

Fairytales of New York by Xanthe



Story archived: www.xanthe.org/fairytales-of-new-york/

Story Notes:

Author's notes: "Fairytales of New York" by the Pogues and the late, great Kirsty MacColl is my favourite Christmas song. And what could be more natural than a fusion of that song with a Gibbs/DiNozzo story? Uh, well, lots of things I suspect! This story doesn't attempt to capture the storyline of the song (!!!), but is more a homage to it, with some actual lines of the song popping up here and there for those eagle-eyed enough to spot them. Thank you for indulging me in this particular piece of bonkersness!

"Drunk Tank" = *Chiefly US slang. Police custody cell, in particular, where the drunk and disorderly are held until sober*

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Fabulous Xmas graphic by the
wonderful Spoonyriffic

It was Christmas Eve. In the drunk tank.

Tony sat on the floor, his back against the wall, and glared at Gibbs across the cell. Gibbs gazed back at him impassively.

The only other occupant of the cell was the old man lying on the floor next to Tony who stank to high heaven of the heady mix of liquor and what Tony suspected was probably urine. The old man grinned up at Tony to reveal a mouth that was almost entirely devoid of teeth. Those that did exist were black and rotten. Tony grimaced.

“Smile! S’Christmas Eve!” the old man slurred, in a thick Irish brogue.

“Yeah. Christmas Eve. I know.” Tony glared at Gibbs some more. “And this was not how I damn well planned to spend it,” he snapped at Gibbs. It was his first Christmas at home since he’d moved back here a few months ago, and now he was going to be spending it behind bars, courtesy of the New York Police Department. “Why the hell did you come after me, Gibbs? I thought I made it clear that I was done with NCIS – and with you.”

“Yeah. You did.” Gibbs ran his hand over his jaw, rubbing at the dark bruises that had started to form there. “You made your feelings on that subject damn clear, Tony – both when you left, and back in that bar,” he said in a rueful tone.

“I don’t feel guilty. You deserved it,” Tony said defensively, wincing slightly all the same as he remembered slamming his fist into Gibbs’s jaw in the bar an hour or so earlier. He looked down at his knuckles and saw that they were bruised too.

“I know.” Gibbs shrugged.

The old man shifted and sighed. “Gettin’ old,” he said mournfully. “My last Christmas. Won’t see ‘nother one.”

Great. This was just what Tony needed – to be stuck between Gibbs on one side and a maudlin old drunk on the other.

“Gets cold out there on the streets,” the old guy continued.

“That why you got so pissed?” Tony asked, deciding that he’d prefer to make conversation with the toothless old guy over Gibbs any day. “So you got to spend a night in the drunk tank in the warm?”

The old guy looked sad. “Wind goes right through you,” he muttered. “S’no place for the old.” He closed his eyes and his head started to droop.

"So your friends in the NYPD let you spend the night here." Tony had done it himself, back when he'd been a cop in Baltimore; you let some of the homeless old drunks spend the night in the cells when it got really cold out there. "Well, I guess at least one of us wants to be here," he growled, with another meaningful glance at Gibbs.

"Hey - I didn't start it. You were the one who was drinking – you took a swing at me, remember," Gibbs pointed out. "That's why we ended up here."

"I was just having a quiet Christmas drink by myself – last thing I expected was for *you* to walk into the damn bar and ruin my Christmas," Tony growled.

"Quiet Christmas drink?" Gibbs snorted. "More like ten."

"So? Free country." Tony sulked – but he could feel his cheeks flushing all the same. He'd been downing drink after drink as he nursed his bitter resentment towards his former boss. This time of year always made him melancholy anyway – and he'd been taken completely by surprise when Gibbs had walked into the bar. The combination of the liquor and his sour mood had meant that the meeting with his old boss had quickly degenerated into a heated argument. Or at least, Tony had been heated. Gibbs had mostly just stood there, taking it. Tony winced as he remembered throwing out words like "scumbag" and... "Uh...did I call you a maggot?" he asked.

"Dunno. Probably. You called me just about every other name under the sun." Gibbs shrugged. "I'm impressed. Didn't know you had such a wide vocabulary, DiNozzo."

"Hah!" Tony said, that wide vocabulary deserting him now that he was starting to sober up a little.

At that moment they heard a cacophony of voices outside, rising, falling and undulating in a way that was painful on the ear.

"What the hell...?" Gibbs got up, walked over to the bars of the cell, and tried to peer through them.

"The NYPD choir does a concert every year on Christmas Eve," Tony told him with a weary wave of his hand.

"Why? To scare away the tourists?" Gibbs asked.

Tony couldn't help the snort of laughter that escaped his lips, and then he felt annoyed with himself. Damn it, he wanted to stay angry at Gibbs, not start laughing with the guy.

"This is just them warming up. They're actually pretty good when they get going. Dad used to bring me into the city on Christmas Eve when I was a kid just so we could listen to them."

"How is your father?" Gibbs asked.

"Fine."

"You're working for him now? Head of security for his business?"

Tony glared at him. "Well if you know already, why d'you ask? And of course you know already. I expect you know everything I've done and everywhere I've been since I left NCIS. Probably even know what I had for breakfast this morning."

"Donut and a breakfast burrito," Gibbs replied promptly. Tony glared at him. Gibbs put his hands in the air in mock surrender. "Hey – it's what you *always* had for breakfast back at NCIS, Tony. I really wasn't following you around to see what you ate this morning."

"Why *are* you here?" Tony demanded.

Gibbs stared at him for a long time. "To ask you to come back," he said at last.

Tony felt angry all over again. "No," he snapped. "You had your damn chance, Gibbs, and you blew it."

"I was freaked out."

"And I wasn't?" Tony flung at him. "I gave up ten years to you, you bastard. Ten years of trying to get your damn attention, of working my ass off to please you and putting up with your secretiveness, your withholding, and your sneaking up on me when I least expected it. Ten years of being on your six, always your loyal fucking St Bernard, just sitting there waiting for you to throw me a scrap that showed you cared – hell, that showed you even *noticed*. Ten years of hauling your ass out of deep water and covering for you with various directors. Ten years of taking your growling, and your bad temper, and your goddamn head slaps, and..."

"You always liked the head slaps," Gibbs pointed out. Tony glared at him because that was true.

"Don't change the subject. Ten years of wanting you, of hoping you'd one day look at me as something other than a fucking nuisance. Ten years of waving my arms around and yelling, 'I'm here, Gibbs, and I'll be here when the wives, the girlfriends, and the endless fucking line of redheads have all walked out on you because you're such a miserable bastard. I'll stay. I'll always be here for you because I *get* you, the way they never do. Just look at me, just notice me, just see how totally and hopelessly fucking in love with you I am!"'

Tony's expression darkened. Gibbs nodded slowly.

"Go on," he said quietly. "Say it. Finish it."

Tony didn't need any further prompting. "And then when you finally did catch a damn clue, we had that one night - that one glorious, fantastic, amazing, totally mind-blowing night -

only for you to walk into work the next day and treat me like I didn't fucking exist. It was just: 'DiNozzo, get your lazy ass over here and do some work for a change', like it never happened. And then, when I went around to your house later that evening, thinking that the night we'd spent together had meant as much to you as it did to me but you just couldn't show it at work, you had the damn nerve to tell me that it was a *mistake*, you gutless bastard. That you'd been drunk – which you weren't by the way – and that I should forget it ever happened, and then, when you slammed the goddamn door shut in my face..."

Tony paused, breathing heavily. "Well I snapped, Gibbs. I fucking snapped."

"You never used to swear this much," Gibbs commented.

"I'm drunk. And mad. I'm mad as hell."

"You never used to get mad, either," Gibbs said.

"Well, I've changed."

Beside him, the toothless old guy started to snore, loudly.

"I was lost the minute I met you," Tony said softly. He looked up into Gibbs's blue eyes. "I was going to be the next big thing, y'know, Gibbs. I was going to solve every homicide in Baltimore, make a name for myself far and wide. I'd watched all those great TV cop shows – Miami Vice, Hill Street Blues, TJ Hooker, Cagney and Lacey..."

"Cagney and Lacey?" Gibbs raised an eyebrow.

"Don't you dare diss Cagney and Lacey – those chicks rocked," Tony growled. "I watched a lot of TV as a kid, Gibbs, and I knew that the hot babes and the good-looking guys all go for a heroic cop with a gun who hunts down bad guys. I was going to fucking rule Baltimore...and then you came along. You flashed those baby blue eyes at me, and next thing I knew I was working for a national agency nobody had ever heard of, and staring down at one dead petty officer after another while you barked at me night and day. And d'you wanna know what the stupid thing is?"

Gibbs made a little movement with his head.

"I loved it," Tony choked. "I fucking loved it, Gibbs, because I loved you, and it meant I got to be near you every damn day even if you didn't care whether I existed or not."

He came to a halt, his chest heaving. He suspected he was probably very drunk. He never talked this way when he was sober. Then again, he'd been bottling up this particular speech for a very long time, so maybe it was inevitable that it all had to come spilling out, sooner or later.

"I cared, Tony," Gibbs said softly.

Outside, Tony could hear the boys of the NYPD choir starting their concert. Their voices soared melodiously into the air, deep and strong and beautiful.

Gibbs came over and crouched in front of Tony. He reached out and gently touched the side of Tony's face.

"You took my dreams from me, Gibbs," Tony said hoarsely.

"I'm sorry, Tony."

Tony stared at him: Gibbs never apologised.

Gibbs put his hands on either side of Tony's face and looked straight into his eyes. Tony looked straight back, as helpless as he always was where Gibbs was concerned.

"You were my first," Gibbs told him. "Never been with a guy before. Freaked me out, Tony – and you wanna know why?"

Tony stared at him wordlessly. Gibbs's eyes were a particularly glassy shade of blue.

"Because it was so good," Gibbs whispered. He stroked a thumb over Tony's cheek. "Never was as good with anyone else, not even..." He broke off and glanced up at the ceiling, then composed himself and looked back at Tony again. "Not even with Shannon – and it feels like a betrayal to say it. You've been bi for years, Tony – you've had a long time to get used to it. Me? I had eight hours to get my head around it; eight fantastic, amazing, wonderful hours – but still only eight of 'em. Then it was back to work, and you were there, looking so bright, and shiny, and beautiful, and happy. And all I wanted to do was put my hands on you, and touch you, and kiss you, and make you mine all over again...and I couldn't handle how overwhelming that felt, Tony. So I shut down."

"You could have explained that to me..." Tony began. Gibbs slid his thumb sideways and covered Tony's lips with it. He shook his head.

"I couldn't have explained it to myself back then," he said ruefully. "I was lost too, Tony. You turned my concept of myself upside down. You changed my identity. I didn't know who the hell I was anymore."

"And now?" Tony asked softly.

"Now I know." Gibbs leaned forward and pressed his lips against Tony's. Tony felt a gentle sigh escape from the depths of his heart. Gibbs drew back.

"Last few months have been hell, Tony. Ten years you've been beside me – ten years you had my six and were my loyal St Bernard, always there, always faithful, always true. I miss you. Come back, Tony. Come back home with me and stay this time - in my bed, in my life - equal partners."

"I don't know..." Tony bit on his lip, and Gibbs stopped him by putting his finger there instead.

"Can't make it all alone, Tony," Gibbs said, his voice almost breaking. "I need you."

Tony blinked the sudden blurriness away. "You've got me," he replied hoarsely.

Gibbs's eyes were shining as he leaned in and pulled Tony close for a long, deep kiss. Tony wrapped his arms around Gibbs and kissed him back. This was where he belonged, where he had always belonged. He was home again.

Outside, the boys of the NYPD choir were singing 'Galway Bay', and the bells were ringing out for Christmas Day.

The End

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