

**An Affair of the Heart and Soul**  
**By Meriko**

**Chapter 31: The Only Two People on the Planet**

They sat companionably on the chair, Marion on Vincent's lap, with arms and legs tangled happily together. Every few minutes, Vincent would turn a page in the notebook he was holding and skim it for interesting tidbits. Skimming accomplished in a matter of four to five seconds, he would then return to the pleasing task of perusing Marion's face. An hour or so passed this way, the same conversation repeating itself every few minutes with Marion starting it off, seemingly unable to grasp her new reality.

"You're not going to die?"

"No."

"And neither will I?"

"No."

"You won't leave me?"

"Definitely not."

"Ever?"

"Never."

A pause to try and let it sink in once more, and then,

"I love you."

This statement, delivered in Marion's clear, sweet voice, had the effect of rending Vincent speechless for a good 30 seconds each time she said it. As the afterglow of her words faded a bit, he would reply in a soft, husky voice, "I love you, too."

Then the conversation would end as they exchanged kisses for several minutes, lips hovering and dipping like two butterflies dancing with each other, and then another page in the notebook would be turned and skimmed and ignored. Dazed by the joyful revelation, and still exploring their newly discovered love, they existed in no other moment than now, and thought of nothing but adoring each other.

Less than two hours ago, Marion had seen a vision of the road before her stretching bleak and barren, a curse to be walked alone and afraid. And where was the cold, calculating Vincent Valentine who knew without a doubt that he was doomed for all time to a life of reparation for his sins? The fear and despair that had haunted their hearts for so many days and weeks and months were completely forgotten in the new happiness that seemed to light their future like a million suns.

Human nature was like that sometimes, especially in children.