by Linda Mooney

"It's called a condom," Catherine told him.

Vincent stared at the little brown cellophane square he held between his thumb and forefinger. Seeing he wasn't quite understanding, she smiled and plucked it from his grasp.

"Hasn't anyone told you about condoms?" she softly asked as a smile crept over her lips.

"Devin mentioned them. Once," he admitted. "It was a long time ago."

"Then I'm going to assume he didn't show you one or explain what they're used for."

Tearing the package open, she removed the latex ring and held it up. "You place this over your... over your erection. Then, when you come, it prevents your sperm from fertilizing my egg, and I won't get pregnant."

He sighed. "And you want me to wear this every time we make love?"

She tapped it. "This is a one use only item. But, yes, for now you'll need to wear one every time." Reaching behind her where they lay on his bed, she brought forward the box she'd purchased to show him. "I bought a box of them. There's thirty-six in here. I got the extra-large."

He stared at the little circle. "Are you certain it will fit?"

She unrolled the condom to examine it. "It should."

Vincent stared at the small, flimsy, thin object, then down at himself. "How do I wear it?"

Catherine reached for him. "There's only one way to find out."

"No, no. Let me. I need to learn to do it myself."

He took it from her and tried to pull it on like a sock, but the object shredded from his claws. Seeing his look of exasperation, she opened a second packet, placed the ring on the crown, and tried to roll it down.

"I've never done this by myself before," she admitted as she struggled.

"Then we're both novices," Vincent quipped, wincing. "And it's too tight. I feel like I'm being strangled. Do they make a double extra-large?"

"I don't know. I'll go back to the store tomorrow to see if they do."

"Until then, what do we do? Without?" he softly asked her, a funny grin on his face.

"Aww, screw it." Grabbing the box, she tossed it away and reached for him.

And, no, she discovered they don't come in extra extra large.