

THE TOWER

by Katrina Relf

"I'm going to marry him. I have to – it's the only way."

Those words, Catherine, tore at my heart, overwhelming me. I was at once filled with the inconceivable knowledge that you would sacrifice everything, everything for me, for my world; but at the same time came the devastating realization that I would never see you again. You would have given yourself, your life, and married a man you didn't love, in order to save the lives of those you do love.

An overpowering jealousy consumed me. To know that he would touch you, love you, was more than I could bear, and I was filled with an all-encompassing sense of loss. It was the end of our dream and my love, my life were collapsing around me, just as surely as the tunnel walls. My pain erupted in a scream of pain and despair – a scream lost to the drilling above us, just as our world would soon be lost to Elliott's tower.

The realisation of all you were giving, of all you were sacrificing, filled me with wonder – and despair. There was no way I could prevent this tragedy – nothing I could do or say – and yet I couldn't let you sacrifice your life for us. What could I do? You had gone – gone to him. I could sense your trepidation, your sadness, as you spoke those words, and yet I could also feel your determination to help those you loved, and who loved you.

Suddenly there was a feeling of relief – even a kind of joy, tinged with sadness. You had failed to change his mind, such was his determination – greater even than his love for you. You felt that you had failed, but, Catherine, how could such love, such unselfishness ever be a failure? You were willing to sacrifice everything for us, and your courage inspired Father, inspired us all, to find another solution, another way to save our world.

Days passed, and the solution was no nearer, until suddenly, in that unforgettable moment when I felt your joy, your elation, coming through our bond. Its depth, its strength was so real that I felt surely it would cause my own heart to burst. Elliott's tower was no more – our world was safe.

That night, on your balcony, as I held you close, knowing how nearly I had lost you, and never wanting you to leave my arms again – I felt a sudden sadness for Elliott. He had lost you, Catherine; he had lost his tower. His dream was over. And he was alone.