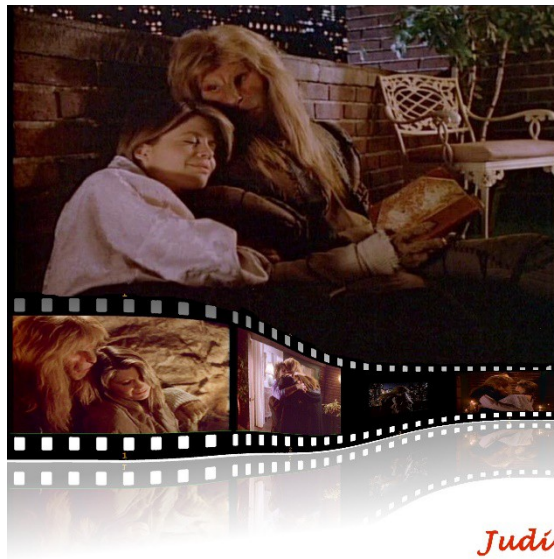


6 Tidbits

by Judith Nolan



Judi

The Beginning

“What is it?” Father peered at the tiny package pushed into his unwilling hands.

“A baby... I think.” Falcon shrugged. “Don’t know. Found it in the snow up behind St Vincent’s. Chucked away like trash. Almost stepped on it before it cried. Couldn’t figure what else to do. Real cold up there.”

“A baby...” Father muttered incredulously, instinctively drawing the bundle against his chest. “How could anyone throw a baby away?”

“Topsiders...” Falcon dismissed the city-folk above them.

Holding the ragged bundle in one hand, Father drew aside the dirty swaddling covering the baby’s face, and stared in open-mouthed disbelief...

Another Beginning

Catherine reached for him, laying her hand against Vincent’s chest before dropping her head onto his shoulder. “What can I say to you?” Vincent tensed, everything within him demanding he escape, put distance between them. But the beguiling tenderness of her embrace anchored him in place. He was entirely unprepared for the emotions coursing through him, taking his breath with them. It truly felt as if his heart were breaking... into tiny pieces, never to be repaired or whole again. And yet he laid the palm of his hand in the small of her back and drew her closer still...

For Always...

Vincent lifted the tiny hand of his sleeping son and laid it carefully within his, palm to palm. Catherine had given him this incredible gift, beyond price or imagining, conceived from her unquenchable love--and the wonder of it still snatched his breath away.

Warmth seeped into his flesh from the miniature fingers which barely covered the heel of Vincent's broad hand. Though the child remained sleeping his little fingers curled instinctively, folding tightly around his parent's thumb as if Jacob would never let him go. Vincent stared at the tenuous connection that could never be broken, come what may...

We Will Endure...

Vincent stood with his hands linked in the small of Catherine's back. "We have endured... much."

Catherine sighed, holding her love close from hip to thigh, as if she dared not let him go. "Yes, we have. And I know, in the deepest part of who I am, that whatever happens now, Vincent, we will endure. We will."

"Yes, we will... always..." Vincent sighed. His gaze dropped to the soft parting of Catherine's lips, and this time it seemed the most natural thing in the world to lean closer, gently caressing her mouth with his in the lightest of touches...

Father's Day

“Now this...” Mouse offered a package. “For you.”

“What is it?” Father accepted it gingerly.

“You’ll see...” Mouse nodded encouragingly.

“Very well...” Father’s beseeching eyes slid sideways to a watching Vincent, but he offered no comment. “Will I like it?”

“Mouse-made,” the tinker replied. “It’s okay, good.”

That’s what you said last time...” Father opined darkly, releasing the parcel’s string while trying not to flinch.

Matching wooden bookends were revealed, one carved with Father and Vincent, the other Mouse and Father. The craftsmanship was beautifully detailed.

Father smiled. “I’m sorry, Mouse, for doubting you.”

Mouse bounced gleefully. “Happy Father’s Day...”

Winterfest (2016)

Once again they danced together with the secret music of the Great Hall as if no-one was watching them. Tonight, of all nights, their abiding love allowed no room for either to remember they’d ever been hurt by an adolescent passion or obsessive desire. And as she turned slowly within Vincent’s loving embrace, Catherine whispered a lilting song her Irish grandmother had once taught her, as Vincent’s lips quested slowly across the soft skin of her throat. And both knew with certainty they would always love and live their lives within this incredible haven they’d created both Above and Below...