sweep behind him in anticipation as he watched her eat between his scoops of the ice cream. They met eyes again for a moment, then Vincent glanced at the candles. He thought their bright flames were minuscule in comparison to the fire within him that was threatening to erupt from within, but he knew there would be much time for it later. After all, dinner was only the start of a long night for them. When they broke eye contact, Opal savoured her next mouthful of the cake, Vincent doing the same with his ice cream and letting it melt in his mouth.

"I guess you really can have your cake and eat it." smirked Vincent. "And then some."

"Oh, don't you tempt me now." said Opal, sneaking a look at his trousers underneath the table. "I know you're happy to see me tonight, but we've got other things to get through first." While the sunbear wasn't looking, Vincent reached over and swiped another one of her strawberries.

"Hey!" groused Opal. "I've only got one left now! That's not fair, Vinnie!"

"Oh, sure it isn't." said Vincent slyly, and just when he'd eaten the strawberry, Opal aimed her spoon at his sundae and dished away the last of his cream.

"Aw, I wish cream didn't always rise to the top." complained Vincent. "I've got none left now."

"That's for my strawberries, you naughty wolf you." giggled Opal. "You should have ordered your own cheesecake."

"But then I wouldn't have got to share yours!" smiled Vincent. "You should have had ice cream."

"We could ask the waiters for more." suggested Opal.

"Nah, this'll be enough, I'm sure." said Vincent. He looked into his bowl. There wasn't much left now, but despite what Opal had taken, he had thoroughly enjoyed his dessert. And as Opal finished the last of her cheesecake, Vincent followed suit. And at the very moment they met eyes and held hand paws, the plump vixen waitress returned.

"You two enjoy your meal?" she said.

"Oh, you bet we did!" smiled Opal.

"Yeah, I saw what you two were doing." observed the waitress. "My colleague found it pretty funny."

"You want anything else, Opal?" asked Vincent.

"I think that's it for me, Vinnie." said Opal affectionately. "We'll have our bill now."

"How'd you find your desserts?"

"Oh, I got back from the men's toilets and there they were." said Vincent brightly, showing a flirtatious smile to Opal. "And those weren't the only desserts I came back to. No dessert of mine is complete without a little sunbear on the side."

"Oh, stop!" giggled Opal. "I got my sides too, you know. Everything tastes better with a little, hm, wolf." She licked her lips at him with a wanting smile. "In more ways than one."

"You're gonna start talking about Little Red Riding Hood next!" he said.

"I can see you two are like two peas in a pod!" chirped the waitress. "Your bill will be along in just a moment." And as she left again, Vincent and Opal blew out the candles and leaned towards each other. Their lips met in a warm kiss, and even though the moment was brief, Vincent could feel the dawning of a new energy within him, warmth beginning to race through his body from his tail to the ends of his claws. There was no mistaking how he felt. Maybe they'd blown out the candles too soon? Before he could dwell on this, the waitress returned with the receipt.

"Hey wolfy," said Opal, "we never decided who was paying this time, did we?"

"What do you say we split it 50/50?" suggested Vincent. "You pay, I'll put in the tip."

"That's not half and half!" chuckled Opal. "Unless you're tipping 100%!"

"It covers the wafers you took, but alright." conceded Vincent, stroking her around the shoulders and ruffling her hair. "You win this round, teddy bear."

"Who are you calling Teddy?" teased Opal.

"Uh, you, honey bear?" said Vincent sheepishly.

"What are you, Mr Bean?" said Opal, her tongue poking out.

"Aw, at least I didn't put a stick of dynamite into a tin of paint when I redecorated the house last year!" protested Vincent.

"Yeah, I suppose that's true." conceded Opal. "But I don't know where your halo went. It was so bright and shiny."

"Keeping it clean is easy." said Vincent huskily. "I never wear it any more."

"You're getting naughtier, you are." With this, they examined the receipt and drew out several notes each, before they pocketed the after dinner mints and headed off, but not without sharing a tender kiss in the moonlight once they got outside. This hadn't gone unseen, for some of the diners were watching and had simpered, then whooped and congratulated the duo before clapping them away. *That's quite the spectacle.* thought Vincent as he looked around the city. *And a scrumptious meal!*

"Hey Vinnie, look!" cried Opal when they started their walk. She pointed at the pitch black night sky. Fireworks were shooting up above the city across the sea, even though the clock tower nearby stated that was still just under two hours left until the New Year. Vincent and Opal's ears twitched as a nearly invisible firework soared through the sky, then let out an almighty bang as it went off, splaying a bronze glow all across the sky. Vincent couldn't take his eyes off it as four Catherine Wheels rose and cartwheeled across the path of the next two fireworks. But then he felt a sliver of guilt. *I could have spoken with the operators. he thought. I could have got them to launch a message across the sky for me. But maybe there will be another chance.*

"We're so close now." said Vincent. "It's been quite a year for us."

"I wish we could have met years ago." said Opal, hugging him and stroking his shoulders.

"I was thinking the same thing." replied Vincent.

"You wanna check out the fireworks displays?" proposed Opal. "I think there's one on the bridge." He looked up at it. The concert had gone, with another beautiful display in its place. While there were still a number of cars navigating their way through, a sizeable crowd had gathered there. It looked too good an opportunity to pass up.

"I can't turn down a celebration." smiled Vincent. He looked up at her again. He looked into those shining bronze eyes of hers. *Opal, he thought, you might be a different species from me, but you're the most beautiful lady I have ever seen before or will again. Maybe I'm crazy...but if it's crazy to adore you like I do, then perhaps I am.* He felt around his pocket again, his heartbeat starting to race again.

"Opal," he said, "would you forgive me if I was to do something shocking in front of the city?"

"Shocking, you say?" said Opal, sounding more amused than surprised. *This is it.* thought Vincent. *My life's defining moment.*

"Shocking." agreed Vincent.

"It ain't scandalous." smirked Opal. "Not like the contents of my sock drawer." Vincent spotted several creatures watching from the windows of the surrounding buildings. He was glad for their company, wanting as many to know about how he felt as possible. He felt like the love he felt for Opal was robbing him of any shred of composure, but that only signalled that he felt ready. With that, he pulled the card out of his pocket. The sunbear heard it rustling, before they met eyes once more.

"Opal, I've had a lovely evening." smiled Vincent. "And I can't forego thanking you for it."

"Aw, but thanks aren't necessary." said Opal as she gingerly opened the card. She opened it and read out the rhyme inside it aloud, Vincent listening fondly as though she was giving a powerful speech:

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy, when skies are grey. You'll never know dear, how much I love you. So please don't take my sunshine away. With all the love in the world, Vincent.

"Vincent, that's beautiful!" cried Opal. She approached him with her arms outstretched, but he remained still.

"It doesn't stop there, sunbear." he said. Looking up at her, he knelt down, bending a single knee and pulling the box out of his pocket.

"Opal, my dear...I love you more than life itself. And I cannot imagine my life without you in it." He held the box up and opened it before her, tilting it slightly so that the emeralds and topazes glistened in the light of the five fireworks that launched into the sky in perfect unison. "Opal, will you marry me? Will you make me the happiest wolf who ever lived?" Tears sparkled in Opal's eyes as she clapped her hand paws to her muzzle in surprise, his own welling up with tears of his delight. The adoration that shone in her eyes now was unmistakable, and looking as though she was about to cry, she tightly hugged him, his arms coiling around her in return.

"Vincent, yes I will marry you!" cried Opal. "I will, I will!"

"I can think of nothing better than being yours eternally, my love." sighed Vincent happily.

“How could I possibly refuse a lifetime with the wolf who makes me so happy no matter what colour the sky is?” said Opal, elation lacing its way through her voice.

“I don’t know, but knowing that I could make you so happy means you’ve got the key to my heart. And I’m ready to let you unlock its door.” Warm tears began to seep through his shirt and into his fur. There was nothing he adored more than seeing his favourite sunbear as happy as he could make her, and it was only the beginning.

“I’d love us to get married as soon as possible, wolfy.” said Opal.

“I can hardly wait until we get started planning it!” agreed Vincent as, after a long moment, they parted. He took her left hand paw into his hand paws, before he pulled the ring out of the box and slid it gently onto her left ring digit. She sniffed and the next tear she shed glistened as another firework from the display on the bridge exploded nearby, and then he felt himself shed one of his own.

“This ring’s beautiful, Vincent.” she said. “Looks just like my eyes...and yours.”

“That’s why I chose those gemstones, my lovely sunbear.” smiled Vincent. “I just can’t forget those gold eyes of yours. The ring’s not as beautiful as you are, you know.”

“Don’t forget your eyes, wolfy.” said Opal affectionately. “This ring’s got nothing on how handsome you are.”

“I suppose you’ve got something to compare them to now, eh?” suggested Vincent sheepishly.

“That’s right.” smiled Opal. “Will you, Vincent, make me a happy bear for the rest of my life?”

“No question.”

“Will you love me forever?”

“I will. And don’t forget about the day we first met.”

“Definitely not. Will you be with me until the end of time?”

“Yes.” And with that, the two shared an embrace again, sharing several heartfelt kisses in a night he would remember for the rest of his days. Now that the highest trump card had been played, he was determined to make their marriage, whenever it began, the happiest time it could be. In their life, there would be only one law – to continue their love and adoration for one another. Vincent couldn’t think of a better way to spend it.

“What do you say we go and check out the firework displays, my hubby to be?” proposed Opal.

“I’m with you, my future wife.” said Vincent fondly. And with that, they linked hand paws and headed up to the bridge, sharing another kiss in the light of the pair of amber and green Catherine Wheels let off up above.

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When they headed up to the bridge, they were, much to Opal’s surprise, welcomed with an applause from the groups of creatures watching the display. A number of them held up their glasses of wines and beers, enthusiastic whistles coming from all around.

“Way to go, wolfy!” cried a vixen near one of the supporting struts.

“You lucky son of a gun!” cried a bat standing near one of the hosts. “She’s gorgeous!”

“Aw, thanks.” said Vincent bashfully, feeling his cheeks turn bright red under his fur. They made their way into the crowd, managing to find a spot that gave them a good view of the sea and the many buildings lit up and giving the city an amazing glow. Below them, a pair of large passenger boats passed with crowded festivities on board, before the next fireworks were set off in front of them.

“Hey you two,” said a raccoon standing next to them, “these guys are taking requests right now. I saw everything, so I’d take the opportunity if I were you.” She gestured to where they were letting off fireworks, while a passing car tooted its horn. With that, Vincent found a path through the crowd and headed towards the front, Opal following close behind.

“Hey lovebirds!” crowed one of the hosts fondly once they reached the front of the display. They were a pair of black panthers who were both dressed in off colour suits, one of them light blue and the other bright orange. “Glad you made it! You want to request something?”

“You got it!” smiled Vincent.

“So, what’ll it be?” asked the host.

“I’ll leave this one to the love of my life.” said Vincent. “You’re up, sunbear.”

“I’m not fussed.” said Opal, but then she suddenly thought of an idea. “Ooh, what about something with green and gold? Goes with my ring and our eyes.”

“Any particular kind of firework, my dear?” asked the host.

“Have you got any Roman Candles in those colours?” suggested Opal. Both of the hosts grinned and there came cheers from all around them.

“It just so happens we do.” he said. “And we’ve been told that your man just proposed to you. Anything for the happy couple!” And with that, several Roman Candles were lit, each firing in rapid succession. As the sky lit up with the glows of gold and green, Opal pulled Vincent into a warm hug and kissed underneath the colourful horizon. And as he held his love in his arms, a heartfelt smile crossed his muzzle as they met eyes once more. *Thus begins our thousand year reign of love, he thought, starting with the best bear hug the world has ever seen.* Truly, he felt there was no better place he could possibly be than the warmth of Opal’s arms. He would never regret the day their hearts collided for the first time.

The End

