

FAIRY SONG

by Rhonda Collins

Season Three note: *I would like to add a note about 'my' Diana. When I watched the episodes of third season I was convinced that Diana was psychic. I had read the book 'Red Dragon' (introduces Hannibal Lecter and FBI profiler Will Graham) and seen the movie 'Manhunter' (Graham coming out of retirement to lend his talents to an investigation) -- and Diana's character was so like the detective in that story (and I was convinced that Graham was psychic) that I 'knew' this must be the case. And it fit. I thought it was a marvelous touch. After all, if the writers were forced to remove Catherine than it seemed logical and appropriate to have Diana be very different.*

And now on to our story...

A week or so passed quietly. Joe called Diana to let her know that the Prices had received their letter from Jeanie (*characters from a previous storyline*) ... mailed from outside the city... and the Prices were anxious just to let the matter drop. "No wonder he's so anxious... I'm sure once he got the letter saying that if she came back she would testify against him, his paternal concern simply withered away. She seemed not to be overly worried as well... just relieved that the girl said she was all right and with friends."

Diana sighed... "I'll tell Father and Vincent. Thank you, Joe."

"By the way, Bennett, there's a new case for you; several joggers in the park have been strangled... same M.O.... no real clues, as usual. Nothing to really tie the victims... not even robbery as a motive. Can you come down to the morgue to see the last body... and to my office?"

Steeling herself for another case. Diana said, "Sure, Joe. I'll head right over."

Later the same day, Vincent was running his routine sweep of the tunnels... checking for anything amiss, broken, or needing care of any kind. The pipes tapped their usual unending messages, a soothing music... almost unheard, except in his subconscious, until his name was tapped. He stopped to listen.

'Vincent... letter received from Above... unknown sender... go to Father'. Vincent tapped a quick reply, then headed home. *'Who',* he wondered, *'could be sending him a letter if not Diana or Joe'?*

When Vincent reached Father, he could tell the older man was concerned. He handed him the small envelope with the unfamiliar writing, and Vincent stared at it a moment before opening it.

'Vincent,

Catherine gave me your message and told me that if I ever needed a safe place... away from the death and dying... to come to you. She told me who to contact and where to meet you. I need that safe place, Vincent. Please meet me at the Central Park West Tunnel at midnight tonight

Love, Brigit'

Vincent looked up into Father's worried brown eyes. The candlelight flickered over both of them, causing shadows to dance in the chamber.

'Brigit'

Father was lost a moment, then looked at Vincent in dismay, "Brigit O'Donnell?"

"Yes. I told her to contact me if she ever needed me... needed a safe place... and she has... Don't worry so, Father. Brigit... if *'anyone'* would keep our secret safe, Brigit would... but I wonder what horror has driven her to seek out my help."

Vincent thought back to that magical Halloween night when he had met Brigit and had spent all night seeing the city with Catherine later. Saowain... the night when the wall between the worlds grows thin, and the spirits of the Underworld walk the earth. He smiled, thinking of the wonders of that night and all that he had shared with Brigit... and Catherine. Brigit had seen him as he truly was and not been afraid, and she, with her lost Ian, and he... having lost Catherine... now shared still another bond. If anyone truly understood him and how he felt about Catherine, it was Brigit. Reassuring Father, Vincent left to finish his work and check on Jacob.

Diana stood outside the morgue, hesitating. She always hated this, but it was needful. Pushing the doors aside, she went in and an orderly pulled out the body she had requested. She looked down at the sheeted figure, then pulled back the sheet. A young man, 20 perhaps opening the file, it showed:

(Age 21...

Robert Gainer...

death by strangulation...

signs of a struggle. Bruises on the shoulders, arms... one on the head from a blow)

She put the file down and wiped perspiring hands on her slacks. Placing her hand on his head, she closed her eyes. *'You were running... enjoying the night air. Surprise. Pain. A stranger. No air... can't breathe! Terror and dark!'* She broke off, sweating. This hadn't helped her much. Just that he hadn't known his killer.

Shaking, she covered the body and pushed it back into its slot. The other two bodies... an older man and a young woman, she received much the same impressions. Going later to Joe's office, she was unable to help him with anything new.

Joe gave her the remainder of the information he had. "The victims all died between 11pm and 1am. No sign of robbery... no sexual assault... nothing. They were all killed in the park in different areas, but within a one mile radius. We have undercover police watching the area."

Diana sat heavily into a leather chair. "This one isn't going to be easy, Joe. Have you had police out dressed as joggers during that time?"

"Not yet, but that's a good idea, Bennett. If you think of anything else... let me know."

Midnight, and Brigit waited just inside the pipe where Catherine had told her to wait. The man, John... the Helper... had been kind in giving her directions and she had been careful not to let anyone follow her. She heard a grating as the tunnel door opened, then Vincent stepped out, pushing open the bars. He was not dressed as handsomely as he had been on Halloween, the time they met, but '*Dear God!*' He was as magnificent as she remembered, with his glorious chestnut mane and strangely handsome face. He reached out one hand, and she did not hesitate to take it... though she had only seen that hand once before... when it grabbed Jamie Harland through the window in her father's hotel room and pulled him outside.

"Come," he said. "It is not safe to stay here." He drew her inside the tunnel and closed the entrance.

They stood staring at one another for a long minute... then Vincent spoke, "Brigit... it is good to see you, but why have you come?"

Brigit squeezed his hand, then dropped it. "I have angered both sides now, Vincent. Someone tried to kill me two nights ago. The hate and killing are taking their toll on me. I needed somewhere to go where no one could find me... just for a while, to let me rest, and to let things quiet down a bit. I hope it is all right."

Vincent looked at this delicate woman who had so much strength and marveled. "Of course you are welcome for as long as you wish. Please come and see my world. Are you very tired?"

She smiled radiantly at him... "Tired? When one is come into the faerie realm? I feel as though I have passed over into a magical land, Vincent. Please show me."

Vincent led her through the tunnels, down the Spiral Staircase, their feet ringing on the metal stairs. He led her though the Chamber of the Winds to the Mirror Pool and the Falls.

She was enchanted. "Oh, Vincent! It's wonderful! How Catherine must love it! How is she?"

Vincent turned to her, his grief unexpectedly ravaging his face... '*thought I had been prepared for the question*'. He knew Brigit had not stayed in touch with Catherine. "She... died... about a year ago."

Brigit was aghast. She put her arms around him, and he laid his head on hers and cried. He told her the long story of Gabriel and how he had kept Catherine for all those long, dark months, and then killed her... right after her son had been born.

Brigit looked up at him, tears in her eyes... "But she left you a son, Vincent. How wonderful for you. I would

that Ian had left me a part of himself."

They walked on, past the Abyss, turning corner after corner, going down still more levels, until they reached Vincent's chamber. Father was there with Jacob, and Vincent introduced Brigit.

"Father, Brigit O'Donnell... Brigit... this is my father, Jacob Wells... and my son, Jacob."

Brigit reached a small hand out to Father, and he smiled, captivated by her. "Please, everyone calls me Father..."

Brigit smiled and took his hand. "Father then, it is. You must be a remarkable man, to have done all this." She made a gesture indicating the entire tunnel world, "and to have reared such a remarkable son." She then looked at Vincent for permission, then took Jacob from Father. "Oh my, Vincent. He is wonderful. How I envy you."

Vincent, Father, and Brigit talked far into the early morning before Vincent took pity on her exhaustion and insisted he show her to the guest chamber. "You are welcome for as long as you wish, Brigit."

Sleeping in the next morning, Vincent was awakened by Jacob, who was climbing out of his bed. He picked the child up and convinced him to snuggle in next to him for a bit longer. He slept again, and dreamed.

'He was in the park, looking for Diana, and couldn't find her. He was frustrated and anxious... there was something wrong... not immediately... but a dull, worrying sensation kept nagging at him.'

When he woke again, he felt more tired than before, so he got up, dressed himself and Jacob, and took Jacob to see if Brigit was ready for breakfast.

Brigit was waiting for him when he got there. She had been visiting with Jamie, who had made her acquaintance just that morning. "Ah, and here is himself."

Vincent inclined his head in acknowledgement, and replied, "Should my ears be burning?"

Jamie and Brigit just laughed, and Jamie left to meet Mouse. "Ah, I suppose your ears might be burning. Jamie was telling me you have been busy lately."

Vincent looked puzzled. "I am unusually busy, why does that seem strange to Jamie?"

"She tells me there is a woman in your life again. Vincent... I'm happy for you."

Embarrassed, Vincent looked sidelong at Brigit, "Diana has been a good friend."

Flirtingly, teasingly, Brigit looked up at him. "So, just a friend she is, now... that's good... perhaps I have a chance with you."

Vincent's head whipped up, tossing his mane... He looked at Brigit in astonishment, not knowing whether she was serious or not, and couldn't tell from her look, even then.

"Ah, don't be running away, now. I'm just teasin' you... though there might be a scrap of honesty in there as well. We have much in common, you and I... and I do find you... very attractive." She slid her small hand into the crook of his arm and walked with him toward the kitchen. Vincent could absolutely not think of another thing to say, and they walked in total silence.

Breakfast was interesting, to say the least. One person after another had to be introduced, and Brigit graciously spoke with all of them. Vincent was inordinately quiet while he fed Jacob and ate his own breakfast. Brigit was beginning to realize that her flirting had truly bothered him, and was sorry, but... She could not truly say that what she had told him was untrue. She was drawn to him more and more, and she was strangely jealous of this unknown woman who had found her way into his life.

Brigit went with Vincent when he went to teach the children in their literature class. She listened to him read from Hamlet...

" 'I stand in pause where I shall first begin. And both neglect. What if this cursed hand were thicker than itself with brother's blood, is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens to wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy but to confront the visage of offense'?"

His voice went through her like a knife... she had never known anyone whose very voice could affect her like that. She listened as the others took their turn at reading as well, but afterwards, all she could remember was watching him as he read, and listening to his voice. After class, he continued her tour of his world. He even took her to the Reach, where the children played on skateboards on the only unbroken area of concrete available to them.

When they were alone again, she tried to apologize to him for upsetting him. "Truly, Vincent, I didn't mean to upset you. I was only playing a bit." She put her hand on his chest, and his breath caught... and she continued speaking. "I was only playing... then... but I'm not playing now. Truly, you and I are much alike, and there is no reason we should not comfort one another."

She slid her arms around his neck, and Vincent caught her hands, meaning to pull them away, but instead found her lips upon his in a searching kiss. Confused and ashamed, Vincent did pull away, but his senses were reeling.

'Diana...' he thought... *'Diana will know what I am feeling'.* He pulled away from Brigit and said, "I'm sorry... I must go."

He left her standing by the Mirror Pool, a little ashamed of herself. She must apologize properly next time, and forget his nonsense. Deep down, she knew there could be nothing between them... their worlds were even more disparate than hers and Ian's had been... or his and Catherine's. She had been selfish... but for that time she had needed him so... it had been so long since she'd had anyone she cared that much for... or wanted so badly. *'It was a mistake to come here'*, she thought sadly.

Diana did feel what Vincent had felt with Brigit. She was as confused and upset as he was... and was feeling extremely jealous. *'Who was this woman? How had she even gotten close enough to him to get him to allow*

her to kiss him? Perhaps it was time for a visit to the tunnels'!

Diana headed through the tunnel from her apartment... determinedly heading for Vincent, though what she would do or say when she saw him, she didn't know... certainly not accuse him of anything... what happened was not his fault, she knew that. But she had to meet this unknown woman.

Vincent, seeing her suddenly appear ahead of him, though he had expected her, stopped him in his tracks. He held out his arms for her, and she ran to him. He groaned as he held her... almost too tightly.

"It's all right, Vincent, I'm here." Diana said finally. "It's all right."

Vincent remembered how he had felt when he felt Catherine falling in love with Elliot, and when Michael had kissed her... and he knew how Diana felt... but he was so relieved to see her. He stroked her hair, her back, as they clung to one another desperately... not wanting to let each other go.

"Who is she, Vincent? What does she mean to you?"

Vincent considered his words carefully. "She is a friend... someone I met a while back. She and I are much alike... we have both lost people we loved... I care for her. She is a gentle and brave woman. I do not love her, Diana... but..."

She looked up at him sadly... "But you found yourself desiring her, and you don't know why."

He sighed and looked away... "Yes." Diana took his hand, stroking the long, reddish hair.

"It's all right, Vincent. I understand. It happens. I would like to meet her, though."

As they reached the guest chamber, Vincent saw that Brigit was ready to leave. Distressed, he said, "You do not have to go. You came here for safety... that has not changed. You are still welcome, Brigit. We are still friends."

Brigit started to reach out for him, then changed her mind... it might not be wise... "I know, Vincent. But I would not cause you pain. Besides... it is time to leave my safe place..."

"... and walk empty-handed among your enemies?" Vincent finished for her... making it a question.

"I have friends there as well..., " she said, then changing the subject. "So, this is Diana?"

Diana stepped forward, liking this woman immediately, despite what had happened. "Hello, Brigit. Vincent told me how he met you, who you are. Truly, if you need to stay, it is all right..."

A look of understanding passed between the women that Vincent surely did 'not' understand. "Perhaps I will be back again." She smiled at Vincent, then back at Diana.

Diana felt the other woman's loneliness and understood why she felt as she did about Vincent... but deep

down, she was glad she was going... Brigit was entirely too loveable for Diana's peace of mind. But she could tell Vincent was not happy with the arrangement... He was concerned for Brigit's safety.

Diana looked at Brigit again and decided suddenly... "Brigit... would you perhaps consider staying with me a few days? You would never have to leave the tunnels to reach my apartment... you could still be safe for awhile, and you could have access to the telephone to see what the status is before you go back. I would enjoy getting to know you better."

Brigit smiled mischievously at Diana, her eyes twinkling... "Sure, and I would enjoy that too, Diana. If you are sure, I will take you up on the offer."

Vincent let his breath out. He had not realized he had been holding it. He was relieved that Brigit would be safe, now... and grateful to Diana for her generosity.

"Come," Diana said, taking Vincent by the arm, and Brigit reached up and took his other arm, and Brigit reached up and took his other. Somewhat bemused, Vincent led the two women down the tunnels with them both chatting around him. He was a little amused, but felt superfluous somehow.

As they reached Diana's apartment, Diana hugged him again, looking up into his azure eyes to reassure him that all was well, then stepped back to allow Brigit to say goodbye. Brigit took Vincent's hand and thanked him for his friendship.

"We are birds of a feather, ye and I, Vincent. I do care for you, you know."

Vincent's head bowed and he spoke quietly... "... and I you, Brigit... but..."

She waved away his protest... "Nay... don't say it. It does'na matter. I'm only sorry I caused you distress. I was being selfish... and I think Diana understands. She has the Gift, you know."

Amazed, Vincent looked at Brigit. *'How could she know of Diana's gift... unless she had some of her own'?*

Cocking her head and smiling up at him, Brigit said enigmatically, "I come from the old country, you know. Perhaps we are all faerie-touched."

As the two women disappeared inside the bowels of Diana's basement, Vincent leaned with one broad shoulder on the wall of the tunnel. The smile he smiled was somewhat enigmatic as well, before he shrugged and headed back to Jacob.

Diana and Brigit got along famously and talked for several hours. Brigit told Diana about her work... the ugliness and the beauty of her country... told her about Ian and their love, and how sympathetic she felt to Vincent and Catherine... and to Vincent and Diana.

"It is so difficult to love someone who cannot even live in the same *'world'* with you. No one else can ever understand. But it creates its own kind of beauty as well... the struggle. It is a kind of triumph of the spirit. Vincent has a soul like Ian's... I'm sorry I intruded, Diana."

Diana thought awhile, then confided to Brigit... "Vincent's and my love is so new... to him at any rate... it seems I have loved him forever... It is too easy to feel uncertain. Vincent is still so vulnerable after losing Catherine. When I felt his passion aroused... and then he came to me... I was tempted..." her voice broke, "to take advantage." She stood, and looked out the window, unwilling to look at Brigit. "But when he does come to me... I want him to want me for myself... not because he is aching for Catherine... or for any other reason."

Brigit came and put an arm around the taller woman, and they stood, looking out over the city. "Come, it is time for bed... we have both been up too long."

Brigit left to go home a few days later, and Diana missed her. They had become good friends in the few days they had known each other.

END