

# Red and White Rose

by Angie

*In this kingdom by the sea,  
But we loved with a love that was more than love—  
- Edgar Allan Poe*

Vincent had been as thrilled as Catherine when her rose bush bloomed with a white and red rose – and at such an opportune time, when they both needed something to ease the horror of the previous few days and give them hope.

Later, when Vincent returned to the tunnels, he couldn't stop thinking about the roses. There was a poem .... if he could find it. He wanted very much to read it to Catherine.

He rummaged through the poetry sections of Father's library, searching, and finally laid hands on the book he remembered from long ago. He opened it and soon found the poem he wanted. Catherine must hear this – however it was too late, so he took it back to his chamber and put it next to his journal, so he would remember it.

The next night he returned to Catherine's balcony, when he knew she was at home, and rapped lightly. She came to the door immediately, and rushed into his arms, as if they had been apart for weeks.

"Catherine," Vincent rasped, trying with some difficulty to get the words out, when he could have stood there for hours, just holding her.

"Catherine I found a poem I would like to read to you."

Catherine pulled back a bit and looked up at him, smiling. "Then I want to hear it, Vincent."

"May we sit where we can see the rose bush," he asked?

"Of course. Just let me get some cushions for the floor. It's chilly."

Vincent waited and Catherine soon appeared with two very large cushions and a small blanket. She moved to the end of the balcony where the rose was, and placed the cushions, then sat down. Vincent followed her and sat down too, pulling the book from his pocket.

"I remembered this from a long time ago, Catherine. It seems more than appropriate now. It's by Thomas Carew, a 17<sup>th</sup> Century romantic poet."

He began to read softly;

*"Read in these roses the sad story  
Of my hard fate and your own glory.  
In the white you may discover  
The paleness of a fainting lover;  
In the red the flames still feeding  
On my heart, with fresh wounds bleeding.  
The white will tell you how I languish,  
And the red express my anguish;*

*The white my innocence displaying,  
The red my martyrdom betraying.  
The frowns that on your brow resided,  
Have those roses thus divided.  
Oh! let your smiles but clear the weather,  
And then they both shall grow together."*

Catherine looked at him and nodded. "We have already grown together, Vincent," she remarked at last, quietly. "We have seen much, done much, yet like my roses, we can surprise with joy, with love."

"Yes," Vincent said. "I think this poem is something of an apology too, from a man who is divided between the beauties of red and white, but never in doubt of his love."

"It could as easily be that of a woman," Catherine pointed out. "Why do men in ages past always think that they are the only ones who understand - or feel - love. They assume the object of their affection is less sincere, oblivious, perhaps even frivolous, regarding their love. Very unfair!"

Vincent chuckled. "Yes. So we are left to wonder what the women would say."

"This woman feels every line of that poem, Vincent. At least he offers hope."

"Hope is all we have, Catherine, ever."

"Oh, I think we can do better than that, Vincent. Don't move!"

Obediently, he did not and Catherine leaned over and planted a kiss on his cheek.

Vincent was a little stunned, but found his voice fairly quickly.

"I see what you mean, Catherine." He bent over and returned the kiss.

"We need more excuses for these, Vincent."

"Yes. I think we can find suitable inspiration," he replied.

Catherine smiled at him, and then they both regarded her rose bush thoughtfully.