

Love Lorn

by Angie

'What will be, shall be'

- Christopher Marlowe

Diana knew Vincent loved poetry. She hadn't had a classical education, and poetry had not been a significant part of her life then, or now. However, she enjoyed it, especially when he read it to her. After all, most songs were poetry of a kind, and she did love music.

So she decided to meet Vincent half way, and went to a bookstore in the village to seek out a book of poetry. She found one called *'The Little Book of Love Poems'*. Reading it was a delight – they were unexpectedly lovely. Over several days, she delved into it and bookmarked a few for later discussion with Vincent.

One in particular made her smile, not least because of the 17th Century poet had a now-famous name. A short bio revealed that she was the daughter of a baronet, but had an unhappy marriage and enjoyed a love affair with another baronet, not unusual in the history of the upper classes, whose stories were most likely to survive until the present.

The poem spoke to her, and she wondered if she dared read it to Vincent. Would he have heard of this poet? She hoped not, and the poet was sufficiently obscure she might surprise him. There was only one way to find out.

The next time he visited her loft it was on the anniversary of their first meeting, which Diana was sure Vincent didn't note, there being other matters of concern then. She remembered it because her life changed that night she found him on Catherine's grave. He became more than just a name and a mystery – but a real person with a life she could hardly imagine.

It seemed an age ago now, so much had changed. Little Jacob was walking and talking up a storm, and Vincent himself, although still quiet, seemed to enjoy her company and visited when he could. They talked and read and listened to her music collection, an eclectic mix of pop, rock, classical and just about anything that helped her unwind from her job.

She needed to relax and she needed Vincent too. He gave her a perspective she hadn't expected of him, and helped her deal with the emotional drain of her cases. She gave him some insight into her world, which he confessed he had lost with Catherine's death, and missed more than anything except Catherine herself. They helped each other.

So when he had made himself comfortable with a glass of wine, Diana grabbed her book and suggested she read a poem from it.

Vincent nodded and looked at the book. He was not familiar with it, but there were so many books of that type. He preferred to immerse himself in a single poet.

"I found this poem," Diana started, hesitatingly, softly, "and I wanted to read it to you. The poet has an unusual name, or at least one that is attached to an entirely different woman now. Her name was Elizabeth Taylor, and she was born in 1685, the daughter of a baronet in England."

Vincent smiled at the name – even he was aware of the actress of that name – who could not be?

“I have never heard of the poet,” he admitted, which made Diana smile in turn. She couldn’t help herself. The poem was unusual too, but it spoke to her and she was sure Vincent would find it interesting.

“Then I’ll read it,” Diana said, and made herself comfortable next to him. “It’s called ‘Song’.

*“Stephon hath Fashion, Wit and Youth
With all things else that please
He wants nothing but Love and Truth
To ruin me with ease:
But he is flint, he beats the Art
To kindle fierce desire;
His power inflames another’s heart
Yet he never feels the fire*

*O, how it does my soul perplex
When I his charms recall
To think he should despise our Sex;
Or what’s worse, love ‘em all!
My wearied heart, like Noah’s Dove,
In vain has sought for rest;
Finding no hope to fix my Love,
Returns into my Breast”*

Vincent was silent when she finished, obviously digesting what she had read. Diana wondered if perhaps she had been too forward when the silence continued, but was determined not to say anything and let him speak first.

Eventually, he spoke softly. “Diana, I had never thought to hear such a poem directed at me, and it ... hurts a little ... as truth always does in these situations. I am no Stephon, but indeed my heart has been elsewhere for as long as you’ve known me. I am sorry, Diana. You deserve better.”

Diana took a deep breath and was about to blast him with the honest statement that she did NOT expect more than he could give, but swallowed her words before they could escape and merely sighed. When she spoke, it was as softly as he had.

“Vincent, I didn’t read this poem to make you uncomfortable. I do NOT deserve better. I go my own way, always have. I envy Catherine that she loved you with all that she was and that you loved her in return, the same way. I’ve known love, I think, but never like that. I suspect most people’s love is much less exciting, more ordinary, than what you two had.

“This poem made me think of some of the men Catherine knew, Elliot Burch for instance. That man was charming and rich, the kind of man Catherine would have married, had she not met you. Not the kind for me at all. How many women looked at him and wondered what they could do to attract him?

“You are no Elliot Burch, but your heart has been hidden since ... um You don’t despise women, but seem to be hiding from love, showing no emotion but a polite interest. That worries me. You deserve so much more.”

Vincent thought about that for a few moments, opened his mouth, and then shut it again and sighed.

“I don’t know how to respond, Diana. You are correct. No woman below has seen any more than friendship from me. They are like sisters.”

“Do you want something more, Vincent?” There, she had asked it.

Vincent looked at her, as if considering this for the first time. He rose and then leaned over to kiss her forehead. Diana was surprised – he had never initiated any kind of closeness. She rose herself, and put her arms around him, then planted a kiss on his lips. He did not move away and regarded her with a different expression when they parted. He seemed to be struggling to verbalize something.

“Tell me,” Diana asked softly, using an expression she had learned from the tunnel folk.

Vincent turned away and strode to where he could look out her loft window at the stars. Then he turned to her and put his arms out. She went to him and was embraced, pulled into his warmth, a place she would have been happy to never leave.

“This seems natural, Diana,” he whispered into her hair. “I don’t know why it has taken me so long to do this. Forgive me.”

Diana looked up at him and planted a kiss on his chin, all she could reach. He dropped his head so they could kiss properly, and what resulted left them both a little breathless when they parted at last.

“There is nothing to forgive, Vincent,” Diana remarked, a little hoarsely. This was an unexpected outcome for that poem, but she was glad she had chosen it. “You are a friend, the kind of friend one accepts without conditions. As I once said, you make everything seem possible.”

It was Vincent’s turn to sound a little hoarse as he spoke. “Is this all you want, Diana, or do you wish for more ... closeness.”

“I want whatever you are willing to give, Vincent,” she replied. “But I don’t demand it as the price of our friendship. It will be your decision.”

“Catherine once said something similar to me, at a time when I thought such was never meant for me.”

“Catherine obviously knew you well - that you would have to come to her when you were ready.”

“I was a fool,” Vincent stated baldly. “I was so afraid that my differences would scare her away, that I might hurt her. In the end, in that cavern far below where I almost died, I was beyond excuses. I only knew, somewhere deep inside me, that her love would save me.”

“And now, Vincent?”

“Now, Diana, I need that kind of love to complete the circle. It was taken from me too soon, before I barely knew it. It did prove there is no reason not to move forward.

“Will you make love to me, Diana?”

“We will make love to each other, Vincent.”

“Yes.”

That night they did exactly that.

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