

# Light of my Life

- by Angie

*".... happy realms of light ...."*

- John Milton

Catherine and Edie were eating lunch in the local greasy spoon they both loved, when she became aware of a familiar pop song playing in the background, fed from a local radio station. She stopped mid-bite and listened, trying not to shudder at the still off-key background instrumentation.

*"So many nights/ I'd sit by my window/ Waiting for someone/ To sing me his song..."\**

It brought back memories; 1977, Radcliffe ....

There were those rare nights when she, Nancy and Jenny used to sit in a local pub, discussing what they wanted to do with their lives. These were girl's nights, just the three of them having a couple of drinks around one of the small tables. They were not there to dance or pick up guys - but of course, they were always approached. Guys sat eight or 10 to a table with a pitcher of beer, or ranks of draft glasses, bespeaking how much they had inbibed. Their eyes seldom looked at their buddies, but scanned the smoky pub for likely "hits".

Sometimes three guys would approach them together and introduce themselves. How did they decide who would hit on who, she had always wondered at the time. They were politely rebuffed. But one night, a single guy, of a type Catherine recognized all too well, approached and introduced himself. She had looked at him, eyeballed his perfect sweater, perfect jeans and perfect desert boots - all worn to show off a perfect athletic build. His hair was perfectly and carefully manicured to mimic the longer style of the day

But his face, even more than his clothes, gave the game away. There was nothing there but the rich kid arrogance she had seen far too often, both in the classroom and at social events. 'Frat boy', she thought disgustedly.

His approach was predictable. He had smiled, showing his perfect teeth and asked her to dance, or if she preferred, join him for a drink. She could have just said no, but his expression annoyed her, as if he was god's gift to women and he expected her to immediately get up and leave with him. She inwardly wound herself up, quite aware that her two friends knew her well enough to have recognized the sign - that wrinkle in her forehead - which meant she was going to make a pronouncement.

"And what makes you think I'd want that?" she'd asked bluntly.

"Why else would you be here?" the guy had replied with a smirk.

"Because I enjoy having a couple of drinks with my best friends. Believe me when I say, if I was

looking for company, there would be no doubt. However, even then, you'd be the last person I'd say yes to."

The guy had looked a little taken aback, but still asked, "Why?"

Catherine had raked her eyes over him, head to toe and then looked him in the eyes.

"Because I know a fake when I see one."

Come to think of it, Catherine mused now, her string of boyfriends after university had been of that type, shallow and rich, although by the time she started working in her father's law firm she had accepted that this was her fate. Tom had merely been the most recent, the last before that fateful night, the night Vincent had found her in the Park and changed her life.

In that pub, so long ago, she had turned back to her friends. She surmised the hunk had moved off when their eyes returned to her. Both were smiling now. Nancy had shaken her head and looked at her ruefully.

"I would never have had the nerve to say that," she confessed. "He's gone back to his table of buddies and they're all looking at us now. What do you think they're saying?"

"Frankly, I don't give a damn," Catherine had replied. "I'm sick and tired of being propositioned by jerks."

"But Catherine, he was gorgeous," Jenny had remarked with a sigh.

Truth to tell, had she been in high school, Catherine knew she would have been flattered by the attention. Studying law had helped her recognize deceptions, at least some of the time. She had sighed deeply then.

"Yeah, I know. And that pissed me off more than anything else. He wanted arm candy, but one who wouldn't detract from him."

"But Cathy, you're gorgeous too!"

"Not tonight I'm not Nancy! My hair's a mess and these clothes are all have left, because everything else is in the laundry bag. Plus he was at least a foot taller. I refuse to be a toy."

There was no more talk after that, and they had returned to more mundane topics and then gone back to their dorm rooms.

Unable to relax, she had turned on her radio ... and that song had played. It had been popular for some while, but she had not really listened to it until then.

She had sat down heavily on her chair, and suddenly wondered what she was doing. What did she really want? Tears had rolled down her cheeks as the song continued.

She remembered hugging herself and rolling into bed fully-dressed, too dispirited even to change into her nightie. She'd not slept much, but the following day, she had got up early to be first in the laundry room. She had sat there in summer wear watching her clothes rotate in the washer and then the dryer, her mind a blank, her brain dull. Her classes that day had diverted her mind. She had resolutely moved that kernel of unhappiness deep into herself and locked a door on it.

Vincent had unlocked that door, and her heart, made her think - and inspired a real change in her life.

*"... Waiting for someone/ To sing me his song ..."*

Eddie looked at Catherine, who had gone quiet and still. She heard the song and realized that it meant something to her friend.

"What is it?" she asked.

*"... So many dreams, I've kept deep inside me/ Alone in the dark/ But now you've come along ..."*

Catherine shook herself from her reverie, and looked at Edie.

"When that song first came out, I was in university. It was the best and worst of times. I had wonderful girlfriends, and a few male friends, but there was no man I could conceive of spending my life with. They were so .... shallow. It hit me hard one night - and then I heard this song on the radio."

*"... And you/ Light up my life / You give me hope / To carry on  
You light up my days/ And fill my nights/ With song ..."*

"And now?" Edie prodded, sensing she might at last learn a little more about this so-secret man Catherine cared about. The one who wasn't Elliot Burch.

Catherine looked at her friend and smiled, recognizing the curiosity there.

"He lights up my life - in a way I never dreamed possible. I can't tell you any more than that, Edie - except that I've never been so happy."

*"... Rolling at sea/ Adrift on the waters/ Could it be finally/ I'm turning for home?  
Finally a chance/ To say, "Hey I love you,"/ Never again/ To be all alone ..."*

"That's it?" Edie asked in mock frustration. "You won't tell me how tall he is, what colour his eyes are, what he does for a living, where he lives? "

*"... It can't be wrong/ When it feels so right/ 'Cause you/ Light up my life."*

Catherine listened to the last chorus and sighed. Indeed her love for Vincent was right. She spoke softly.

"He's very tall and his eyes are an incredible shade of blue, almost turquoise. But I can't tell you anything else. I promised not to. But I can tell you this, Edie. Don't you ever give up hope of finding Mr Right. He's out there."

"If you say so, girlfriend," Edie said with a heavy sigh. "He must be something, this man of yours, if he can make you keep secrets like that - and put that look in your eyes listening to ... that."

Catherine chuckled. "The music still makes me cringe. Maybe that's why it's memorable."

Then her expression became serious.

"I do say so, Edie - and he is something else."

And she would tell him so, tonight, she decided.

END

\* *"You Light Up My Life"*  
Songwriter: Joe Brooks  
Singer: Debbie Boone