



Walk This Way Again...

By Judith Nolan

"You've gotta dance like there's nobody watching,

Love like you'll never be hurt,

Sing like there's nobody listening,

And live like it's heaven on earth..."

~ William W. Purkey

“Do you remember our very first Halloween night, Vincent?” Catherine glanced up at her husband, a warm, reminiscent smile curving her lips.

“How could I forget?” Vincent replied, as he helped his young son struggle into his pirate costume. “Ten years have passed, and yet it seems like only yesterday.” After a deeply drawn sigh he said, “You showed me the city that night. A city I had never seen before, even though I had lived beneath it all my life.”

“Yes, I did. Until that night you had seen so much of the violence and hatred of my world. It was a pleasure to show you there were beauties as well. And the sunrise?” Catherine questioned softly, managing to button the back of her daughter’s fairy outfit, despite the child’s determined efforts to wriggle off the bed and run from her parent’s chamber to join her twin sister, who was waiting impatiently outside with an equally excited Mouse.

“Oh, I remember that. It was very beautiful...but not as glorious as you.” Vincent looked up, his blue gaze measuring the slight flush rising in his wife’s cheeks. “And I remember the jogger who told us Halloween was yesterday, man.” He began to laugh. “I was so lost in the moment, I didn’t hear him approaching. I don’t know who received the bigger shock. But he never knew what he interrupted. I discovered a new desire that night. I dared to dream...”

“Yes, that man did get in the way, didn’t he? There, all done.” Catherine released her wriggling child who made a dash for freedom and the promise of illicit treats to come.

“*Hey! Wait for me, you guys!*” Jacob’s boots hit the floor running. He skidded to a halt in the doorway, returning to give his father a swift hug. “Thanks, Dad. Don’t take too long. I want lots of chocolate.” He grinned cheekily before running after his sisters.

The children’s excited chatter died away as they hurried, hand in hand with Mouse, towards Father’s chamber where the rest of the tunnel children were gathering, waiting for the evening to begin. When the escorting adults had finally assembled they would begin the trek to go Above. But first the children demanded to hear the time-honoured Halloween stories Father still delighted in telling. This was also an important tradition not to be missed.

“Your son is far too knowing for a child of his age.” Vincent gazed after his eldest child. He looked back to Catherine. “If we hadn’t been interrupted...I wanted to kiss you that morning. I have never wanted anything more.” He crossed the chamber on slow-moving feet, his smile widening with intent, eyes smoky with desire. “I would have kissed you, right then, for all the world to see, and claimed you as mine. You looked like an angel sitting there. The universe could have stopped, spun away forever, and I would not have cared, as long as you were with me, beside me...always.”

“And yet, you didn’t...” Catherine made a small moue, watching her husband coming closer still. “I’ll admit it was a magic night. A kiss would

have been a very special ending. And a beginning. But I knew there were limits, lines you didn't feel you could cross..."

"It was magic...yes..." Vincent stopped in front of her, hands inert at his sides as he leaned closer. "A time when the walls between the worlds grew thin and spirits of the underworld walked the earth. A night when anything was possible and nothing was quite as it seemed..."

"That's what Brigit said she told you, when you first met..." Catherine breathing became uneven, her heart-rate gathering speed. It always did when her husband looked at her like that, as if nothing else mattered and they were truly alone, despite the chattering traffic of excited tunnel dwellers outside the chamber walls.

Vincent nodded. "She has been a good friend to us through the years." His teasing smile widened. "But it isn't Brigit I'm thinking about right now..." He leaned closer still, his head inclining slowly down until his mouth was only a breath from hers. "I didn't kiss you that night because I had no true idea if you would stay with me, or could even be in my life. Yes, there were limits I had set for myself, but I was also afraid to make you mine. To ask for more than you could give. It would not have been right to burden you with such impossible demands."

"And I knew you'd been listening to Father's cautionary teachings..."

Catherine accused softly, on a hitched breath. "But I forgive you. He had the best of intentions and we were truly something that had never been."

"Father worried for us, for what we were to each other. Where it was all leading. He was afraid, for both of us, and didn't wish for either of us to

be hurt. I tried to respect his point of view. But I found I could not. Ever since that night I found you, Catherine, I wanted so much more.”

“Your father and mine...they worry and cluck over us like a pair of old hens. So often they have found themselves in perfect accord. How could a love as impossible and as complicated as ours ever hope to survive. But it did.” Catherine went up on tiptoe, bringing her mouth level with her husband’s. “I think they can see that now.”

“Yes...” Vincent brushed his mouth slowly across hers, making her shiver with anticipation. He laughed softly. “I think after a wedding, and three grandchildren, perhaps they have finally come around to our way of thinking...”

“And not before time.” Catherine nodded jerkily. “Forget them. You were saying something about wanting to kiss me that night...”

“Yes...” Vincent’s hands lifted to encompass her waist, drawing her in against him from breast to knees. His long fingers curved around the small of her back, sliding down to cup her behind, lifting her up and against him. Catherine came into his embrace on a long sigh of contentment, her head going back as she gazed up at him, tall and powerful in the candlelight. So assured in the warm security of their love.

Vincent brushed his mouth across hers again, its unique texture and shape invoking delight. “Will you walk with me again, in the world Above, Catherine...Show me its wonders and beauties once more?”

“I think I could manage that...” Catherine lifted her arms high, linking her fingers into his mane at the back of his head, bringing his mouth down hard against hers.

Their kiss was long and intensely sweet, a slow burn of mutual desire that could not be slaked even by the years that had passed since they had first met. Her feet left the ground as her husband straightened to his full height, and she gave herself completely into his control, knowing he would never let her fall.

It would always be like this between them, Catherine knew that now. They only had to touch and the magic was new again, as it was on that first night; that first sunrise they had witnessed together. She knew with certainty there would be many, many more...

“Aw, come on, you guys...” an impatient seven-year-old male voice complained from the chamber entrance. “If we don’t get going, we’re gonna miss Grandpa’s stories and all the best goodies. You can do that yucky kissing stuff later when I’m in bed.”

“Truly out of the mouths of babes...” Vincent sighed, resting his forehead against Catherine’s. “Shall we go into the world Above once more, my love?”

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