

Series 14 - Erotica

Sweet Release - p. 2

Silver Spoons - p. 7

Sharing - p. 10

The Scent of Love - p. 12

-by Angie

Sweet Release

*A little still she strove, and much repented
And whispering "I will ne'er consent" – consented
- Lord Byron*

Catherine found Vincent in his chamber, standing next to his bed. He had not met her at the threshold and looked slightly rumpled, as if he had been napping. He looked a little vague, as if he was still half in a dream. She hoped it had been of her, but she could feel nothing from their bond – as if he had shut it down.

She flung herself into his arms, desperately wanting that embrace which comforted her like nothing else could.

Vincent reflexively hugged her against his chest. She could feel his soft hair against her neck, knew that he had bowed his head over hers to inhale her scent, as he always did. It seemed to be an unconscious action and she loved it because it brought his mouth closer to her.

She liked the smell of him too as she put her head on his chest – a sort of spicy scent she attributed to a combination of Rebecca's candles and the Tunnel-made soap. His own male scent was a tantalizing hint of musk that rose from beneath his many layers to his exposed neck.

She could feel his heart beating quickly against her ear, his chest muscles were tense. As she pressed herself closer, she could feel his manhood bulging against her stomach. That was a sensation she found arousing. Usually he did not let her get close enough to feel it.

He was breathing raggedly, she realized, as his fingers massaged the small of her back. She gave herself up to pure sensation then, let her love and desire for him run along their bond. She felt him shudder and a sudden maelstrom of passion and desire returned from him. Then she felt his chagrin before he quickly shut down his side of the bond. But now she knew his need matched her own. She felt a fire kindled between her legs and her crotch muscles ached and throbbed with her need for him - for something much more than a hug.

She ran her hands over his chest, felt his heat, even through the layers of his clothes and rubbed her pelvis against him again, wanting him so badly she was weak with it.

Abruptly, he let her go, moved swiftly across the chamber, left her standing abandoned, with a chill that had nothing to do with the usual cold temperature in his chamber. He stood stiff and tense, his back to her. Then he leaned his head against a wardrobe, his arms straight at his sides, his hands clenched into fists.

Catherine sagged, a frustration raging in her, desperation piercing her heart and soul. She sat down hard on the edge of his bed, suddenly unable to accept his denial and rejection - again. She shouldn't have come unannounced, she realized belatedly.

However, her thwarted passion would not dissipate this time, perhaps because she could still sense Vincent's own need, however much he tried to shield it from her. This time, she had felt the full power of it!

It was suddenly all too much for her, the last straw.

Her right hand, on its own volition, crept below the waistband of her pants. With a few quick strokes along her wet and swollen clitoris, she brought herself to a climax. The blessed relief washed over her in a tingling wave and she sighed softly. She had forgotten how nice that sensation was, was amazed that she remembered how, after so long. She bowed her head and closed her eyes, spent.

Then, the thought that her emotion might have been transmitted along the bond suddenly shocked through her. After all, that was why she was so out of practice! She had not wanted Vincent to feel it – as he almost certainly would.

She straightened her spine, guilt and remorse vying with a sudden desperate need to escape. She looked up and saw that Vincent was facing her, his face hidden in shadow, his arms straight at his sides, his fingers spread apart stiffly, as if in shock. Her worst fears had been realized.

She dropped her eyes quickly, hot tears falling freely. She felt shamed and defeated for succumbing to weakness.

She had to leave. She rose unsteadily to her feet and staggered towards the door, blindly, careening into something hard. It took a moment for her to realize it was Vincent, that he had moved to intercept her. He clasped her to him again, one hand pressed to her back, the other behind her neck. She didn't dare touch him and kept her hands at her sides.

What must he think of her? She felt his hand move to the front of her neck and a soft-backed finger pressed under her chin, forcing her to look up at him. She was sure that he would never forgive her and braced herself

for the harsh words she deserved.

What she saw, when she finally steeled herself to open her eyes and look at his face, shocked her. His eyes were dark with desire. His breath rasped from his open mouth, exposing his canines. Then he opened his side of the bond and it transmitted his extraordinary, undiminished love for her - and a deep, undeniable need.

He moved his hand from her chin and suddenly took her hand into his, the one she had used to pleasure herself. He drew it to his face, snuffled her fingers, then put them in his mouth, tasting and nuzzling them gently, his eyes closed.

Then he looked down at her again, a plea in his eyes. Sudden understanding dawned in her, but amazement paralyzed her. She couldn't believe it!

Still holding her hand, Vincent moved away from her slightly, using his other hand to undo the laces which closed the flap at the top of his pants. Then he pressed her hand to his lips again, caressing her palm, holding it as if it were something infinitely precious.

The invitation was unmistakable now and Catherine found herself completely unable to deny it. Her curiosity about this part of his hidden anatomy was extreme. A thrill ran through her and she felt suddenly short of air. She breathed deeply.

Thankfully, he wore no underwear. She ran her free hand below his waistband, far down, past a soft mat of hair, far enough to cup his balls. They were large and covered with fine, velvety fur. They seemed to heat up as she explored them. She wished she could see them, but resigned herself to kneading them gently, weighing them in her hand. She heard him whuff explosively and felt his tense expectation through their bond. He held her hand tighter, his fingers locked into hers, lightly clenching and unclenching.

Catherine shifted to where his penis was struggling. She found it enclosed in a sheath, hot and swollen under her hand. Gently, she freed it from its uncomfortable curve and urged it upwards, lifting his clothes so she could lay it vertically against his belly, also covered in lovely soft fur. His penis extended and stretched almost to his navel.

He was delightfully long and thick and she sighed with erotic pleasure at the sight. Under her hot gaze, it throbbed.

She moved her hand so she could lift her sweater and press her naked stomach to his, trapping his heated organ. She rubbed up herself up and down it, felt it stiffen further, engorged.

Then she put her hand behind his penis and began to move her torso in slow circles, enjoying the heat which rose from him, felt him quiver down his length in reaction.

She moved her hand slowly up his column, massaging and stroking, until she reached the flared crown. Grasping this in a tight grip, she ran her finger around the head, massaged it, lightly stroked around the opening.

Vincent tensed against her, shuddered massively, then growled. She could tell he was close to climax. His penis was pulsing, ready to explode. She squeezed it tightly then, pulled him upward slightly. She bent at the knees so she could slide his long length between her breasts and then pressed herself hard against him.

She felt his sudden release through the bond. A white explosion seemed to flare behind her eyeballs and she gasped with his passion. Vincent growled deep in his chest and threw his head back. His juices shot out over her breasts and belly, an exquisite slick warmth that made her sigh in satisfaction and lean her head against his chest. Although he made no other sound, she could feel his roar of release through their bond, right to her bones. She held him tightly around his waist with her free hand until he calmed, spent. She felt his cheek against her hair and his soft breath on her neck.

Catherine wanted desperately to taste him, as he had her. She moved away from him slightly, clasped his free arm and captured his wrist. She brought his hand to her belly, using it to rub off some of his juices. Then she lifted his hand to her mouth, inhaled his unique musky scent, then softly licked the residue from his fingers and palm, tasting and savouring him for the first time. She turned his hand over so she could feel the long soft hair on the back, then kissed his hard, deadly nails.

Vincent's hand curled around hers softly, then he rumbled deep in his abdomen, clasped both her hands against his chest.

He pressed his face down on hers, capturing her lips in a kiss so sensual that it made her legs weak, forcing her to lean against him for support. He pushed her arms down and wrapped them behind her, lifting her slightly and pushing his mouth harder onto her own, massaging her mouth and capturing her upper lip in his cleft. She sighed with pleasure as she felt his love for her along the bond. She transmitted hers in full measure back to him.

She pressed her belly to him, feeling the slickness between them, his heat merging with hers, skin to skin. A vibration was making her skin tingle and she realized he was purring, a sensation so wonderful that she wished she had more exposed skin with which to feel it.

Vincent lifted his face off hers to look at her and she felt as if she were drowning in his eyes, now so full of sated passion that she felt a thrill down her spine.

She extracted her hands from his so that she could hug him, feel his solid body against hers through the layers.

She pulled away from him slightly and looked down between them. His penis, now retracted into its foreskin, was draped flaccid over his waistband.

Catherine sighed. He seemed completely unaware of how sexy he looked. He was the stuff of erotic dreams and Playgirl centrefolds. She just couldn't leave him that way, she thought, suddenly possessive. What if someone walked in?

She carefully eased his organ back into his pants, repositioned his clothing and re-tied the flap.

Then her brain started to function again.

What had just happened? She had wanted his body for so long, and now he had taken the initiative in a fashion she had not considered in her wildest imaginings. He had shed his modesty and restraint. Why?

Vincent, catching her puzzlement through their bond, moved away slightly, his hands falling to his sides. He obviously reached a decision, because he wrapped his arms around her again and hugged her gently to him. His voice, when he spoke at last, his breath against her hair, was the silky whisper she loved so well, but deep with restrained emotion.

"Catherine, how can you forgive me? I did not realize the torture I was inflicting on you - or maybe I didn't want to know. You shamed me with your guilt and remorse when you could no longer deny yourself relief, in my chamber, in front of my eyes - after I had left you in such need. Then you tried to run away, to leave me. Your self-disgust tore at me, made me loathe myself.

"I ... it was too much to bear, Catherine. It broke my heart. I couldn't let you leave like that.

"This situation was all my fault. I realized what a fool I had been to deny what I felt, what I wanted too ... but even more, what that denial was doing to you.

"I have been blindly selfish. I beg your forgiveness, Catherine. I ... I can't lose you. My life would be unbearable, hollow. I need you, like water or air.

"Whatever you want from me now is yours. I can no longer deny you anything - will not - and have no desire to."

Catherine looked up into Vincent's eyes, stood on her toes and drew his head down to hers again, kissing him lightly, lovingly.

"Vincent, I don't know what came over me. I was just so full of frustration, thwarted desire, terrible despair from a horrible day at the office, that I didn't think. There is nothing to forgive. You give me so much joy, so much love ... words are inadequate.

"Yes, I have wanted your body desperately. I want to make love to you for the rest of my life, but I know this is hard for you to accept, that you have fears, doubts.

"I did not mean to pressure you. Do not feel you have to accommodate my yearnings - unless they are also yours. Love-making needs complete surrender to mean anything. I do not want you as a lover unless you can promise me that."

Vincent clasped Catherine tighter to his chest, feeling as if a great knot inside him had suddenly dissolved. He was at peace with himself, possibly for the first time in his life.

"Catherine, you have proven to me, again and again, that love has no boundaries, no limits. My fears now seem those of a child afraid of the dark – pitiful in someone my age.

"You surprised me, Catherine, there on my bed. I have never seen anything so erotic - and I desired you then, beyond all reason, beyond all doubts. I wanted to ravish you on the spot - but I realized I had to let you know the depth of my remorse. I could think of only one way."

He took her left hand, the one which had pleased him, and kissed her palm.

"Catherine, I could not have done for myself what you just did for me tonight. I have been denying it all my adult life. I had no right to expect you would want to touch me in that intimate way, to pleasure me so, when I have repeatedly denied you what you want most, so many times. You humbled me, made me realize the depth of your love for me.

"Catherine, I want to see where our love will take us now. I want to experience it with you, in full. I promise that whenever you wish, I will be your lover, without reservation. My body is now yours - just as my heart and soul have been since we met."

Catherine saw the truth in Vincent's face, felt it in their bond, and marveled that such a small act of self-indulgence could have such a huge consequence for their relationship.

She felt immeasurably better now, but it was late and she had to work tomorrow.

"I must go now Vincent," she said regretfully, "but I'll look forward to our next encounter. I could never deny you anything. My body is yours - has been yours to claim whenever you were ready. I lost my heart to you long ago.

"I'm sure you have more delights to reveal," she ended, looking at him lasciviously.

"As do you my love," Vincent responded, with an expression which made her crotch pulse.

Catherine sighed and leaned against his broad chest, closing her eyes, feeling his love blaze through their bond. She knew he meant what he said and that he would not keep her waiting. These next few days were going to be hell. She was tempted to phone in sick, but knew she couldn't leave Joe in the lurch like that. However ...

"I can clear my calendar this weekend, beginning Friday night," she whispered.

"Then expect me Friday on your terrace, the moment it's dark," he whispered back.

She looked up at his face and saw the promise there.

"Good-night, Vincent. I think I would like to walk back on my own."

"As you wish, dearest Catherine. Good-night and sleep well."

She smiled and left him, walking as if on air, hardly noticing the long route to her threshold, almost sleepwalking up to her apartment. She was relaxed in a way she would not have thought possible. She heaved a sigh of contentment.

She felt as if her heart had been grinding, noisily banging about her ribs for years - and that she had only now realized it because it had found its rhythm, beating in harmony with the man she loved.

In his chamber, Vincent undressed and slid under the covers. He sensed Catherine doing the same and they fell asleep at the same time, physically apart, but joined with new promise.

END

Silver Spoons

Through the friendly silence of the soundless moon
-Virgil

Vincent awakened to find himself bathed in adamant. The moon was shining down through the skylight, making their bed seem ethereal, mystical against in the dark room.

As he always did, he looked beside him and saw the sight that never ceased to amaze him. Catherine's naked hip rose outside the covers, a smooth hillock in the moonlight, emphasizing the sensuous dip of her waist above it. Her hair, glistened like a silver waterfall.

He had never thought much about Fate. After all, Fate had made him what he was – and that didn't bear thinking about for long. On the other hand, that fate had also made him ignore many of the strictures forced upon him – and he had thus found Catherine one night and changed his life forever.

Fate was obviously a double-edged sword. It imposed limits in one area and granted freedoms in another. Catherine had once reminded him that there was no life without limits. Many people, he knew, suffered greater limits than himself. They were disabled, or poor, or unloved. He was none of those things. In fact, he had a full and rich life, a community and family who loved him as much as he loved them, and was healthy and fit. The one stricture – and it seemed very small now – that he could not walk the streets in daylight, or see first hand some of the wonders of the planet, seemed inconsequential in the light of all his blessings.

Yes, he was fortunate. He the felt a familiar urge within himself that, this once, he decided to indulge. Perhaps it was time. He rose smoothly from the bed, walked to the French doors and looked over the brownstone's darkened garden. Leaves flickered with silver reflections in the soft breeze and their garden path was looked fractured and mysterious, as if, tonight, it led to Rivendell, the home of the Elves.

Carefully, he felt along the bond and realized Catherine was awake. He was grateful he did not have to wake her. She would be surprised, but she would understand. There was seldom need for words between them about what they felt.

He raised his arms high, put his legs wide apart to brace himself and lifted his head. Then he filled his eyes and his soul with the moon and roared to the universe.

This was not the roar he used to frighten invaders or the one wrung from him when he was upset or in pain – but something he had never before dared to vocalize. It was a roar of triumph over Fate, gratitude for a full and rich life made possible only because it had Catherine in it. How often he had wanted to do this!

His roar was deep and rich, just above a rumble, from deep in his gut, his heart. It was the sound of a happy man who knew himself blessed – and it thanked the careless fates for allowing him this joy, whether he believed in them or not.

He let the roar diminish to a whisper and then stood silent and still. A feeling of delight was running through him, feeding the almost overwhelming happiness that washed over him as he watched the moon travel across the sky.

Vincent suddenly realized that part of the joy he was feeling was coming from the woman he loved. He turned a little and she was suddenly in his arms, stretching so she could trap his newly-aroused manhood between her legs. The warmth he felt there wrung a groan from him. He clutched her close and flung his head back to roar again, to leave no doubts about how he felt. He could feel her arousal like fire over his manhood and felt himself stiffen further in response.

Catherine gently pushed him, in a crablike shuffle, backwards over the thick straw carpet, until he was stopped by a long woolen tapestry on the wall. He felt its softness against his back and sighed. She had not let go of his penis, forcing him to keep his legs akimbo. Then she used her hands to gently slide him into her moist passage, with an ease which was almost dreamlike.

Vincent found himself suddenly boneless. He put his hands under her buttocks to keep her close against him, slid down the tapestry to the floor, then turned so that he could lay down with her atop him.

He held her as she moved sensuously against his body, making his skin tingle in her wake. Her desire intensified and hot flashes pulsed along their bond.

He lifted his legs and clasped them over her back, lifting his hips to get her closer yet. Catherine looked up at him and met his lips with a kiss that sent a shiver of delight to his groin. He felt her melt into him and they became one in the moonlight, their love inseparable. She slid her lips down his hirsute chin and onto his naked neck. The sensation was erotic and he lifted his head to give her better access and shivered with delight as her tongue found his Adam's apple.

He could feel his roar starting again and released it. Now it was very soft, sensuous, deeper in tone. Catherine nipped his throat lightly, sending a shiver down his muscles that lifted his groin and plunged him into her a little deeper. Then she was still, melting into him, her hands along his hips, her breasts with their hard nipples pressed against his chest.

Vincent relaxed and reveled in the sensation of himself inside her, swelling to fill her, felt her happiness as he did so.

Their crescendo was inevitable and Vincent waited, felt it build. They were, he mused abstractly, like Mozart's famous woodwind concerto, the one Salieri had once admired. Their lovemaking began slowly, softly, low and sensuous. Then gradually another phrase, another element was added, and another, until their bodies were a harmonic symphony. Nothing mattered then. The world retreated as they reveled in the love that flowed along their bond, made them one.

Vincent sighed and held Catherine close to him. His legs were now wrapped around hers, a tangle that joined them and warmed them.

Catherine moved her mouth from his neck to his shoulder and lay her cheek against it. He gazed across her body and saw the moonlight limning her back, creeping along the curve of her hip. He watched as it slid down her legs and knew it must be caressing that warm, dark place where he and she joined, from the back. That, he thought, was the ultimate benevolence of the Fates, allowing him this intimate delight.

Suddenly his arousal flared and he felt her tighten around him in response. They gasped as their orgasm captured them then sighed as they were carried together on waves of passion. They floated down softly, found themselves deposited in the silver glow, replete.

He lifted his legs and pushed Catherine closer to him, so he could nuzzle her face. She opened her eyes to gaze at him, and then closed them, a smile quirking her lips as he explored her cheeks and nose. When he reached her mouth, he captured her lips and felt her joy at the contact. For long moments, the silence in the room was a counterpoint to their kiss. Then they broke to breathe and Catherine put her hands on both sides of his face and they looked at each other, his azure eyes melting into her green ones.

"I felt something different. What were you thinking?" she asked him softly.

He wrapped his arms around her and hugged her. "That we were like a Mozart concerto, subtly different every time, but always in harmony."

"Yes," she whispered. "We are the completion of each other. There is only us."

"Yes. And the moon being soundless. I voiced our love."

Catherine lay still, feeling his purr run along her skin, like silk rippling in a breeze. It seemed smoother than ever before and she sensed something had changed in him.

"Your roar, Vincent. I've never heard anything like it from you before. It seemed to sing in my blood."

There was only one answer possible to the unspoken question.

"That roar was possible because of you, Catherine. I had to let the universe know this, thank it, if you like. You felt it because that exhilaration is in you as well."

"Will you do it again, Vincent, do you think?"

He looked down at her and kissed the top of her head. He spoke so softly she barely heard him.

"No. The universe heard my cry of aloneness, long ago, and led me to you. Now, a whisper of a moment later, I have given my thanks."

Catherine ran her hands up the soft fur of his ribs and around his neck. Silently, she thanked the universe for the man who had given her so much, who could still surprise her.

The moonlight slid over the end of the bed and the room darkened as it touched the floor and found nothing to reflect its gleam.

The two lovers, spooned on the blankets, filled the moonlit silence with their soft breathing.

END

Sharing

Let's contend no more, Love,
Strive nor weep:
All be as before, Love
- Only sleep!

-Robert Browning

Vincent kneaded Catherine's neck with his thumbs, rubbing in circles where he could feel the tension. Gradually, he felt her muscles relax and knew through their bond that she was mellowing.

They were sitting on their bed, naked, Catherine cross-legged, Vincent kneeling behind her.

Despite his hard, sharp nails, Vincent had discovered he could give Catherine a reasonable massage without endangering her. His fingers pads were large and he could tilt his fingers back to give him maximum coverage.

He had always regarded his hands as a bane. While people got used to his face, eventually, nothing seemed to lessen the shock of his large, long-fingered, hairy hands and pointed nails. From his earliest memory, he had hidden them inside his cloak and kept his sweater sleeves pulled down as far as he could – even among his tunnel family. It had therefore come as something of a shock when he first discovered that his hands did not distress babies any more than his face did, then that he could sooth a child with them, even as he told them stories. It was only adults, it seemed, who found his appearance shocking.

Except Catherine. She had held them, stroked them, kissed them even – an entirely new experience for him. She quite obviously found them sexually attractive as well – which he found hard to credit, even while he was feeling her reaction through their bond. Now he was massaging her and knew that she loved the feel of his hands on her. That feeling warmed him as nothing else could.

He felt her sag just a little more as she relaxed further and he make one more circle with his thumbs before sliding his hands down her arms and pulling her against his chest. He wrapped his arms around her and kissed the top of her head.

Catherine sighed. "Why did you stop?"

"Because you are tired, Catherine. You have had a busy day, and you need your sleep."

"And?"

"And if I had continued, you would have begun feeling something else."

"Something else," she repeated.

"Yes."

He stretched out his legs and lay down on his side, bringing Catherine with him. He tweaked the bedding over them both and closed his eyes. She snuggled up against him and sighed again. He calmed himself and let that calm flow along their bond. He soon felt her begin the slide into sleep. Then she fought that slide and shifted into awareness again, she spoke softly.

"I know what you're doing, Vincent. This time, I won't argue. I AM tired. But here's something for YOU to think on."

She tilted her hips just a little closer, separated her legs just a little and reached between them to capture his organ and trap it. She felt him shudder and knew she had made her point. She smiled and let herself fall asleep.

Vincent loved to feel himself in that warm place between her legs, but reflected that this time, she had left him in a conundrum. He dare not move lest he awaken her, but staying where he was would distract him from sleeping.

Or would it? He could hear Catherine's soft breathing and her warmth against him made him feel as if they were one. He could feel her contentment along their bond.

Did she realize that her calm would affect him the same way his did her, he wondered? Of course she did, he admonished himself, but she wanted to remind him that their bond wasn't to be used to influence, only to share.

He sighed and let himself share her peace. Soon he felt himself drift towards sleep.

END

The Scent of Love

And if I laugh at any mortal thing
'Tis that I may not weep

- *Lord Byron*

It was early evening and Catherine sat in her living room playing with a kitten, but not by choice. Jenny had asked her to look after the little ball of fluff for a couple of days, until she was back in town. It was typical of Jenny that she bought a pet and then forgot that she would not be around to care for it.

Catherine had bought a soft toy mouse that the kitten seemed to find irresistible. Its high pitched growls and romps around the thing, tail in the air, made her laugh until her stomach muscles ached. Its tiny, very sharp claws were scrabbling at the carpet and once sank into her knee as she followed it around, making her yelp.

"Little beast," she admonished, pushing it lightly so that it fell over, all four legs waving wildly in the air. It rolled onto its feet, found the toy and immediately began mewling around it again, batting it gently.

Catherine was only Above for short periods now – and this time only to wrap up some personal business. Jenny had brought the kitten with her on her visit the previous night – but she would hereafter have to find another sitter. Catherine had made that very clear – without explaining why. She had not yet revealed her "other" life Below to her best friend. That would happen when she felt the time was right. And that was not yet.

This apartment would soon be no longer hers. She hated to give it up, but she and Vincent were having the brownstone renovated, and this place would no longer be needed. No more thumps as Vincent landed from the fire escape, no more discreet taps on the window and quiet readings on the terrace. No more making love in her bed.

She sighed. She ached for Vincent, wanted his arms around her. She could feel his sympathy through the bond and his willingness to come to her tonight. That made her want him desperately, and she let him know it. She felt his joy and reciprocal passion - and knew he was on his way to her.

Catherine quickly put the kitten into the kitchen with her litter box, cat bed and food, and pulled the bi-folds closed. She wanted no distractions. Walking back into the living room, she spotted the cat toy and slipped it into her shirt pocket. There, all back to normal, she thought.

She felt Vincent's arrival and went to open the french doors before he could tap. She stood back and he entered, dominating her doorway in his cloak, his shoulders nearly spanning the opening. He looked wonderful. Had it really only been two days? And two nights, she reminded herself.

Vincent removed the cloak and took off his boots. Then he moved into Catherine's waiting arms, dropping his head down to her neck to scent her, as he always did. She smelled different Above – more refined, he supposed. She was using different soaps of course, her commercial shampoo – but still wore no perfume. And there was something else he could not name.

He hugged her close, already feeling an arousal that he knew she was matching with her own. He lifted her up by her buttocks and gave her a deep kiss that they held until both were breathless. They gasped and he put her back on the floor. They moved into the living room and Catherine sat on the couch nearest the fireplace.

Vincent kneeled in front of her and began to nuzzle her breasts through her shirt, then began to unbutton it.

Suddenly, his arousal became uncontrollable. He scented something that seemed to hit him between the eyes, disengage his brain and engorge his manhood, simultaneously. With a growl, he almost leaped upon Catherine, pushing her onto her back on the couch, one hand undoing the string closure on his pants, the other yanking down her slacks and underwear without ceremony. Panting, he lay atop her, positioned his manhood and growled in satisfaction as he entered her.

Catherine was pleasantly surprised at Vincent's passion, and gave herself up to him willingly. It was not what she had expected. He usually preferred long foreplay sessions where he could massage her and drive her wild with

strokes of his rough tongue, in as many places as he could reach. She felt his intense arousal and total lack of control with amazement and let him carry her up into a stellar climax that was nova-like and gloriously satisfying. She sighed and put her arms around him as she came back down to earth.

But Vincent wasn't finished. He was still intensely aroused and lifted himself off Catherine so he could flip her over and clasp her breasts from behind as he entered her. She moaned in his arms and he felt her passion respond to his. He pumped himself, grunting and growling, claspng her to him tightly, lifting her almost into his lap. Release, when it came at last, made him roar in triumph.

He came to himself and rolled off Catherine, moving onto the floor, twitching his pants up again, as he did so. He was ashamed to have taken her in such a manner – and twice! What had come over him? They had not been apart so very long. He looked at Catherine, who had sensed his shame and was glaring at him with that look he knew well – even if he had not felt her anger through their bond. She deliberately removed her slacks and underwear completely, threw them over her shoulder, and sat on the couch covered only by her shirt, still partially undone, as he had left it.

“Vincent, don't ever feel ashamed for wanting me! I won't have it! You are the most wonderful lover, no matter how you wish to demonstrate it. Believe me!”

But Vincent felt he needed to understand what had come over him.

“Catherine, I know you love me and would never deny me. But this time, something was different. I lost myself completely – and I couldn't wait. I've never felt anything like it, not even when we first made love. It was as if my brain and my groin were disconnected and I was acting on instinct.”

He thought back to when he had nuzzled her from the floor. There had been a scent, something unusual. He had noticed it earlier too, when he first hugged her near the french doors.

“I smelled something. I don't know what it was. It drove me wild.”

Catherine suddenly felt her face flush. Could it possibly be what she suspected? Was Vincent's embarrassment her fault? She reached into her shirt pocket and held up the cat toy by its long felt tail.

“Vincent, I think I am to blame. I bought this for a kitten Jenny left with me for a couple of days. It loves it. I locked the beast in the kitchen before you arrived, but put this in my pocket without thinking. We had been playing with it in the living room. It's filled with catnip, I never occured to me that it might affect you. I'm sorry, my love. How can you forgive me?”

She looked at him, not sure what to expect as a reaction. He was so beautifully feline, so wonderfully male – but hated to be reminded of the former. She never tired of looking at him – in any state of dress or undress.

Vincent looked at the little toy dangling from Catherine's hand, caught the passionate love in her eyes, as well as her remorse, and leaned back against the other couch. He closed his eyes in relief. Something grew in his abdomen. He couldn't keep it down. He broke out into roars of laughter, hugged himself to keep from exploding. Catherine joined him after some hesitation – and after she flung the toy into the fireplace. He finally managed to get himself under control and regarded her, now completely at ease again.

“Well, Catherine, you now know another of my secrets. As you have probably noticed, we've never allowed pets below, except Mouse's raccoon. But Devin brought a cat toy Below once, as a joke, and hid it on my side of our bed. I was about 12 years old. I couldn't sleep, was twitching with energy. I remember racing around the chamber like a mad thing, panting. Eventually, I ran down to the Mirror Pool and jumped in. It was a great relief!

“Devin followed me and when I finally got out of the water, he confessed to what he had done. I went back to our chamber with him, but refused to get into the bed until he had removed all the sheets and thrown the toy down

the Abyss. We never told Father. He would probably have forced Devin to spend the next year reading Frazer's *Golden Bough* in all 12 volumes - and Devin would have left us even sooner than he did."

Catherine gazed at Vincent, who was smiling widely, his canines showing. He was a never-ending source of amazement to her. That he existed at all, was incredible. That he was so beautiful and intelligent, was a source of great joy to her. That he loved her as she loved him – and forgave her gaffes like this one – well, there were no adequate words.

She moved off her couch and sat on his lap, wrapped her arms around his neck, then kissed him deeply, with all the love she had. She moved away to look him in the eyes. She found some suitable words.

"I think you should remove your pants again – properly this time – and the rest of your clothes."

Vincent did.

END