

They watched together as the last lights of sunset unfolded without a word being spoken. The pink sky turned purple as they enjoyed their wine, until only a slight remnant of light remained.

“Why can’t life be more about moments like this?” Catalina asked. “The sun sets every night, but I miss 99 percent of them because I’m doing ... what?”

“I love you too, Cat,” Legato said, wrapping his arms around her and pulling her closer.

“That was a delayed response,” Catalina said, razzing him, “but I know you love me, Legato. Someone said to me a long time ago, that true happiness is when you’re in such a place, that you’d rather be there than anywhere else in the world.” She looked up at Legato, smiling, and said, “I am so happy right now.”

The darkness of the night settled fully. The only light was coming from the stars. Legato spread out another blanket and positioned himself on his back lying next to Catalina.

As they gazed up at the stars, Catalina was in awe of all she was seeing, “I never noticed until tonight the show the stars put on in the night sky. At least, not like this!

“On one hand, I feel so small looking up at them. On the other, I feel so important. It’s like they’re each looking down upon me with something to say. Am I making sense?”

“You are, Cat. Mystery works that way. It takes us to irrational places and challenges our hearts with thoughts that we can only try to explain with words.”

“What words would you use?”

“Restlessness or yearning are the best words I can come up with. The skies at night are mysterious to me. They cause me to get outside of my worries or pain. The best way I can try to explain it is to say that they draw me into them. They reach out and I reach back—until all my worries and pain disappear into their light.”

“Wow, that’s beautiful Legato. I love listening to you talk like that.” Catalina took Legato’s hand, encouraging him to continue.

Legato was happy to, “There is so much I don’t understand. The things that mean the most and impact my life the most are things I can’t fully explain or define.”

“What kind of things?” said Catalina filled with curiosity.

“Things like the sky at night, a walk on an ocean shore, the life-changing value of true friendship, or love itself. I can’t fully understand and will never be able to define any of these things. They’re too big and I wonder sometimes if they’re out of this world. They’re some of the most amazing, impactful experiences of life, but remain a total mystery to me.”

“Or the love for a child, or husband,” Catalina added.

“Or the love of a sister, or even a silly pet!” Legato added, “I mean, why is it that Bucky is so important to me? He’s just a goofy dog!”

“What about us, Legato? I mean, please don’t take this the wrong way, but a year ago, I never would have imagined you and I would be so close, and yet here we are, alone on an island all night together.”

Catalina looked up at the stars and asked, “Where do we go from here?”

Legato motioned Catalina to roll to her side facing away from him, which she did.

Rolling to his side as well, he moved close and cuddled next to her. He placed his arm around her and kissed her ear, whispering, “I will make a promise to you now, with all the stars in heaven as my witness: I will never, ever hurt you, Cat. You are my best friend and a true angel in my life.

“No matter what lies ahead of us, I promise you, from the deepest place in my heart, what we have is more important to me than anything. Despite how difficult it might be during moments just like this not to reach for more, I will treasure you as my best friend, honor and respect you, protect you, and will never, ever let any harm come upon you.”

He pulled her as close to him as he could and continued, now looking up at the stars and speaking out loud, he said, “God has given me a second chance to share my life with his most special angel. Nothing is more important to me than to honor that privilege, that gift.

“It is a gift, isn’t it Legato?”

Catalina was filled with a peace and joy she had never felt before. Peace filled her with such a soothing experience—she could only smile. Joy coursed through her body like a healing wind. She held onto it, hoping it would never escape.

“I accept your gift. I promise to receive it just as you’ve described it to me. I promise to hold onto it and treasure our love no matter what life throws at us. You are my hero and I’ll love you forever.”

“Just one year ago,” Legato whispered, still deep in the moment, “we were two lost and lonely people on our own islands. But look at us; today, we’re united forever on the same island.”

“Even when we return from here,” said Catalina, affirming him, “we’ll still share this same island. One with a bedrock of trust, honesty, respect, and unity.”

“I’ve decided,” Legato offered, “to leave behind all my fears of being alone. I’m no longer dwelling on what tomorrow holds so I can be opened up to receive every bit of this moment, right now.”

“In a very real sense,” Legato continued, “this moment is eternal and will never leave us.”

Catalina listened to Legato, deep in thought. Then in a voice just above a whisper, she shared, “Right now, I feel like my heart is completely filled with love.”

Tilting her head back towards Legato, she added, “But love doesn’t work that way—it never is really full. It keeps expanding, growing, and becoming more.

“Moments like these will last forever. Love grasps and carries them into eternity and then we join in love to become something that was impossible on our own.

“Something bigger...

“Something stronger and more beautiful...

“Something that binds us together forever.”

A gentle breeze whistled quietly through the pines. A shooting star lit up the night before disappearing from the sky. The warmth from the love they gifted and received filled their hearts with nourishment that could heal any scar.

Legato closed his eyes and the light of the stars stayed with him. He held onto Catalina and the mystery of their love liberated them both from any remaining fear.