

Leaving

(on Lynn's retirement from CABB)

by Ginny

Vincent could feel a sense of sadness in Catherine as she approached his chamber. He opened his arms to her as she entered, offering the comfort he knew she wanted.

"She's leaving today, isn't she?" Catherine stepped into his waiting arms and rested her head on his chest, feeling him drop his head to rest on hers.

"Yes," he answered, "but she won't be far away."

"I'll miss seeing her here so often, though. She's been a part of the community for so long."

"This will be a good move for her. She's looking forward to it."

"I know. Last time I spoke with her, she said it was bittersweet – a good move with a lonely place in her heart for all of you."

"She has more opportunity Above, Catherine. Her art and her writing have begun to provide her an income, and it has become more difficult for her to manage that from here."

"I know. And I'm happy for her."

"The helper whose address she's been using has found her an apartment in the same building, so she won't be alone. She'll have a good neighbor, and tunnel access. It couldn't be a better place for her. She has been very generous in sharing the fruits of her creativity with us. It's time for her to have the freedom to use it to her own benefit."

Catherine moved back to look up at Vincent with a smile and less noticeable sadness. "And no one deserves it more."

"Hello...Vincent?"

"Come in," Vincent answered as he and Catherine moved slightly apart from the embrace they were sharing.

A tall woman with gray hair entered the chamber with a smile and a suitcase. "This is all that's left to move," she stated, setting the suitcase on the floor. "I heard on the pipes that Catherine was here, and I thought I'd see if the two of you would walk me to my new threshold."

"We'd be honored," Catherine answered, taking her arm.

"I'll take this for you," Vincent responded, picking up the suitcase.

"It looks like I'm off to my new life, the woman said, patting Catherine's hand as she led them toward the chamber entrance.

The three of them carried on an easy conversation about new homes and new endeavors as they walked, pausing to say good-bye at the new threshold.

"I'll miss seeing you Below - that beautiful smile and your wonderful sense of humor," Catherine told her.

"Catherine, she isn't really leaving us, only moving Above. We'll still see her often."

"That's right," the woman smiled. "You won't be rid of me that easily. And you can always come and visit," she added as Vincent gave her a hug.

"We'll do that," Catherine promised, giving her a big hug, too. "Good-bye for now, Lynn. Thank you for everything you've done for the tunnels. Enjoy your new opportunities."

END