

Catherine's Blessing

by Barbara Anderson

Season 3



Standing at Catherine's old threshold, Diana wondered what had possessed her to come here. A beam of light shone down from above the ladder that was attached to the wall.

"You must have looked like an angel to him whenever you descended those rungs," she said to the sparkling dust motes that swirled in the light. "To him you *were* an angel, ya know?"

Diana sighed. "I suppose I should have come here sooner... at least before the wedding... but a part of me was afraid."

She closed her eyes and laughed softly. "You're losing your mind, Bennett... standing in the dark, talking to thin air."

"Not completely thin air," a barely audible, feminine voice said.

Diana's eyes snapped open to discover a vision of a woman dressed in white and hovering just above the ground in the pillar of light.

"Catherine?" Diana asked in disbelief.

The woman nodded and smiled serenely.

"Tell me, Diana, what is it that you were you afraid of?" Catherine asked.

Telling herself that she was merely hallucinating did nothing to dispel the intimidation Diana felt standing in front of the woman she knew Vincent still loved.

She swallowed hard, then shaking her head, replied, "I suppose I was afraid you... you wouldn't give us your blessing."

"Why would you believe that?" Catherine asked.

"Because you were **robbed**... *that's why!*" Diana said incredulously. "Because you and Vincent and Jacob were all robbed of the happy life you should have had together... the life you *deserved* to have. A part of me feels like *I've* robbed you."

"Yes, we *were* robbed," Catherine acknowledged sadly. "But it wasn't *you* who robbed us. We were robbed by an evil even Vincent could not protect me from. *You saved him* and you helped him heal. You rescued our child... and then... you avenged my death. For all of *that* I am forever grateful."

As Diana looked at the vision before her, she could swear she saw tears glistening in Catherine's eyes. *Do hallucinations cry?* she wondered.

"There is something else you fear," Catherine said with assurance.

Are my insecurities obvious? It's like she's looking into my soul, or reading my mind, Diana thought, feeling uncomfortably exposed. *I might as well tell her... since she seems to know already.*

"Yes, I... I'm afraid that Vincent will never love me..." she admitted grudgingly.

"...the way he loved you." Diana had never uttered that fear to a living soul... not even her sister... certainly not to Vincent.

“You’re right...” Catherine said. “He will *never* love you the way he loved me.”

Diana’s heart fell at her words, but before she could reply, Catherine clarified her statement.

“That is only because *every* love is unique and different. Just as you and I are unique and different from each other. Vincent’s love for me is different from the love he feels for you. That does not mean he loves you less... *and he does love you*, Diana. That is not something that comes easily for him. Cherish it.”

“Then... you *do*... give us your blessing?” Diana asked, unsure she would be able to if their roles were reversed.

“Yes, Diana, I give you my blessing.” Catherine smiled again. “Love Vincent... the way he deserves to be loved. Love Jacob... as if he was your own. And may you all have a long and happy life together.”

Diana closed her eyes as Catherine’s words distilled upon her heart. She was filled with peace that had long evaded her as her fear melted away.

“Thank you,” she whispered.

She opened her eyes and found herself standing alone, surrounded by sparkling dust motes that swirled in the light.