

BAtB Fanfiction – Soul Mate (Complete)

This story probably takes place between 'Anniversary' and 'Date Night', and deals with Vincent's struggle to accept his Beast as a part of his intimate relationship with Catherine. It's a story I've had in the back of my mind since before writing any of my others, it's also been requested by some of my readers - Judache.

Vincent let the cool night air blow over him as he leaned back against the iron railing. If only the breeze could blow right through him, blow away everything that was keeping him from having a normal relationship with Catherine. As he thought about what had happened yet again and felt his frustration rising, he dug his fingers into his thighs hard enough to hurt, trying desperately to quell the frustration before it turned into anger. Anger that would only bring back to the surface the part of himself he was trying so hard to subdue, the part which was causing the problem in the first place. Although the danger of transforming seemed to have passed, he was still hard and aching for her - but Vincent didn't dare risk going back inside and acting on his desire. Just a little longer, he thought to himself...although it was taking longer each time.

It had happened almost a dozen times now, and was becoming increasingly frequent. Five times in the last week, although he'd spared Catherine from most of them. Tonight, as he had on other occasions, he'd woken up as it started, and stayed in control long enough to leave her side before the urge took over, before she awoke and realised what was happening. The other times, well, it had come over him so quickly that he was on her, in her, before he barely knew it himself, sometimes before he was even completely awake. Then, fully aware but unable to stop himself, he'd engage in a curious battle of wills and emotions; begging his alter ego to give way...but not really wanting him to. Hoping he would finish quickly...but craving the intensity for as long as possible. Trying to ignore how much he could feel that Catherine was enjoying it, encouraging it...because that only fed his own arousal, his own enjoyment. And he didn't want to enjoy it. He didn't want her to enjoy it. Vincent just wanted it to go away.

When he was done, Catherine would hold him as he changed back, stroking his head, telling him how much she loved him, until he was himself again and felt able to meet her gaze. He would tell her how sorry he was, she would see the shame in his eyes and tell him it was alright, that she liked it; he would pretend to agree with her and they would go back to sleep, well, at least she would. Vincent rarely slept after it happened, just lay there lost in his thoughts, hating himself just a little bit more each time, unable to understand her acceptance, let alone the pleasure she obviously derived from it...or worse, the pleasure he did too. It baffled him.

In the morning he'd act outwardly as if nothing had happened, but would be carefully checking out Catherine's body, looking for new bruises and scratches, even bite marks. Inevitably there would be some evidence of what he'd done, but he'd learned it wasn't worth trying to discuss it with her; she'd simply brush it off, laughing that she got worse at work. At least he didn't worry any longer that he'd lose control to the extent of hurting her seriously, his other side seemed as determined as he was to keep her safe - but that still didn't stop him worrying about an unintentional injury, especially as the instances became more frequent, more intense.

And so he sat on Catherine's fire escape clad only in the track pants he'd hurriedly pulled on, waiting for the urges to pass, wishing he could find a way to make them disappear for good.

"Vincent - what on earth are you doing out here?" He started; he'd been so caught up in his internal struggle he hadn't even heard Catherine getting up. She stood just inside the window, wrapping her arms around herself against the cold and peering out at him in confusion. "Aren't you freezing? Come on, come back inside."

"Oh damn, Catherine I'm sorry - I should've closed the window, I didn't mean the cold to wake you." He deliberately avoided a direct answer about whether or not he was cold; when he was in this state, his blood was boiling, it could have been -40 and he would've barely noticed it.

"No - you not being in bed with me woke me up. Please Vincent, what's wrong?"

Vincent climbed back inside, into her waiting arms. "Nothing Catherine, nothing." He kissed the top of her head. "I just couldn't sleep. Everything's fine. Let's go back to bed." He closed the window and led her back to their bed, holding her close as she fell back to sleep, eventually feeling calm enough to do the same himself.

The next morning was as normal as normal could be for them; Catherine was up and in the shower before the alarm had even stopped. Vincent followed, noticing again the bruises on her hips and ribcage, the scratches on her back, and the gentle but obvious bite mark on her shoulder, all courtesy of when he hadn't been able stop in time on previous occasions. They soaped each other, wanting more but knowing there wasn't time, settling for a few quick kisses. As Vincent dried himself and dressed, Catherine was already in the kitchen. She presented him with a steaming mug of coffee as he entered the room, then pushed back past him with her own coffee in hand, to get ready for work.

"Can I make you something to eat?" called Vincent, shouting to be heard over the hair dryer.

"Ah yes - please - there should be bagels, toast me one of those and I'll love you forever."

"I thought you already did!" he yelled back, smiling at the domesticity, the worry and fear of the night before already fading.

Twenty minutes later they were ready to leave, bagels eaten and coffee finished. "So what are you doing today?" asked Catherine as she searched for her keys.

"Lots to do at the new place. I promised JT I'd take care of a bunch of things today while he's out earning the paycheque, we haven't even unpacked the kitchen yet. And I think your keys are probably somewhere near the door...where we dropped them last night...we weren't exactly focussed on putting things in the right place..." Vincent grinned at her, remembering the way they'd entered the apartment the night before, practically undressing each other before the door was closed...then just as quickly trying to push the thought out of his mind as another part of his body also started to react positively to the memory.

"Ahah!" laughed Catherine, retrieving her keys from the floor and smiling wickedly at Vincent. "It's all coming back to me now." She moved over to him and kissed him, gently. "But tonight, Heather will be home, so..."

"This is why you have a key to my new place." Vincent gathered her into his arms, breathing in her scent and thinking again, for the umpteenth time, that he was the luckiest man in the world. "I'll be there, waiting, counting the minutes until..."

She stopped him with another kiss. "Yes so will I, but now I have to go. Tess and I have a day of boring paperwork ahead of us with the DA's team, but at least I shouldn't be late. I'll bring something for dinner. Do you want a lift home?"

"No, you go ahead. Be careful, and I'll see you later." Vincent tried to ignore the jealousy he still felt at the mention of Gabe Lowan, and left via the fire escape; swiftly and invisibly making his way through the city to his new home.

The day went by quickly for both of them; and when Catherine arrived at Vincent's place around 5pm, take out dinner in hand; they were both ready for a relaxing evening. They ate unhurriedly, watching the evening news on TV, enjoying the normalcy but stealing lustful glances at each other as they both anticipated what was sure to happen later.

"You're sure you can't stay tonight?" asked Vincent as he joined Catherine on one of the many huge sofas spread around the various rooms, this one in an upstairs vestibule opposite a large picture window. "I sorted out the plumbing in my ensuite today...so even after JT gets home, we've got complete privacy. You know, we've got doors and everything." He winked.

"Well well, 'ensuite'...aren't you special now. Anyone would think you live in a mansion or something." Catherine grinned, then sighed. "But no, I do have to be home later for Heather. I promised her, some work dilemma she absolutely has to discuss with me, apparently. But we still have a few hours..."

"Okay. I should catch up with JT anyway; we've barely seen each other since we moved in here. But he won't be back for a while either, so I think we should take advantage of those few hours you mentioned," he said, pulling Catherine next to him. Vincent was actually a little relieved that they wouldn't be spending the night together for the first time in a week; he wasn't quite ready for a repeat visit from his other side, at least not until he could figure out what was triggering it. He wanted to see if JT had any theories, although he hadn't yet decided exactly how to broach the subject.

He drew Catherine closer still, groaning audibly as she started to move her fingers in a lazy circular motion on his jeans-clad thigh. So gentle, scarcely touching, but with Vincent's senses and amplified libido it took little to arouse him - and this was suddenly causing bolts of desire to course through him. His manhood reacted instantly, swelling before she'd barely moved her hand. Vincent realised that even his nipples had already tightened, aching for her touch. Damn, the things she did to him, and oh the things he wanted to do to her...

"Mmmmm..." murmured Vincent, leaning over and lazily nibbling on Catherine's throat. "You could do that all night and make me a very happy man." He noted her increasing heartbeat, as she squeezed his thigh gently, moving towards his already bulging crotch.

"If that's all it takes, then what's in it for me?" Catherine breathed, leaning into Vincent as his lips kissed their way up her neck towards her mouth, one of his large hands now cupping and firmly massaging her breast, the other tangled in her hair.

"Oh don't you worry, I'm sure I can think of plenty of things to keep you happy too," he replied, as his tongue snaked out and barely grazed her bottom lip. "In fact, if I trust my senses it seems to me you're already enjoying yourself as much as I am." Vincent had taken in the heady scent of her arousal, and it was spurring him on. It was as if her need became his, as he attuned to her heartbeat, the surge of blood through her body, the unmistakable knowledge that even now she was already wet with desire for him - it all combined with his own feverish lust and put him in a place that no other man could ever truly understand.

Catherine's fingers had reached his straining erection, but she continued with her lazy circles and occasional gentle squeezes through the denim. Vincent growled, already feeling like he was going to burst if they didn't hurry things along. They were kissing now, deeply, pulling closer. Often they could just kiss for ages, losing themselves in the intimacy, but tonight Vincent was feeling an almost primal urge to take her completely, as soon as possible. It seemed like she was feeling it too; he could feel her shudder as he started to undo her blouse, resisting the urge to rip the last few buttons away, removing it and her bra and somehow managing to shed his own shirt in the same movement. She moaned, and they shifted on the sofa. Vincent eased her down and their bare chests came together, hot flesh meeting hot flesh. Her taut nipples brushed against his and he reacted as if shocked; her touch was pure electricity when he was this far gone. Breathing quickened as their kisses deepened further, until Vincent sat up with a growl, one hand undoing his jeans while the other undid hers. He tugged almost frantically at them and her panties, pulling them down just enough to gain access to the part of her he needed so desperately. Catherine countered by reaching up and releasing his raging tumescence, he groaned loudly as she touched him, unable to stop his hips from thrusting his enormous, inflamed shaft into her hand. Oh, damn he wanted her so, hungered to feel her heat around him; his entire body was already quivering in anticipation. As usual he moved his hand down to her folds, checking that she was ready for him, even though his senses had told him she was, even though she always was.

Oh yes hell yes she was so ready, so hot, so swollen and oh so damn wet. For him. All for him. Only for him. That thought aroused him further. Even though he was yearning to be inside her, somehow he forced himself to hold back just a moment longer. He let his fingers linger a while, circling, probing, rubbing, enjoying the sensations he could feel he was giving to her, to them both, knowing exactly where and how quickly he was taking her. She was pulsing against his fingers, tightening around him, and Vincent could feel it in every single nerve ending he possessed, the sensations pushing him to the edge right along with her. "Oh God, yes Vincent, that feels so good, I want you, mmmm, oh God oh God oh Vincent!" Catherine screamed his name as she came with a rush, sooner than she had expected, but it was no surprise to Vincent. He held the woman he loved tightly as she moaned into his shoulder, his own hunger momentarily sated simply by sharing in her euphoria. They were connected.

It wasn't long though, until his own lust reared again. His shaft was still thick and heavy between them, stiffening impossibly, lengthening even further. Vincent felt the familiar stirrings of his other side, no longer content to wait; just beneath the surface his Beast pushed and simmered, but Vincent was prepared. He'd become rather good at the give and take between them, especially recently; usually allowing him through just enough to be satisfied, and sometimes even enhance the experience - but not enough to lose control. Not like when the Beast visited in the night without warning. That was something separate, and Vincent was determined to keep it that way.

Catherine whimpered and ground into him, kicking free of her jeans and wrapping her legs around his hips. Vincent knew she was ready for more, and he could wait no longer. He rose above her, guiding the raging tip of his manhood against her sex, then gradually pushed inside, letting her grow further around him. She was still pulsing from her orgasm, and in turn the sensation pulsed right through him, into him, almost making him lose focus. It was so damn good, oh God, he thought, every man should have the chance to feel this the way he did, just once. Her hands were all over him, on his back, his ass, his chest, and Vincent almost lost it yet again when she tugged at one of his nipples, making him growl with animal lust. He began to thrust, slowly at first, then faster, harder, deeper. They kissed, his tongue plunging into Catherine's mouth with the same increasing rhythm. Her tongue met his and they danced together, tasting each other. His Beast chose that moment to push, reminding Vincent that he was there, but Vincent pushed back with practised ease, always aware, never letting his enjoyment overtake the need for control. He knew his eyes had turned golden; that was okay, but no further. If he had to give up a little of his own pleasure to ensure he could give Catherine the lovemaking she deserved, then that was the way it had to be. It was still more than he had ever imagined they would be able to have.

As he drew closer to release, Vincent moved faster, his breathing becoming ragged. He grew even thicker and hotter inside her, aching, throbbing, bringing her to the same place he was: on the edge of pure ecstasy. He growled and Catherine mewled back, two humans, two animals, rising and falling within each other, their eyes locked together. The ache became unbearable, he felt Catherine let go again, and oh God how did she do that, she was clenching him tightly from within, damn she was good she was so hot she was oh fuck oh "Oh Catherine yes now...now..." His words turned back into growls as he came in a rush, owning every endless, glorious spasm inside her, again, again, again, his Beast making himself known with a low roar, then drawing back once more. Vincent collapsed onto Catherine, instinctively rolling them both slightly sideways so as not to crush her, holding her tight as they panted against each other.

Eventually their breathing slowed, and Catherine started to giggle. "Do you realise you never even completely got undressed?" she asked, "Not to mention we couldn't even make it into your bedroom. You, my dear Vincent, are insatiable."

Vincent grinned sheepishly, looking down at his jeans still hanging low around his hips, and then at his bedroom door not five feet away. "It's all you," he replied, leaning forward to kiss her, "you make me want you constantly, wherever we are. And besides, we've done the bedroom. This is a huge place. We've got so many other rooms to, umm, explore together." He began to harden again just thinking about that, but drowsiness was overtaking them both, and lying on the sofa in a tangle of arms and legs, they dozed.

Vincent awoke in a panic. Catherine was squirming beneath him, half-heartedly protesting "No Vincent, no, wait, please Vincent, wait". With horror he realised he was completely transformed, leaning heavily over her, his massive, furious erection pushing into her relentlessly. As always she was ready and able to take him, but this time, for the first time, she was not completely willing. He tried to pull out, tried to pull back from his Beast but it was too strong, too focussed on what it coveted. His face buried in her shoulder, he heard the animal grunts, heard Catherine pleading but it was all through a haze. He wanted to scream, to let her know he was there, that he wanted it to stop, but he couldn't get through, not even a little bit.

Tonight the Beast was unyielding. Not violent, not in danger of hurting her, but almost...almost...angry, something Vincent hadn't ever felt him be with Catherine before...even on that very first night.

He suddenly became aware that Catherine had stopped protesting, and with a rush of sadness realised she'd acquiesced. Already he could feel her increasing arousal as she began to move with them; whether she'd wanted it or not, she couldn't help herself, just as he couldn't. It felt incredibly good, dammit...but it shouldn't, it mustn't. Without the resistance his Beast calmed slightly, but it was too late to change anything. The Beast finished with a loud, guttural roar of possession, pulling Vincent along for the euphoric ride as they flooded into Catherine, leaving him with an almost crippling rush of incompatible emotions. At this moment, as he did every time, Vincent wondered how much longer his psyche would be able to take the conflict.

As usual, Catherine held him as he changed back, telling him she loved him, waiting until he could speak. But this time, as he looked into her eyes, Vincent could see it was different. Her gaze was questioning, although not upset. "Wow Vincent, that was unexpected..."

He cut her off abruptly, almost sobbing out the words "Christ Catherine I'm sorry, oh damn I'm so sorry..."

"Vincent it's alright, you know it is, I know you can't help yourself."

"No, it's not alright." Vincent's despair was quickly giving way to anger. "You said no, Catherine. You said NO, and I couldn't stop him. I couldn't help you."

"I didn't need help, Vincent. I was only saying no because I was in an uncomfortable position, and because I realised we'd slept and I had to get home to Heather...but you know I can never resist you for too long." She smiled playfully, and leaned in for a kiss.

Vincent sat up and turned away, surprising her. "Catherine that's not the point. What if you really had been saying no? Tonight proved he won't stop even for that, even with the influence you have over him. And then what...what if he hurt you? I couldn't live with that." Vincent's thoughts were in a jumble. This was what he'd been frightened of when they first took their relationship to this level. He'd dared to believe they'd passed this hurdle, and even in the face of the increasing Beast visits it had been easy to sweep them aside, to focus on everything that was good about their lovemaking. But now, now it was all falling apart.

"Vincent I don't understand." Catherine sat up with him, stroking his cheek, trying to calm him. "But I wasn't saying 'no' for real, I'm sure inside you knew that, you could tell the difference. Vincent, I couldn't feel anything but your love. We were still together, all the way, like always."

"Catherine, don't you see, it's not me, it's him. I'm just a silent observer in the background. Lately I have no idea what he will or won't do, and I can't keep putting you in that danger. It's too big a risk."

"You're overreacting Vincent, of course it's you, besides it's not like this happens very often, and you know I rather li..."

He cut her off again, looking down and mumbling. "It's been happening a lot...more than you realise." Vincent took a deep breath and looked up again, into the eyes of the woman he loved completely, knowing he was hurting her, and about to admit he'd been lying to her. Or at the very least, keeping her in the dark, and very possibly putting her in danger by doing so. He took her hands in his, sighed deeply, and continued on. "After the first few times we were together, when you know I really had no control, I've been, well, learning how to deal with him when we make love. How to keep my other side away from what we have together. But, once in a while he would come out and I couldn't stop him..."

"I know, we talked about that, you know I accept it all. Vincent what's wrong?" Catherine looked at him, so trusting, making Vincent die inside a little bit more.

"No, you don't understand. My animal side, well yes, outwardly I've had a little more control. But lately, after we make love, something's changed. He...he keeps waking in the night, and usually I can get away from you in time, but sometimes..."

"What do you mean 'get away from me'? Why? How often are you talking about?" Her tone was becoming sharper, as Catherine started to realise there was more to this than she'd thought.

"Ah, well, almost every night this week" He waited for her reaction, but was greeted with wide-eyed silence. "I, um, usually I wake up when I start to change, yeah, and I can get away from you, protect you while I go and regain control. But sometimes I can't, like tonight, or like last weekend when he did this to you." Vincent grazed his fingers over the bruise from the bite mark on her shoulder.

"Almost every night?" Catherine was looking at him, a mixture of confusion, pity and anger in her eyes. "So last night, when I found you sitting on the fire escape in the cold..."

He nodded. "And Tuesday when I took that shower at 4am...and..."

"So you've been lying to me?"

"No, not lying Catherine, believe me. Just trying to protect you while I figured this out...I didn't want you to worry."

"Vincent how many times do I have to tell you that I don't need your protection...from any part of you. I thought we'd gotten past all that. We agreed no more secrets." She was definitely angry, getting dressed as she spoke, moving away from his touch and making a beeline for the stairs.

"Catherine don't go, please." Vincent pleaded, hauling up his jeans as he moved to follow her, "we need to talk about this."

"You're right Vincent, we do. But not now. I have to get home to Heather...and I need to think about this for a little while. By myself," she added emphatically, her eyes shooting daggers at Vincent, stopping him in his tracks as he started down the stairs after her. "Don't come by tonight, please. I'll call you tomorrow." Catherine left, barely nodding at an arriving JT as she nearly plowed through him in her haste to get out of there.

"Some-one's in trou-ble." JT sang out, not bothering to suppress a chuckle as he walked into the room. "So what have you done now? Actually, based on your state of undress I probably don't want to know. I see the kitchen's not unpacked, I thought you were going to do that today? Is there anything to eat?"

"JT, actually I do need to talk to you about this...and yes there are leftovers in the fridge, Catherine brought enough for you too."

"Ah, well then that woman is a saint, so obviously whatever's happened, it's all your fault." JT was walking around the room peering into boxes. "Do we have any dishes?"

"Last box on your right. JT look, something's been happening when Catherine and I..."

JT turned and cut Vincent off mid-sentence. "Whoa, buddy. Best pal or not, whatever goes on between you two behind that bedroom door is, well, between the two of you. It's obvious that you can't keep your hands off each other and I'm happy for you, really. But..." JT stopped, noticing the expression on Vincent's face. He sighed before continuing "...but this isn't just swapping stories stuff like in high school, is it?"

Vincent shook his head. "No this is my DNA stuff, so yeah I really need to talk to you."

"Fine, okay. Of course." JT watched as his oldest friend looked at him gratefully. "But just let me heat up this food first. And you're not going to get too detailed are you? Can I eat while we talk?"

"Yeah, I think you'll be fine."

"Good. Well then grab me a beer please. I have a feeling I'm going to need it. And Vincent..."

"Yes?"

"Can you do up your jeans and put a shirt on? I'm eating, remember? Plus I don't need to be reminded that I didn't go to the gym again today."

Vincent broke a small smile, buttoning up his fly as he donned a t-shirt that was hanging over a chair, and grabbed a beer and a bottle of water from the fridge. The two men sat at the table, JT digging into his meal with relish, Vincent trying to decide where to start and how much to tell.

He decided to start at the beginning, and, whether JT wanted to know or not, tell him everything. Well, more or less anyway, keeping his descriptions as clinical and impersonal as possible.

"So, tonight was the first time it happened so soon after you...umm...after? And the first time you felt anger? How do you usually feel, emotionally I mean? Was there any other possible reason you could've been angry at Cat?" JT was finished eating, now nearly done his second beer, and definitely in scientist mode. He was even taking notes, something he hadn't done with Vincent since the whole serum thing, months ago.

No, nothing, really," Vincent shook his head. "Like I said, I think he was angry because she resisted this time...and to answer your question, usually he just feels determined, and...and...I guess you could say he feels happy. And sort of satisfied...I mean...I know this sounds awful, but as if he's just staked his claim or something." Vincent shifted uncomfortably. JT was giving him a look that he'd seen too many times over the years, a look that said he didn't think he was getting the whole story.

"No Vincent, stop with how 'he' feels. I asked how you feel."

"I, I feel...ashamed. I feel ashamed that Catherine has to keep putting up with that side of me and that I can't stop it, yet I have more control than ever at all other times, including when we're together, um, normally."

"And?"

"And what, JT, what?" JT just stared at him and Vincent's eyes dropped, knowing where JT was going but not wanting to have to say it.

"Hey, you asked me for help...and at this point in our friendship I doubt there's much you can say that will shock me."

Vincent was silent for a while, then he turned about 15 shades of red. "I like it," he mumbled. Then again, his voice starting to break. "I like it, a lot JT, and I feel possessive too...just like him. I try not to...but in the moment it all seems so right..." Vincent's voice trailed off and he bit his lip to try and stay focussed on their conversation.

"And Cat?" JT saw the look on his friend's face and started again. "Sorry Vincent I know this is a really personal question, but how does she feel about it? I know you said she was okay, but while it's happening, is she just putting up with it or...?"

"She, she enjoys it. She...she says it...um...turns her on. And it does, I can tell." Vincent could feel himself turning red again, this time on Catherine's behalf. "But that's so wrong JT; she shouldn't, just like I shouldn't. When it was only once in a while, I could deal with it, but not like this, not almost every day. It's not fair to her. Dammit it's not fair at all, we got past this, for once in my life something was almost normal..." He banged his fist on the table, surprising himself.

"Sounds to me like perhaps you are a little angry at her, for liking it. Let alone at yourself." JT looked at his friend thoughtfully. "Look you've said that even when feeling angry you wouldn't hurt her. So why not just go with it? Maybe if you could accept that you like it, you'd be able to accept that she does too, and it wouldn't be so bad when it happens?" JT had to really work not to laugh at the look of horror on Vincent's face.

"Yeah. Maybe..." Vincent was trying hard to come to terms with what JT saying. 'But JT, even if, and that's a big IF, I could somehow work through that, it still doesn't explain why. I need to figure out what's triggering it, and why so often now. What if it just gets worse? I need you to do tests and check me over and find..."

"Vincent you know we're already doing the regular tests with the better equipment, and I can assure you that nothing was different this week than last or the week before that.

Sure there's the occasional improvement in your senses like when you developed night-vision, but nothing that would cause you to start transforming in the middle of the night...and certainly not just for a quickie." JT couldn't help himself this time, he giggled.

"Then we need to do different tests!" Vincent glared at his friend.

"Like what? I already told you there's nothing changing physically. But yes you're right, if it's happening this much then something's going on." JT sighed. "I have an idea big guy, but you might not like where I'm going with this." Vincent eyed him suspiciously. "Just keep an open mind."

Vincent felt even more miserable than he had when they started. If it wasn't anything physical and he wasn't going to like it, then what? JT had better not be about to suggest that he would need to stay away from Catherine...okay maybe for a short while as he sorted this out, but not for good, no way. They'd come too far and loved each other too much for that to ever be an option. No, JT had better think of something else.

JT took a deep breath and continued on. "It's not your DNA Vincent, and it's not Catherine..."

"Then what JT, what is it?" Vincent interrupted.

"It's you."

"Me? What do you mean, it's me?" Vincent shook his head in disbelief. JT had just told him that it wasn't a problem with mutating DNA that was causing his Beast to keep awakening. No, the reason his animal side wasn't letting Vincent have the control he was usually able to maintain during his lovemaking with Catherine, was apparently down to him, and him alone.

"Yes, YOU, Vincent. Just good old stubborn, human Vincent Ryan Keller. At least that's what it's starting to sound like."

"But..."

"Listen to me buddy. The way I see it, it's pretty clear what's going on here - and it's gonna be down to you to decide what you want to do about it. No magic serum this time."

Vincent stopped protesting. He needed his friend's help, so perhaps he should shut up and listen.

"You're one of the smartest guys I know Vincent, I'm amazed you didn't figure this out for yourself."

"Figure out what?"

"You say that ever since you and Cat started, ah, sleeping together, you've been working on suppressing your Beastly side when you're together, right?" Vincent nodded at him. "And you've been getting better and better at it?" Vincent nodded again, starting to look impatient. "Well big guy, dumb move. Think about it. What happens when you keep pushing something down, like a coiled spring?"

Vincent looked at his friend in exasperation. What the hell was JT going on about? How could the increased control be a bad thing, why would...oh. Crap. Of course. All of a sudden it seemed so obvious.

"So the more I push him back when Catherine and I make love, the more he's going to come out on his own later to take her on his terms."

"Bingo."

"But okay, JT in theory I can see it, but why only with Catherine, in that situation? I have so much more restraint now at other times, true I still can't stop him from coming out if he perceives a threat, but I can come back to myself much easier now. And often I can even control what I do and to what degree while I'm transformed...and that doesn't seem to have had negative consequences. It doesn't make sense."

"It makes perfect sense." JT leaned forward. "What's the most primitive urge we have? Sex, right? Or, to put it more bluntly, the fundamental need to mate. Now as evolved humans, we've tamed it somewhat - well at least on the surface. But the animal part of you..."

"...the animal in me thinks Catherine is his mate," Vincent let out a huge sigh, "and I've effectively been keeping him behind a locked door when I'm with her."

"Actually I think it goes further than that. You don't 'think' she's your mate, she IS your mate. You love her, and in primal terms that's what it translates to. That's why you feel so possessive. And by not allowing that side of yourself to come out and play, you're taunting it. You can't wave a steak in front of a wolf and expect it to just sit there quietly. When your Beast impulses can't take the tension anymore, they come to the surface, pure and simple. Hell Vincent, for most of us it's hard enough just being a normal man and wanting a woman. I can't imagine what it's like for you."

Vincent rolled his eyes, then sat silently for a while. "Well thanks for that JT. Let's see. I'm the big bad wolf, you've called my girlfriend a piece of meat, and as if I didn't feel bad enough already, you've told me that any hope of a normal sex life is doomed because I'm too primitive. This was really helpful."

"I did not say any of that...and don't take it out on me." JT got up from the table, shaking his head. "If you don't want to hear the rest of what I have to say, that's fine. I'm sure there's a game on TV."

"Wait. Wait JT, I'm sorry. I'm just...well...you know. It feels like the old days when we were first trying to figure out what Muirfield had done to me, and we were hitting brick walls at every turn. Please, I do want to hear what you think. Really." He looked at his friend and could see JT give in.

"Okay." JT went to the fridge and got himself another beer, then turned back and leaned against the fridge, looking down at his friend.

"Somewhere along the line you became so obsessed with protecting Catherine that you started to equate good, wild, animalistic sex with the negative part of your zoo DNA, instead of remembering that it's completely human to feel that way.

You forgot that letting go is part of what it's all about, hell it's part of what makes it fun...and you forgot that you used to think that way too." JT took a deep breath, then continued. "Vincent, she's not Alex."

That was certainly true. Vincent thought about all the times he'd become frustrated with Alex's shyness and lack of adventure in the bedroom, hell, her idea of taking it up a level had been woman on top - and even that had taken a lot of convincing. He had loved her, but by the time they graduated medical school he'd become so dissatisfied that he'd eventually decided he wasn't being fair to her or himself, and would break it off for good. But then the Towers happened, and somehow none of that had seemed important anymore. He was basically living in a daze, and Alex was there and she loved him and he'd needed that. Before he knew it they were engaged and he was in the army...and well...then came Muirfield. Although his main desire was to avenge his brothers, on more than one occasion Vincent had wondered if a tiny part of the reason he signed up for the experiments was to escape being stifled by a well-meaning Alex.

"No, no she's not." Vincent said quietly.

"And you know I'm the only person who really understands the extent of your sex drive both before and since Muirfield...umm...I mean...oh God that came out so wrong." Now it was JT's turn to turn bright red. "Stop laughing. I only meant that I was the one you talked to about your frustrations with Alex, and I was the one dealing with you - as a friend and a scientist - when you first came back...and let's face it Vincent, you've always had a raging libido, hey, nothing wrong with that. But the cross-species DNA just enhanced it along with everything else. Thank God that was one of the first aspects of yourself you learned how to control, at least when you weren't transformed." JT stopped, looking uncomfortable again.

"I didn't have much choice." Walking around in a perpetual state of arousal had been damned painful and caused him to constantly start to transform, not to mention being quite awkward for his poor best friend as they tried to figure out what had been done to him. "By the way, I don't know if I ever thanked you for the...uh...porn you used to silently leave in my room." Vincent was quite enjoying JT's momentary embarrassment, since it was taking the focus off him.

"Well I didn't know what else to do. If movies and magazines could stop you from prowling the streets looking for the real thing, then it was a small price to pay for every video store clerk in the area thinking I was an obsessed pervert. I was the happiest person in the world when we got you hooked up on the internet instead." JT took another long swallow of his beer and frowned at Vincent, who was still chuckling. "I said stop that. The point is that you've always enjoyed more than just vanilla sex, Beast or not. And now you've got a girlfriend who apparently enjoys that too, so why go back to boring?"

"It's not boring to make love slowly and gently to the woman you love," Vincent said quietly, "it's...well it's the best thing in the world. And I can appreciate that even more now, with my other side making it so difficult. Geez JT, you're making me sound like some kind of sex fiend. But yeah, I...we do like to take things to another level too..." Vincent's voice trailed off as various images started to flood before his eyes, none of them even close to 'boring'.

"Well maybe that wasn't the best choice of words," muttered JT, trying to look anywhere but at his friend. "But whatever you're doing, if you're not allowing yourself to enjoy...Vincent are you listening to me?"

"Hmm? Oh, sorry man. Yes JT I'm listening." Vincent was having a very difficult time letting go of the vision of Catherine hanging from chains, writhing against him as she... He shook his head and tried to focus. "Go on."

"I said, if you're so worried about transforming that you're not letting yourself enjoy it, then what's the point?"

"Look, that's just the way it is JT. Okay, so yeah, I do have to restrain myself. No it's not fair but I have to try and keep some kind of balance. For Catherine. And considering what I thought my life would be like, it's a small price to pay." Vincent looked down at the table and muttered "Besides, he's enjoying himself enough for the both of us no matter what I want." No response from JT. Vincent looked back up at him.

JT was staring incredulously. "Oh my God. Now it's starting to make sense. You're jealous. You're actually jealous of...yourself. Dammit V, this is seriously fucked up. Don't you see? All this 'he' and 'him' talk today, I should have realised. I thought...where are you going?"

Vincent was moving from the table, his eyes flashing briefly in anger. "JT, we are NOT going to start having this conversation again."

"Well my friend, be mad at me if you must, but even after all this time, apparently we need to. For some reason you're hiding behind your Beast to take what you need...and give Catherine what you know she needs, using your DNA as an excuse. Vincent, come on you know this - there is no 'him', it's YOU who's waking up in the night demanding more, and it's YOU who causes that to happen by denying yourself...and for that matter, denying Cat too. You're making the decision for her, what she should and shouldn't enjoy. Can I make this any clearer? It's like I said before; if you can accept that you both enjoy YOUR animal tendencies, then there's no need to suppress them so much, and that'll probably stop the unwanted transformations."

"JT, it's not that simple. I...he...well I can't just turn him off...I just...can't, so stop bringing that up." Vincent stopped. He felt hopeless and angry and couldn't decide if he wanted to cry or put his fist through the nearest wall. Or both. Yes, JT was right...but that didn't change how he felt. If only he could figure out why...

As if reading his thoughts, his best friend continued. "Dammit Vincent. I thought we were done with all this 'he' vs. 'you' accepting yourself crap years ago. I mean I love that you're in love and all that, but look what it's doing to you. Obviously there's something more going on here, but if you won't tell me, I can't help. And you know what? That's all I have to say. I'm going to bed. Goodnight."

The next evening Vincent tried to stay calm as he paced the living room, waiting for Catherine to arrive. He hadn't slept a wink since their fateful nap on the sofa the night before, and it had taken all his willpower not to go to her.

He'd sent one text this morning; "Please...call me. V.", and it had been hours before she'd texted back "I'll come over after work". At least they'd have the place to themselves again, as JT - who Vincent had apologised to earlier - was teaching another evening class.

He'd tried to keep busy with tasks around the house, but after hammering his thumb one too many times, he gave up and alternated between furiously working out, and just sitting; brooding and running everything over and over in his mind. He hated to admit it, but JT was right. At least about the control. He would have to let up, just a bit, see if that helped. Hell he'd known from the start this relationship with Catherine wasn't going to be easy, but perhaps he was overdoing things. After all, there had been that time a few weeks ago when they first moved in, that he'd successfully - as he thought at the time - held back the control, and it had been good. Very good. But after another transformation he'd gotten scared, and hadn't tried again. Maybe it was time.

He waited and waited, as it started to get dark outside and began to rain. Eventually Catherine arrived and Vincent greeted her eagerly, wanting only to take her into his arms and make it all right between them. But instead of accepting his embrace, Catherine held out her wet coat, then sat down in the single chair and looked at him expectantly. She gave him a small smile, and Vincent's heart leapt as he realised there was no longer any anger in her gaze. But he could still see sadness, and it held him back.

"I, ah would you like tea? The water's just boiled, it won't take a sec." Catherine nodded and Vincent hurried over to the kitchen and poured the water that he'd kept boiling repeatedly for the last hour. He handed Catherine a mug and then sat on the sofa opposite her, not sure who should speak first. She was his life, his everything, and he couldn't bear that he'd disappointed her. Somehow, this was worse than if he had hurt her physically. He decided to take the plunge.

"Catherine I'm sorry. You were right; I should have told you from the start what was..." Vincent stopped as she moved over to sit beside him, brushing the hair from his eyes. Oh, God that felt good. He shivered at her touch, waiting hesitantly for her next move. Even without super senses she had to be able to hear how loudly his heart was beating.

"No Vincent, I'm sorry too. I mean, no you shouldn't have kept this from me. But I know how difficult all of this is for you. I should have given you a chance to explain instead of just running away. I was just hurt that you didn't trust me enough..."

"Catherine, no, it's not that I didn't trust you, I just thought I could figure it out myself without having to burden you. I just wanted to..."

"...you wanted to protect me, I know. Again. Vincent I get that you can't help yourself, it's ingrained into you, but we've got to stop doing this. Whenever we don't tell each other something for the 'right' reasons, it always ends up backfiring."

Vincent nodded, and continued her thought, "And we keep blaming Muirfield, but we...I...have to take responsibility too. I have to learn to push past that instinct. Actually Catherine, I've got to learn to deal with some other things too, or at least try and deal with them differently."

Her gorgeous brown eyes looked at him questioningly, and it was all Vincent could do not to lean over and pull her closer. Damn he wanted her. Even now, when he should be concentrating on their serious discussion, he couldn't stop his thoughts from wandering.

He supposed he could blame his Beast for that, but nope, he knew this was just as much him. Okay. Deep breath. Focus. Vincent started to explain; about how much he'd been holding back, about JT's coiled spring analogy, and about how he was willing to try and find a happy medium for them both.

"Well now that you've told me what was going on these past few weeks, then yes, JT's right. It is obvious." Catherine stood up and held out her hand.

"Where are we going?"

"To test out that theory, of course. But let's make it into the bedroom this time."

Vincent stood up and blinked in confusion. "Catherine wait. Don't you think that we should talk about it some more. Figure out how to do this?"

She laughed. "I think we know how to do it...and the only way we're going to figure anything out is by trying. Until we get it right," she added, a wicked gleam in her eye. "Besides, you're more than ready for me." She took his hand, purposefully brushing hers over his crotch as she reached for it. Vincent let out a low moan and trembled. Catherine was right; he'd been fighting an erection since she'd moved to sit next to him...and as usual, he'd failed miserably. Well, at least his senses were telling him that she was just as ready for him. With a grin he leaned down and scooped her into his arms, lifting her effortlessly.

"Whoa, Vincent!" Catherine giggled as he ran up the stairs with her, kicking the bedroom door shut behind them and kissing her breathlessly before laying her gently on the bed. He stood, gazing down at her as she smiled and pulled her shirt over her head, then swallowed hard as she moved her hands to her breasts, playing with them through the silk of her bra, deliberately teasing him. That. Was. Hot.

"Christ, Catherine, the issue here is restraint and you're not exactly making things any easier." Vincent drew his breath in sharply, unable to stop his own hand from moving down and stroking his aching shaft through the denim, causing it to swell further. Catherine reacted immediately, Vincent could sense the heat pooling in her sex, as their desire for each other ramped up another notch.

"That, Vincent, is the idea," she breathed huskily. "Now get down here and make love to me."

He didn't have to be told twice. With a growl Vincent ripped off his shirt, then lowered himself onto the bed. He planted his knees on each side of hers and his hands outside each shoulder, essentially caging himself over her.

As he felt the heat rise from her and mix with his own, he began to shudder with want, all thoughts of control temporarily forgotten. Catherine reached up, clasping her hands behind his head and pulling his mouth onto hers, causing Vincent to growl hungrily as their lips met. He could feel the electricity pass between them and he wanted more, he wanted it now. He nipped at her bottom lip, and she opened up, meeting his tongue and nearly drowning him in the sensations. This was what heaven was, surely. He moved slowly down, licking her neck and gently feathering kisses over her shoulders, until he met the lacy trim at the top of her bra. Catherine moaned as he used his teeth to pull down the cups one by one, letting his tongue barely touch her pebbled, rock hard nipples, teasing.

Vincent loved how responsive she was, and loved even more that her reaction was all for him. She was on fire, thrusting her pelvis up against his hips and grinding relentlessly against his hardness. He ground back, settling into a rhythm that mirrored each swirl of his tongue around her buds. Vincent realised that she was close to release, and they hadn't even taken their jeans off yet. For that matter, he wasn't far behind himself, and...

Damn. There it was. There HE was, pushing, demanding to be a part of the action. Vincent took a deep breath and continued his ministrations to Catherine's kiss-swollen breasts, trying to ignore both his other side and the urge to force it back down. He would make this work dammit, if he could wait just a bit longer before pushing back, perhaps that would be enough. His Beast pushed again, further this time, enjoying the added freedom. Vincent was finding it harder and harder to ignore, he could feel the familiar ripples under his skin and the pounding of his veins, oh God what if he'd let it go too far, what if he couldn't stop it now...

"No!" Vincent wrenched up and pushed away from Catherine. His heart was beating a million miles a minute, as she would say, but this time not in a good way. He breathed deeply, trying to regain his humanity, as Catherine sat up and put her hand gently on his arm. He tried not to flinch, but couldn't help it. Her touch was only adding to the problem.

"It's okay Vincent, you can do this. We can do this. We've been here before and got through it." He met her gaze and knew she was seeing his eyes flash yellow, knew his face was on the verge of changing.

"No Catherine, I can't, I have to push back - or we have to stop." His voice was hoarse, gravelly. "Look at me, I'm changing. I tried to give up control and it's not working. Another minute and you would have been with him, not me."

"No, I don't think so." He looked at her in disbelief as she continued. "Vincent just because you start to change doesn't mean you will completely, or that you won't change right back. Have you forgotten those first times we were together, and even several times after that? You didn't have control then; you often started to change, or changed a bit, but rarely all the way. And you were always still with me. And it was good, oh so good, you can't deny that."

"Yes, yes it was." Actually it had been the best sex of his life. "But isn't it better not to have to worry about that at all? If I keep him away then it's up to us what happens, not..."

Catherine narrowed her eyes at him. She was starting to look exasperated again. "Vincent are you listening to yourself? If you keep that side of you away now, we're back to square one again...it'll just come back out later, even stronger. Now you know I enjoy it as much as you do, but I agree it's not exactly convenient or ideal. So I don't understand why you don't just stop all this 'control' stuff and let things happen as they will. And another thing - it's always up to us what happens. Even when you're fully transformed you're no less attentive to me or conscious of what you're doing. Look at how you've gotten gentler lately."

Vincent couldn't believe what he was hearing. She thought he was still calling the shots when he was transformed? She thought he was willingly enjoying it? No, no, no this was all wrong. And gentler? What the hell did she mean by that?

"Catherine I don't think you understand what happens to me...I, I'm barely aware of what he's doing to you most of the time. I feel helpless and I try to stop him and I can't and it kills me inside that I can't. And he's hardly gentler, if anything he's been more persistent lately...perhaps you've just become used to it."

"No Vincent, it's you who doesn't understand. You forget that I'm looking into your eyes...and it IS you I see there, even when you've changed. All the time. I see your pleasure, sense our connection. I see your concern for me, feel how you shift your weight or try to sheath your claws if you think you're hurting me. Sure, it's rough, and it's different...but it's still you and me, making love."

Vincent was dumbfounded. How could they possibly be experiencing the same thing in such completely different ways? Although, according to Catherine, he wasn't. He was right there and enjoying everything just as much as she was. He moved back off the bed as if suddenly afraid to touch her, afraid to trust in his own senses.

"Catherine, it's not..." he rasped. Geez, even his voice didn't sound like his own anymore. "I don't know what's going on here, but it's not me you're with when I change, it's him."

"And that's the problem Vincent." Catherine was getting angry now. "There is no 'him'. I am with YOU. Always. Just you. And if you can't accept yourself in every way, then we'll never be able to move forward."

"You've been talking to JT," Vincent muttered, putting his shirt back on, "look he's wrong, he doesn't..." Catherine cut him off.

"JT? No I haven't. But if he's saying the same thing, perhaps you need to listen." Vincent sat back down on the edge of the bed, facing away from Catherine as she continued on, less angry now. "Vincent I can't begin to imagine the hell you've been through. But we've worked through a lot of our own already, and I know we can deal with this too. Your other side, your Beast is just as much a part of you as the human side, and everywhere but in our relationship you seem to accept that. Actually even with me you have no problem with taking advantage of your heightened senses for fun, or your strength if I'm in danger. Logically you know you're all...you...so why Vincent, why do you shut part of yourself away when we make love?"

"I can't...I mean I don't know...Catherine..." Vincent's shoulders sagged, and his voice caught in his throat. "Perhaps you should leave; I'm no good for you right now."

"I'm not going anywhere. I love you and I'm not giving up that easily."

"Yeah? Well perhaps I am." Vincent had had enough. He was tired, he was confused and dejected, and he was angry. Angry at himself, at Catherine, at JT, and most definitely at his Beast. He didn't care if it was logical or not, he was sick of trying to make sense of everything. "Fine, stay if you want. But I'm getting out of here for a bit." He got up and walked out the bedroom door, not even looking back at Catherine.

A few minutes later, Vincent was standing on the roof. The rain was pouring down over him, he had no coat, and he didn't care. He'd made his big exit and realised he had nowhere to go. Great plan. Although why this should've turned out any better than the rest of his day, he had no idea. He'd told Catherine a number of times that he didn't know anymore how he'd live without her...and he meant that. But right now, he didn't see how he could live with her, either.

Not unless he could figure out what the problem was. She was right. JT was right...logically he knew it. But he didn't know why, and it was driving him crazy. Perhaps he should go for a run over the rooftops. Or maybe not, because surefooted as he was, in this rain and current state of mind he'd probably slip and end up splat on a sidewalk somewhere. He was a quick healer, but there were limits. Maybe he should go for a regular walk, nobody out in this weather to see him...but nope, for that he'd have to go back inside and get his coat and cap, and Catherine might still be there. "Just great...next time you have a fight with your girlfriend Keller, you just might want to plan your exit strategy". Vincent growled as he realised he'd said that out loud. This was only getting better; now he was talking to himself.

He leaned against the railing and let his Beast roar in frustration, knowing nobody was likely to hear him over the wind and the rain, and not really caring if they did.

"Are you done now?" Vincent started at Catherine's voice. He turned; she was standing a few feet away, wearing only her jeans and t-shirt, already soaked to the skin. And oh God that was turning him on. His manhood reacted to the sight immediately.

"Catherine, Christ, get inside, you're soaked." And sexy as hell.

"No. Not until you tell me what's really going on."

"I told you before, I don't know. Look come on in and we'll talk there." He moved to take her arm, but she backed away. For a moment Vincent thought she'd done it because she was afraid of him. He looked at her - why on earth would he think that? He knew she wasn't...and at that moment he understood what was wrong. It had been buried in his subconscious, but there all along. The knowledge hit him like a ton of bricks; he'd practically split his personality to try and protect Catherine. Again with the protecting. He didn't see how he could ever make her understand why it had been necessary. Hell he didn't see how he would sort it out for himself.

"No Vincent. Out here. Now." He blinked at her, trying to wrap his head around what he'd just realised. Catherine was still trying to talk to him. Why didn't she stop? He needed to think, needed to work out what to say. One thing was obvious; he couldn't do this. Not now. Maybe not ever.

"Why won't you accept yourself when we're together? What have I done? Vincent?"

"You haven't done anything. It's my problem to deal with. Catherine please, go inside." He couldn't look up at her.

"Ah, so you do know then?"

Vincent groaned, he'd walked right into that. "Catherine...I...no. Just leave it be. Please!" He turned away, trying to keep his growing anger in check, hoping she'd give up.

"Vincent, talk to me."

Vincent felt his frustration rising to a level where his Beast started to take over. He turned to face the woman he loved...and roared at her. "He's a killer Catherine. A murderer! How could you want to be with that? I...!" He stepped back, the realisation of what he'd just said and how he'd yelled at her sinking in. "Oh dammit Catherine."

She was just staring at him, digesting what he'd said, he knew that any moment she'd turn and leave. Leave him.

But then her hand was on his cheek, turning his head, caressing his scar as she did whenever he was distressed. He looked down at the woman he loved, rain streaming down her face and mingling with her tears. "He's...I'm a killer," he whispered hoarsely, "a raging, violent murderer. I didn't realise that was the problem, but it makes sense to me now. Even though I've come to terms in the rest of my life with what I've done, I don't think I can do it in our relationship. You...what we have together is the one good, pure thing I have in my life, I can't let my true self taint that."

"Vincent that is so NOT your true self. And your way of dealing with it was to suppress that part of you when we were together...and when that didn't work, completely detach yourself? Pretend...no, actually *believe* that it wasn't even you? Wow."

"Yeah, I guess...I...please, you have to know that I didn't realise, I, oh hell Catherine what have I been doing to you?" The full extent of what had happened was still sinking in, and he was horrified at himself...and a little scared. Vincent had always known his psyche was sometimes just hanging on by a thread, but even he never imagined he could go this far. And yet, Catherine was still there, still stroking his cheek. No, no this had to stop. Vincent took her hand and moved it away, taking a step back from her. "You don't need this. I'm so damn messed up..."

She stepped back towards him. Vincent protested as she took both of his hands, but Catherine wasn't giving up. "Yes, a psychiatrist would have a field day with you. But, since you can't exactly go and visit one, then you'll have to put up with me and JT helping you get through this, and anything else that comes up. Vincent you are so strong, just look at how far you've come since we've been together...and even that pales in comparison to what you went through all those years with JT."

"But Catherine, I can't ask you to do that. Who knows what I might do next? Especially if I don't even realise I'm doing it! What if..."

"You're not asking me to do anything. Don't you see? I've already reconciled myself with everything you've done, or might have to do. I did it a long time ago, and feel the same whether we're in bed or not."

All those things, they were awful, yes, but your strength in moving past that has made you a better man. Vincent, what about all the good you've done as well, all the times you saved people...all the times you saved me? That and the person you are inside far outweigh anything else you've done."

Catherine moved closer, bringing her hand once again to his cheek. "You're stuck with me. Not so long ago, on another roof, I told you that you were my normal. Well Vincent, okay maybe 'normal' just took another unexpected turn, but you, you are still *my* normal. Nothing has changed since the first time I told you that...nothing except that I love you even more."

Vincent was stunned. Once again she'd forgiven him, accepted him, and loved him. His chest tightened with emotion and he tried to say something, but couldn't speak. Leaning instead into her hand, he kissed it, then gathered his incredible woman into his arms, holding her more tightly than he ever had before. For what seemed like ages they just stood there in the rain, as Vincent accepted what she'd said and came to terms with what he had to do. He was going to have to trust - in her and in every part of himself - and give up control. Do what she asked and just let things happen. "Catherine, I can only try," he breathed into her ear, "but I mean it, now I understand, perhaps finally we can move forward. I know I keep saying that but I get it now, I do. We both love you, me and my Beast...um...I mean both...I mean all of me loves you...damn I can't even say it right, can I?" He managed a small smile, relaxing further as Catherine smiled too.

"Well you know Vincent, I have no problem with you referring to your Beast for fun as long as you don't ever try and say it's not you. After all, I am his mate, right?" She winked at him. Grinning, Vincent looked into her eyes and saw them shining with love. He saw something else too; lust and arousal. It seemed he wasn't the only one affected by their closeness.

"Catherine, you know, right now this second, here we are having one of the most serious talks of our lives and I'm having a hard time not leaning you over that railing and...you know..."

"Is that the man or the beast talking?" She started running her hands over his waterlogged jeans, squeezing his ass. Vincent groaned.

"Ah, both." He returned the favour, his huge hands kneading her gently. "We should go inside."

"No."

"Aren't you cold? You're soaked through?"

"You'll keep me warm...you're making me pretty hot right now."

Vincent growled, through their sodden shirts he could feel her hardened nipples against his chest as she pressed into him. His erection strained against his fly...and he felt his Beast just under the surface, needing to finish what they'd started earlier. "Dammit Catherine I want you...we want you...and that wet t-shirt, oh my God, you have no idea what that's doing to me."

She closed her mouth over his in response, her tongue persistent until he opened up to her. He dipped his head and kissed her hard, deeply, as he pulled her against him, letting her feel his thickness, the extent of his desire. With a whimper she ground back against him, and he stiffened even further. Even in the rain and through her clothes Catherine's scent was intoxicating, and Vincent was desperate to feel her sweet arousal. With a low growl he reached down between them and undid her jeans so he could slide his hand inside panties that were damp from more than just the rain. His fingers searched, stroked, and she arched against him, quivering as he reached his goal and started pleasuring her. His long fingers thrust deep inside, his thumb worked at her swollen nub, and before he knew it she was moaning loudly.

He felt her tighten around him and she cried out, coming so hard that her legs buckled. For a moment it was only his hand inside her that was holding her up, until Vincent steadied her with his other arm, almost going over the edge himself from the force of her climax.

He needed her now. His Beast needed her now. As soon as Catherine was able to stand on her own again he undid his fly and pulled himself out, his rock hard length throbbing with pure human lust. He took a quick look around - not that anyone watching the roof could've seen anything through the downpour - and in that split second she had him in her hands, squeezing, pulling, driving him crazy. Oh God that was good. Too good, if she kept that up he wouldn't last. He felt his other side asserting itself further and took a deep breath, then with an agonised gasp he pulled back, stilling her hands with his own.

"Catherine, I...are you sure?" It took a moment for her to realise he was speaking, and she looked at him questioningly, not understanding what he meant. "Catherine I might change, I can feel it...are you sure?"

She nodded, then reached up and ran her hands along his arms, across the muscles that were starting to ripple, starting to transform. "It's so sexy." She murmured. "Yes Vincent. Please."

He was done for. With a primal groan Vincent swung her around and bent her over a nearby ledge, cradling her in one arm. With the other he tugged down her jeans just enough to grant him access, then nudged the head of his shaft against her folds. She pushed back, encouraging him to hurry, and Vincent plunged inside with one steady thrust, growling, panting, feeling her as if it was their first time all over again. Their heat was so volatile Vincent swore he could see raindrops evaporating as they hit skin.

Catherine moaned beneath him. "Are you alright?" he managed to growl. His Beast had taken over the rhythm of his strokes...no, check that. His Beast *impulses* may have been dictating the tempo, but he was the one doing it. He realised he'd stopped short of a complete transformation - he could still think coherently, still tend to Catherine...and still enjoy himself.

"Mmm so good Vincent so good."

That was all he needed to hear. Eyes flashing more furiously than the lightning on the horizon, Vincent pounded into her. Drawing Catherine's body up against him, he nipped gently at her neck, revelling in her mewls of enjoyment. He wanted to possess her, claim her - and it felt right. Better than right.

As Catherine fluttered and clenched around him, signalling her impending release, he felt the familiar tightening in his own body. He was close, oh so very close...and this was going to be glorious. With one final stroke he stilled, and then they tipped over the edge together. Vincent roared as he emptied himself into her, feeling his Beast's satisfaction at the same time. He'd finally accepted, finally knew exactly who he was.

There would be no unwanted visitor that night.

****The End****

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