

UNCHAINED

By JoAnn Baca

Dedicated to Linda Campanelli, for the inspiration

Vincent slipped silently onto Catherine's balcony as a haunting melody wafted from the interior of her apartment into the late summer night. He had meant to knock as soon as he arrived but something about the song and her mood caused him to pause. Her lithe body, clad in a silken robe of sunlight yellow, seemed to glow like the flickering candles Below as she danced, her movements slow, effortless. He watched her, mesmerized.

Words filtered into his consciousness as she swayed to the music, unaware of her audience. And soon he, too, became captivated by the song.

Those lyrics... They resonated within him as if pulled from his soul. The singer's silken voice seemed to speak for Vincent himself – his secret confession, if only he could dare to say the words. His lips began to echo the singer...

Oh, my love, my darling...I've hungered for your touch...a long, lonely time...

That longing, so simply expressed, vibrated in tune with his soul. So much of what he felt...what he desired...he still kept from her. He knew that hunger...for her touch, of course, and for her nearness...always. But also...for so much more. Yet he had never had the courage to tell her, in all this time...

And time goes by so slowly, and time can do so much.

Catherine stretched her arms out as she glided across her bedroom, twirling and bending to each beat of the song...to each beat of his heart, which quivered in harmony with what he needed...

I need your love...I need your love....

It was true. He couldn't imagine an existence bereft of her love. She was the reason for each breath he took...for her, always and only for her. What more could he ask of life than...

God speed your love to me...

He sighed, embraced by the emotion of the swelling music. He closed his eyes and let it fill him, carry him. Soon he, too, was swaying to the melody, his cape swirling around him and then freeing itself, only to tighten around him for a brief moment before slipping free again. He imagined being enfolded within her arms - her warmth filling him, her desire calling to his...banishing forever the *long, lonely time*...

Was it his imagination? Did he actually feel those beautiful arms caressing his? Was she murmuring the words to the song, her breath gusting lightly against his lips?

He opened his eyes to find hers, deep green and haunting, her gaze as hungry as the words he heard, her need as deep.

And then, like the lonely river of the song, he flowed into her open arms.

Lyrics from Unchained Melody by Alex North and Hy Zaret
