

What's the Matter?

by Angie

"I'm not to blame."

- Don McLean



Catherine had just flopped on her couch, home on time for a change, when the doorbell rang. She grimaced. Not again!

But it was. She she thanked the delivery boy, shut the door, then put the enormous bouquet of roses on the floor beside her hall closet - with the others. She grabbed the card with a frown, glanced at it and tossed it on the table where several others were already scattered. Her mood was dark.

Had he bought a florist's shop? How did he know when she was getting home. She frowned. Catherine sighed and turned on the stereo. At the "One, Two, Three" she stiffened and sat down. Before the second line she was grinning, at the fourth chuckling, and by the chorus she was laughing. By the end, tears were running down her face and she was gasping for breath.

Boy, she sure could pick them – first Tom Gunther, now Elliott Burch!

She heard a tap on her balcony door and jumped up to open it - and ran right into Vincent's arms.

"Thank goodness! she exclaimed.

Vincent, puzzled, looked down at her face. She had seemed incredibly happy. He'd had to investigate.

"Perfect timing," she explained. "I needed someone sane, solid and ..." No she'd better not say that ... yet.

"I was listening to a song, Don McLean's '*Everybody Loves Me, Baby*' *.

"*What's the matter with you?*"" Vincent finished.

Catherine stared at him. "You know that one?"

Vincent smiled. "Catherine, I probably know the words to more pop and rock songs than I can identify. I have walked the streets of New York, a night, when people play their radios and ... whatever they play. Also, I have a jukebox."

Of course he had! She'd seen it in his chamber, an anomaly she had been too distracted to ask him about at the time. Apparently it worked too.

"Well, I got more flowers from Elliot and that song came on, and it made me laugh so hard I thought I was going to ..." She stopped. That wasn't a polite topic to a man like Vincent.

Vincent, however, nodded.

"Are you all right now?" he asked with a grin. He obviously knew exactly what she had not said.

Know-it-all, she thought, but smiled up at him. It was SO good to have him here! She snuggled closer and he obligingly put his arms around her more tightly.

How ironic, she thought. Roses, dinners, theatre ... none of it mattered when she was in Vincent's arms. To hell with Elliot and all his ilk, she thought viciously.

She remembered the last line of the song, '*Tell me what did I do to offend you?*'

She would never need to tell Vincent anything like that – and he certainly would never question her that way. He knew her almost as well as she knew herself. There were no secrets between them.

How refreshing, she thought.

"You are truly like no one else," Catherine told him softly.

"That's so," he agreed, with just a slight catch in his voice. "There's a line in that song, that speaks to me."

"Why, you can't blame me, I'm Heaven's child, I'm the second son of Mary mild."

Catherine looked up at him, serious now.

"You are indeed," she agreed.

"And Mary, whom you haven't met, was my adopted mother, after losing her child and joining us."

Catherine pulled away a little to look at his face more easily.

"Vincent, you are a special man. You can't be blamed for what you are. That's the difference. People like Elliot chose to be what they are."

Vincent nodded, not necessarily agreeing with it all, but not willing to pursue that topic.

"Men like Elliot do not expect to be thwarted, Catherine. They think money can buy anything they want."

He looked through the door at the array of bouquets at the other end of the living room.

"I cannot buy you roses like that, but you have my heart in your keeping, Catherine. And that is more to me than all the roses in the world."

Catherine smiled at him. "You have mine too, Vincent."

"I know."

He gathered her to him and they stood, happily oblivious to the world of Elliot for some time.

When they parted, at last, it was with an unspoken promise to meet again, soon.

END

Note:

*Don McLean, 'Everybody Loves Me' (1971)

[SPOKEN:] One, two, three, four!

*Fortune has me well in hand, armies wait at my command
My gold lies in a foreign land buried deep beneath the sand
The angels guide my ev'ry tread, my enemies are sick or dead
But all the victories I've led haven't brought you to my bed*

[CHORUS:]

*You see, everybody loves me, baby, what's the matter with you?
Won't ya tell me what did I do to offend you?*

*Now the purest race I've bred for thee to live in my democracy
And the highest human pedigree awaits the first-born boy baby
And my face on ev'ry coin engraved, the anarchists are all enslaved
My own flag is forever waved by the grateful people I have saved*

[CHORUS:]

*You see, everybody loves me, baby, what's the matter with you?
Won't ya tell me what did I do to offend you?*

*Now, no land is beyond my claim when the land is seized in the people's name
By evil men who rob and maim, if war is hell, I'm not to blame!
Why, you can't blame me, I'm Heaven's child, I'm the second son of Mary mild
And I'm twice removed from Oscar Wilde, but he didn't mind, why, he just smiled*

*Yes, and the ocean parts when I walk through, and the clouds dissolve and the sky turns
blue*

*I'm held in very great value by everyone I meet but you
'cause I've used my talents as I could, I've done some bad, I've done some good
I did a whole lot better than they thought I would so, c'mon and treat me like you should!*

*Because everybody loves me, baby, what's the matter with you?
Tell me what did I do to offend you? (whoo, yeah!)*

*Everybody loves me, baby, what's the matter with you?
Tell me what did I do to offend you?*

*Yeah, everybody loves me, baby, what's the matter with you?
Tell me what did I do to offend you?*