

A Matter of Trust

By Barbara Anderson

**This is a sequel to the round Robin story "Sinkhole," that is posted at:*

http://www.classicalliance.net/tunneltalesab/bbtv_sinkhole.html

As it turned out, it was nearly a week before Vincent and Catherine found the time to be together again. In that time, they had both replayed the events of that evening over and over again in their minds, and in their dreams, until, in some ways, that night seemed as if it must have been a beautiful dream.

But they both knew, that it had been very real.

Reclining in each other's arms in the music chamber, they listened to Vivaldi's concerto for violins. It felt appropriate not to speak as they became lost in the music, in their own thoughts, and in the sweetness of each other.

Vincent was still pensive as they walked back to her threshold.

"You've been very quiet tonight, Vincent. What are you thinking?" she gently urged.

He looked at her lovingly. "Catherine, the last time we saw each other ..."

"Yes?"

"You said, 'we can choose what to speak of—or not to speak of.'"

She nodded. "I did."

"May I ask you something?"

"You can ask me anything," she assured him. "You can *tell* me anything,"

He tilted his head to one side as if thinking of just how to begin. "Why did you do seek me out that night? What did you intend to do?"

Does he think I meant to seduce him? she wondered. She quickly dismissed the thought. *No, he would know that I wasn't.*

"I was worried, when I heard about the sinkhole and realized where it was." she quickly explained. "I only wanted to make sure you were all right... and then ..."

"And then...?" he pressed.

"And then ... I saw how filthy and how exhausted you were. I wanted to *do* something for you." She smiled wistfully at the memory of him, covered in mud. "You do so much for others. I just wanted to do something ... to show you, how *much* I appreciate you. You give *so*

much of yourself, Vincent, and ask so little in return. Sometimes you *need* to receive something back.

“When I saw you there in the bathing pool, and realized you were too exhausted to even wash your own hair. I just meant to do that one thing for you. And then I was watching you, how beautiful you looked, dozing there, in the water.”

She paused, worried that he might think she had wanted more to happen. “*I promise you*, the rest of it ... I didn’t intend to do anyth--”

He put up his hand to gently stop her. “Catherine ... *I know that.*”

He was silent for a moment, but she could see that he was trying to say more, so she waited.

“Would it embarrass you if I admitted that I have relived that night over and over many times during the past week?”

She blushed and laughed. Then shaking her head, replied, “No, it wouldn’t. Would it embarrass you, if I admitted the same thing?”

He laughed, clearly relieved, and pulled her into the circle of his embrace. “I must also admit that I have had trouble concentrating on my sentry duties since then. I am amazed that you felt comfortable enough with me to ... do what you did. Especially since you thought that I was...” He was hesitant to say it.

“Naked?” she offered.

He laughed again and ducked his head to avoid her gaze. “Yes”

His smile faded a little and he locked eyes with her again. “I was so tired, Catherine ... I was completely powerless to resist you ... I was terrified, and ... mesmerized.” He paused for a moment at the image of her in his mind.

“I wanted to run away. I wanted to stop looking at you, *but I couldn’t*. If you had pressed the issue ... I wouldn’t have been able to resist you. You knew that, *didn’t you?* ... And yet you didn’t ... pursue it.”

Catherine reached up and put her finger over his lips. “Vincent, if the situation had been reversed... If you had come to my apartment and found me like that ... Would you have taken advantage of my weakness?”

He looked shocked. “*No* ... Catherine ... I hope you know ... that I would *never* do that.”

“*Yes*, Vincent, *I do know that.*” She thought for a moment before saying more.

“Vincent ...one day ...we *will* move through the fears that you once spoke of. One day we will *both* be ready to take that last step... *together*. But not like that ... not when one of us is weak and vulnerable.”

He looked at her with doubt.

“I know you don’t fully believe that.” She smiled at him reassuringly. “*But I do.* Not only do I believe it, Vincent ... *I know it.*”

He could feel her conviction as she said it. He looked at her curiously. “Then it was ... what? An exercise in ... trust?”

She thought for a moment and then nodded. “It wasn’t intended to be. I only wanted to do



something ... to show you ... how much I love you...how much I *value* you... but I suppose ... that is what it turned into.”

“But I already trust you, Catherine...*with my life*... and I have no doubt that you trust me with yours.”

“Yes, that’s true, but perhaps now... you can spare a little of that trust for...”

“*For who?*” He asked in earnest.

“*For yourself,* Vincent.” she whispered. “*For yourself.*”

He looked confused for a moment and then his eyes widened, as if a light had turned on. “Oh, Catherine,” he breathed, and pulled her close to him again.

Burying his face in the sweet softness of her hair, he whispered, “Thank you.”

“One either moves toward love, or away from it. There is no other direction.”¹

i Vincent, Beauty and the Beast Season 2