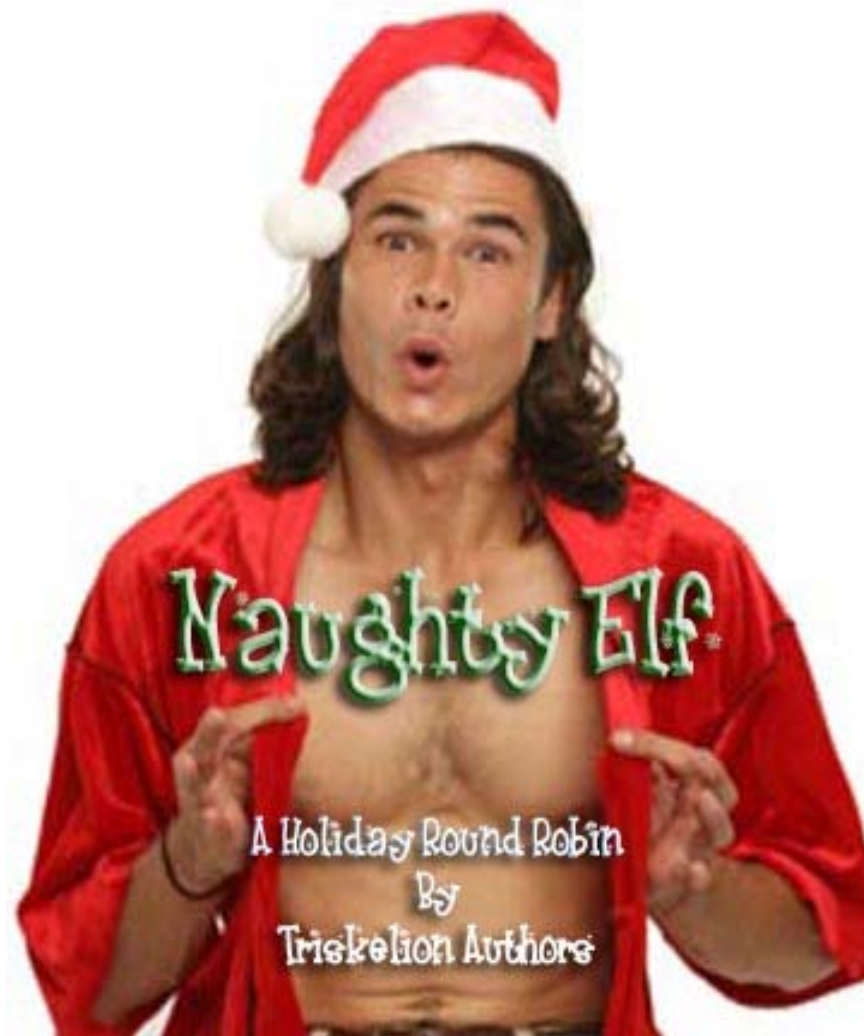


Triskelion Publishing Presents



Naughty Elf

A Holiday Round Robin
By
Triskelion Authors

A Naughty Elf Christmas
Very Naughty Elves
A
Round Robin
By
Authors
Of
Triskelion Publishing
www.triskelionpublishing.com

**Merry Christmas
Everyone**

Heather Kundert
Christy Gissendaner
Gail Northman
Lynne Connolly
Melanie Atkins
Tess Harrison
Maggie Nash
Kara Griffin
Sarah Dickson
Sydney Somers
Cythianna Appel
Elaine Charton
Marie Treanor
Pam Champayne
Judith Gilbert
Lynn Warren

Heather Kundert

Christmas Eve...

Angelica Marshall stared at the blinking cursor on her computer with disbelief. She'd been dumped many a way over the years, but this was a first. Never in her life would she have dared to dream that someone would break up with her in this fashion. Seven months of what she'd thought of as wonderful bliss ended with a short, terse instant message breaking the whole thing off—on Christmas Eve no less. If the bastard wasn't more than two hundred miles away she'd wring his bloody neck for this, but as it was, he was a good three hour drive from where she was, which probably saved his worthless, cowardly life.

She pulled a tissue from the box next to her monitor and blotted at her teary eyes.

"I will not cry," she muttered to herself. "I won't." But she did. The tears spilled from the corners of her eyes and poured down her cheeks. Damn him and his little dog, too!

With a violent shove, Angelica pushed herself back from the desk and moved to drop, face first, onto the sofa. She pummeled a throw pillow with her fist and screamed out her frustrations into the cushions. Life was so unfair, and now she'd be completely alone for yet another holiday. It so sucked to be her at times.

Several long, heart wrenching minutes later, she pulled herself up and worked to dry her eyes. She'd had her cry, and that would be the last of it. He wasn't worth the pain and sadness.

Angelica looked to the Christmas tree and the large, blinking star at the top. "Santa, I've never asked you for a single thing, but I'm going to this year. Please bring me someone—anyone—just so I don't have to be alone anymore."

She climbed to her feet and went to the bathroom to mop up her face. The mall would be open late for last minute shoppers. Maybe spending some money would help her to feel just a little bit better. It was worth a shot anyhow.

Plan in mind, she set to work masking her red, puffy eyes. It simply wouldn't do to let everyone see how miserable she was, besides, this was for the better. Everything happened for

a reason, even if that reason wasn't evident. Perhaps one day she'd figure out how being dumped was a good thing.

The muted tones of Christmas carols floated on the air. Raider, the head elf, stood in the ballroom center observing three days' worth of hard work. Multicolored lights winked at him from amid their pine needle garland beads adorning the walls. In the corner, a large blue spruce stood, branches spread wide and heavily laden with ornaments of every shape, color, and size. Beneath the sprawling limbs, brightly colored packages with large, metallic bows and ribbons sat awaiting the welcoming embrace of the one for which they were intended.

Raider nodded his head in approval. Everything appeared to be in perfect order right down to the long, rectangular table along one wall with its heavy load of confections, appetizers, and drinks. This would definitely be a night to remember. He was proud of his crew for all the hard work they'd put into getting things ready for tonight's party.

He glanced at his watch. Five hours until show time. There was only one thing left to check—the guest list. Images of how the room would look filled to capacity with dancing couples filled his head. Loud music and murmured conversation would mingle in the room until one could no longer discern which was which. Bodies would fill the room from wall to wall making it difficult to tell where one left off and the next began. A grin spread across his face. The big guy would be proud of how well the party had been organized.

Raider flipped the top paper on his clip board over and every image in his head shattered into a thousand pieces. His heart stuttered and his breath lodged in his throat as his blood began to boil.

"Dudley!" he roared. He should have known better than to place Dudley in charge of rounding up guests. The list was blank!

Dudley ran into the room. His green eyes looked unusually large as he peered up at his boss. Raider wouldn't yell; he simply wouldn't. Yelling would do no good in this particular case.

"Yes, sir?" Dudley asked.

"Dudley, what job were you given in preparation for tonight's festivities?" Raider asked in a much calmer tone than what he felt.

“Acquiring guests.”

“Then why is the list blank?” Raider tapped the spotless sheet of paper with his fingertip.

Dudley swallowed as his life flashed before his eyes. He could see Raider’s anger boiling just beneath the surface. “No one RSVPed, sir, but I’m onto it as we speak.”

One thick bushy brow lifted over Raider’s dark brown eyes. “Oh, do tell.”

“Dudley,” Carson yelled, running into the room. “Here’s your fliers.”

Dudley took the stack of papers and grinned at his boss. “I plan to go to the mall, which is open late tonight, and hand these out. If the people I sent invitations to show up, as well as people who receive the fliers, all will be well. We’ll have lots of guests and no one will be the wiser as to who got here how.”

Raider looked skeptical. His foot tapped against the wood floor. “Well,” he said, staring at Dudley.

“Well what?”

His boss placed his hands on his hips and his foot tapped faster against the floor. “What are you still doing standing here? The party starts in five hours.”

“Later, boss,” Dudley replied, racing out the door.

He arrived at the mall in no time to find a large crowd gathered on the first floor. His gaze darted from the crowd to the fliers in his hand. It would take forever to hand these things out, but—

Dudley snapped his fingers and dashed for the escalator and up to the second floor. He weaved through the crowd until he reached a spot above the gathering down below, then he did what any self respecting elf would do in his shoes—he tossed the whole stack of fliers over the rail to rain down on the people below.

Christy Gissendaner

Angelica shifted the armload of packages she'd purchased and groaned. What had possessed her to purchase gifts for people she barely knew? Her friends were few and she certainly had no boyfriend to speak of. At least, not anymore.

Something fluttered in front of her face and fell to the ground in front of her. She shifted her bags again and bent down. It appeared to be an invitation of some sort. She tossed the flyer in one of her bags. She probably wouldn't attend, but it wouldn't be a bad idea to keep it just in case she got so bored she was ready to lose her mind.

Later that evening, nursing her third cup of eggnog and up to her elbows in ribbons and bows, she came across the flyer. She set aside her cup and scanned the elaborate invitation.

Come party with Santa's helpers.

Hmm, it sounded kinky. Not her normal thing, but it could be interesting. She glanced at the clock. It was nearly nine, which was when the party was set to begin. Who was she kidding? She didn't have the guts to attend a party alone.

Five minutes later, after cutting her thumb with scissors and having her tape stick to everything but the wrapping paper, she made her decision. To hell with wrapping presents. She would attend the party.

Her closet didn't boast much in the way of fashionable clothing, but she did have a strapless red number that would be perfect. She dressed and did her make-up with great care. If she was going stag to a party where she knew absolutely no one, at least she would look hot doing it. She even put on a pair of thongs with cute reindeer on them. Hopefully there would be a sexy guy she could show them to later on.

She grabbed the flyer on her way out the door and stuffed it in her purse. There was a map drawn on the back that she might need if she got lost.

It was just starting to snow as she backed her car out of the drive and headed out of town. Why would a party be held in the middle of nowhere when there were perfectly good banquet halls all over the city? Maybe it was a spur of the moment thing, the flyer had certainly appeared to be made in a hurry. Perhaps the host hadn't had time to arrange

something else.

Twenty minutes later, Angelica pulled up in front of a large cabin in the middle of a wooded area she hadn't even known existed. The cabin was large and lights were on in every room. As she got out of her car, she could hear music playing. She hummed along with the familiar carol as she walked up the drive.

At the door, a small man took her coat and ushered her into what had to be the biggest ballroom she'd ever seen. She took stock of the decorations, noting the tasteful elegance given. So far, so good. She appeared to be the first guest. A couple of men were in the center of the room, attempting to hang a sprig of mistletoe from the crystal chandelier.

She made her way over to them and tapped the tallest one on the shoulder. "Pardon me, sir, but do you need some help?"

He turned and smiled. She caught her breath as her heart squeezed within her chest. He was absolutely gorgeous. Not pretty boy handsome like her fickle ex, but attractive in that knee weakening, make your mouth water kind of way.

Suddenly, she was very glad she'd decided to attend.

Raider pushed the mistletoe at Carson and focused his attention on the woman in front of him.

She smiled shyly and he saw that she had dimples. Lord, he loved a girl with dimples. He fell into his practiced charm. "Welcome to the party."

She lifted an eyebrow and pointedly looked around the room. "You call three people a party?"

Raider bit back a curse. Damn Dudley and his forgetfulness. "It's early still."

"You're expecting a crowd?"

He sure hoped so else there would be one elf without a job come New Years. "Of course." He motioned toward the refreshment table. "Would you care for a drink? An eggnog perhaps?"

She clutched her stomach. "Um, no. I had three before I came."

"How about a soda then?"

She tilted her head and gave him a brief look. "Do you have any tequila?"

He grinned. "A woman after my own heart." He extended his arm. "Follow me."

He took her to the bar set up at the edge of the room and ordered them both a shot.

"Lemon or lime."

"Lime."

They clinked their glasses and drained the shots. The tequila burned his throat as he swallowed. She set her glass on the counter and blinked slowly. "Wow! That's really strong. What proof is it?"

He shrugged. "I'm not sure really." Judging from the taste, at least one hundred. "Care for another?"

She bit her lip as she thought about his offer. "What the hell?"

Raider didn't know how she'd ended up at the party, but he thanked his lucky stars. He turned back to the elf working the bar. "Bartender, two more rounds please."

Gail Northman

The rounds appeared in front of them, as before the shot went down, this time it didn't burn his throat—quite so much. All the while, he kept eye contact with—

“What's your name” Raider allowed his gaze to travel from her lovely face down, slowly taking in everything. What he saw, he wanted.

“Angelica. And you?”

Raider loved the sound of her voice, husky. Of course that could be the Tequila. Either way, he wanted her to speak some more, this evening was definitely looking up. “Raider.”

“Would you like something else to drink or another shot... Angelica?”

“Yes, I would, ever tried body shots?”

Raider was sure glad he hadn't downed his shot, the image that brought to mind would have had him spitting it back out again. “Umm no. Have you?”

“No, but I'm game if you are.”

Raider picked up on the twinkle in her eye as she said that, oh boy the thought of licking tequila off her delectable body had his cock straining behind his close fitting pants.

Angelica couldn't take her eyes off Raider. Boy, was he yummy. Something about him made her feel very bold. His slow perusal of her body had her hotter than the chili sauce her mother made. Now if her boldness would hold, she might just have someone to take away the loneliness. It didn't matter that she'd only just met him. Never, ever, had she felt this kind of instantaneous lust, and dammit, it was Christmas Eve. So why shouldn't she live dangerously for once? When he asked her if she wanted another shot, Angelica jumped at the chance, not even questioning those three eggnogs from earlier, and the fact that two shots of Tequila might just make her very drunk. On the other hand, it gave her freedom to be bold where as she would never be so brazen to look at a guy as she had and she certainly would not have said what came out of her mouth before the next shot of tequilas were served.

“Yes, Raider, I would, ever tried body shots?”

When Raider said that he hadn't her next reply should have had her turning the color of

her dress but as bold as you please she uttered those words. “No, but I’m game if you are.”

Raider smiled a very sexy smile and it had her knees wobbling, oh boy. And those eyes—

“Would you like to dance with me... first Angelica?”

“Oh yes, I would love to.”

In the next minute Angelica found herself swept up into strong muscled arms and being swirled around the dance floor, noticing that a few more people had entered. Gazing up into Raider’s eyes, she drowned in their depths, and she couldn’t help but wonder how he would look when—

She must have zoned, because she suddenly became aware he was speaking. Oops. Nothing like making a complete ass of yourself. She tried to focus on what he was saying, it took a bit though.

“How did you find out about the party?”

“I’d just gotten home from the Mall and started wrapping the presents I’d bought when I found the invitation, I’m so glad I came, Raider, I didn’t want to spend Christmas Eve alone.”

“I’m glad you came, Angelica. You won’t be alone. I’m going to keep you glued to my side and dance the night away with you. And oh yes, try out those body shots.” He smiled down at her.

Angelica was glad that she held on to him; otherwise she’d collapse at his feet from that look in his blue eyes alone, which promised so much. But could she, did she dare spent time with a stranger? What the heck—it was Christmas. Why shouldn’t she? No one was around to say she was a slut, or question her actions.

“I see a food table, Raider, could we please get some food? I need something to eat and I would hate to pass out on you from too much tequila and lack of food.” She grinned up at him.

“Of course. How remiss of me. Come.”

Taking his hand, she followed him to the food table, grabbed a plate and proceeded to fill it with lots of delicious looking food.

Lynne Connolly

Billy stared at his invitation. He couldn't imagine what Angelica was thinking of, coming to this place on her own. Hadn't she realized his email was a wake-up call? Her last test before he asked her to marry him?

Well, he'd tracked her to this place, followed her in. Perhaps she was meeting a girlfriend. Except he knew most of her girlfriends were out of town, visiting family. He hadn't wanted to believe Bob when he told Billy Angelica was cheating on him, but now all his suspicions returned threefold to haunt him.

She was a bitch. So why did he still care for her?

Trying to wipe the frown off his face, look as though he was in a holiday mood, he strode to the door. A man, dressed casually, but sure as hell a bouncer, stood on point. He took the invitation and swept Billy with an encompassing stare. If he'd been carrying anything lethal, this man would have noticed. His jacket didn't need any padding, and he towered a good four inches over Billy's six foot form. The display didn't improve Billy's mood any. He strode inside and headed for the bar.

Until a light laugh, one he knew well, attracted his attention.

Bitch. Bloody damned bitch. There she stood, dressed in her best, chatting and laughing with another of those handsome devils, tall, dark, and although leaner than the man on the door, equally as lethal looking. His dark hair was drawn back tightly in a pony tail. Billy despised men with pony tails, even collected jokes about them, but this one wouldn't have been amused by his jokes. No sense of humor, despite his laughter with Angelica.

She turned her head, and Billy turned to face the bar. He wanted to watch her for a bit first.

"Who's that at the bar?"

Raider followed Angelica's curious gaze but the place was filling up now, and the bar was three deep in people waiting to be served. Nobody stood out, nobody seemed unusual.

He turned back to her and shrugged. "Who in particular?"

Angelica blinked. "It doesn't matter. I can't see him any more. It just looked like somebody I - I - ." To her horror, tears filled her eyes. She turned away, but he'd seen.

"Hey." He turned her back to face him, his fingers gentle under her chin. Even that small contact filled him. He wasn't concerned that the mood between them, so light a moment before, had turned darker. He just wanted to know what was wrong, and if he could, help her. "What's wrong? This is no ordinary party, you know. You get your Christmas wish fulfilled here. What do you want?"

She swallowed. "Yesterday I would have been sure. I wanted Billy to ask me to name the day. But the bastard finished with me this morning. By e-mail."

Raider's heart sank. She was in love with someone else. He couldn't interfere in that, not if it was True Love. It was against everything his people stood for. If she wanted this Billy back, he would have to give him to her, despite his own growing attraction. "So tell me what you want."

"No. Give me a minute, will you?"

He glanced around, and found they were near the door to one of the bedrooms. He'd hoped to go there for a different reason, but it would be better than this place. Soon her sadness would begin to infect the people around them, and that was no good.

He took her elbow and gently steered her into the room, closing the door quietly behind them.

Her startled glance, wide eyed, reminded him of a fawn. "No, it's not what you think. I just thought you needed a bit of privacy."

"Yes, thanks." She bit her lip.

He took her nearly empty glass and put it with his on a side table. "Come and sit down. Tell me about it. I might be able to help." Although the more he touched her, the more he wanted her, he couldn't neglect his duty. He was supposed to make people happy. That came above his own personal happiness. Dammit.

They sat on the side of the bed and he put one arm around her and let her cry until she made a sound more like an angry tiger than a distressed woman. She pulled away, and leaned across to take a handful of tissues from the box on the bedside table. "Well that puts me right

in the pathetic class doesn't it? Not only have I been dumped by one man, I've blown it with another."

She got up, shaking him off and crossed to the vanity, where she angrily mopped up the mess she'd made of her face. Her mascara had run, and her base was streaked. But once she'd finished Raider wondered why she bothered with make-up at all. She retrieved her drink before she returned to the bed, handing him his glass. For the sake of appearances, he finished it before he put the glass down on the table.

"Not necessarily." Raider allowed himself a small sigh. This was one hot woman. Who in their right mind would choose to spend Christmas anywhere else but with her? Before her mood had changed, she'd been great company, and she had a body to die for. But he had to do his job. "Tell me what happened, and then we'll see if there's anything I can do."

At least she'd stopped crying. "Sorry about that. Call it delayed shock. Why I'm surprised I'm not sure. But I've been with Billy for a couple of years now, and I thought we had something. He was a bit possessive, sure, but nothing I couldn't cope with. Then he sends me this e-mail, so I went to the Mall to try and spend my way out of misery, find something really expensive and stupid to enjoy this Christmas. A new vibrator, I was thinking."

Raider tried, he really did, but the thought she brought into his mind brought parts of his body into instant attention. Perhaps he could resign his job. No he couldn't. "Then I got this invitation and I thought, what the hell." Raider cleared his throat. "I don't know what came over me, except that Billy made me so mad. What a heel, to do this."

Raider agreed, although he knew better than to say so out loud. Never come between a woman and her man, or even her ex-man. "Are you feeling better now?"

She nodded. "So think about what you want, what you really want. Do you want Billy back, despite what he did to you, or do you want something else? One wish, Angelica. What's it to be?"

Melanie Atkins

Angelica blinked. Her mind raced. One wish—oh, boy. She thought about Billy, and how eagerly she'd waited for him to pop the question. They could make a life together. Only—

She looked at this man. She was attracted to him, too. He was so handsome, with sleek dark hair that made her want to run her fingers through it. His sky blue eyes were twin pools she could fall into with no problem, and his chiseled cheekbones made her swoon. Oh, my. How could she marry Billy when she was so easily swayed by another?

"Well? What's it gonna be?" Raider asked, his voice curling around her and pulling her in. He had a certain charisma. He was gorgeous. And his ears came almost to points.

Her eyes flew wide. What the hell was she doing? He was a total stranger. She stood up. "I wish—I wish—oh, dear." She searched for the right words to say. "I wish to go back to the party."

"I have more tequila," he said, holding up the bottle. "We never did try those body shots."

The image of herself sprawled naked on the bed while this total stranger with pointy ears drank tequila out of her navel was just too much.

"I want to dance," she said, her uncertainty bubbling over. She could use the time on the dance floor to get her head straight. If only she hadn't drunk so much tequila. The room spun.

Raider rose and put down the bottle. "If you insist."

He reached for her hand and drew her to her feet. Then he grinned. "May I have this dance?"

"At the party, yes." She pulled her hand free and edged toward the door. "Let's go. I hear more music."

Raider sighed and picked up the bottle of tequila. This evening that had only moments ago looked so promising was going downhill fast. Yes, he needed to get back to work to check on his charges, all of whom were busy putting the finishing touches on Santa's gifts. Yet he

wanted to party, and not with just anyone. The moment he'd laid eyes on Angelica he'd wanted her.

His eyes locked on her slim back as she marched for the door.

He would seduce her.

He smiled. He had no choice if he was going to have her. His lips curled into a sure smile. And have her, he would. Santa had asked what *he* wanted for Christmas.

Now, he knew.

"Wait for me, Angelica," he said. "I'm claiming your entire dance card."

Billy's head snapped around when the door opened and Angelica and the tall, dark-haired man stepped out. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes carried that wild look she always got when she'd been drinking. Oh, bloody hell. So it was like that, was it? Had she and the stranger —

Anger burned through him and grew hotter still when he watched the stranger take her hand and lead her onto the dance floor. His other hand clutched a tequila bottle, and he offered it to Angelina. She grinned and took the bottle.

Billy started toward them, but the door burst inward and six elves in full holiday regalia sauntered between him and the dance floor. Once he finally fought his way through them, Angelica and the tall man had disappeared in the crowd of swaying bodies.

Raider watched as Angelica took another swallow of tequila. Her cheeks glowed and her beautiful green eyes flashed with a daunting, primal hunger. He took the bottle from her and set it on a table at the edge of the dance floor. Then he hurried back to her side and gripped her swaying hips.

"Penny for your thoughts," he said, looking down into her eyes as they moved to the music. His body ached for her.

She looped her arms around his neck and tickled her finger along his ear. "I'm wondering why your ears are pointed."

Her caress grew more bold and the touch of her fingertips to his sensitive skin made him hard as stone. His ears were almost as sensitive as another part of his anatomy—the part

that was straining against his fly. He leaned forward and kissed her lips. She tasted of tequila and lime. A heady mixture.

"I'm an elf," he said softly. "And prone to magic."

"Oh, my." She shivered in his arms. "What kind of magic?"

"Keep dancing with me, and you'll find out. I wish you hadn't been afraid of those tequila shots."

"Only the naked part." She grinned. "I want to get to know you first."

"Then let's get friendly." The music swelled, and he molded her to his body. They fit together just right. She swayed along with him like they'd done this forever. He smiled to himself. His seduction was going very well, if he did say so himself. She would soon be putty in his very ready hands.

"Raider!"

The sharply spoken voice jolted him out of his sex-crazed reverie. He pulled back a fraction and turned his head to see his assistant plowing his way through the crowd.

"Raider, thank God I found you. Some of our elves have gone AWOL."

"Damn. Now? Do you know where they went?" Irritated, Raider stopped dancing. Angelica pressed close to him and rested her head on his shoulder. He was distracted by her sweet tequila smell. Delicious.

Minden the elf pointed. "Just look all around you. The party is growing—with our elves. We'll never get the toys made by Christmas now."

Raider let go of Angelica's hand.

She clung to him. "No, Raider. Please don't go. I want more kisses and tequila."

Tess Harrison

A devilish light flashed in Raider's eyes, sending heat waves coursing over Angelica. This man may be one of Santa's helpers, but if you mix the letters around they took on a completely different meaning. And he could be leading her down a sinful path. Not that she'd mind so much, especially considering everything that had happened to her over the past twenty-four hours.

The effects of the tequila, dancing and Raider's devout attention were making her question why she'd chicken out on the body shots in the first place. No one had ever spent so much time on her wishes alone.

"I must go," Raider said. "Things are getting out of hand."

Angelica glanced at the group of unbelievably gorgeous beings doing Jell-O shooters. Not wanting to miss out on anything, she said, "Then take me with you."

"Where I have to go visitors are forbidden. But if you save my place I'll make it up to you once I return."

Feeling much too bold for her own good, Angelica wet her lips and asked, "And where exactly is your place?"

Raider reached his arm around her waist and pulled her flush against him, allowing her soft body to feel the contrasting hardness of his. "Right here," he growled as his mouth descended upon hers.

The evil light in his eyes held nothing to his kisses. They were demanding, and each stroke of his tongue against hers left Angelica weak and wanting more. Raider's caress made it very clear what his ultimate goal was. Pleasure. Her pleasure. Maybe when he'd asked her what she'd wanted earlier that should have been her answer.

As if somehow reading her mind, Raider deepened the kiss. He buried his right hand in her hair as his left roamed down her back to cup her behind and press her firmly against his erection. She gasped at the sharp striking lust that whipped through her body.

Raider smiled and nipped her lower lip with his teeth. "Save my place." He pinched

her butt and disappeared into the crowd.

Billy had never kissed her like that.

She shook her head. Why couldn't she get Billy off her mind? He'd made his position very clear. He no longer wanted her. It'd been that stranger at the bar. The one, who'd for a ghost of a moment, resembled Billy.

Angelica took a deep breath. What should she do now? She couldn't very well stand in the middle of the dance floor, and the thought of dancing with anyone other than Raider doused her desire. Spying the desert table she was suddenly in the mood for something covered in rich, creamy milk chocolate. Surely they had something to offer that could satisfy her craving.

Perusing the table of goodies, she glanced around the room for Raider. He stood in a rigid stance while he appeared to be lecturing the group of mischief-makers. There should be a law against so many mouth-watering delights in one place at one time she mused as her gaze drifted over each of the male specimens.

She couldn't get over how every one of the group belonged to the Beautiful People Club. And then there was her. Plain little Angelica, who could stand to lose at least ten pounds. She dropped the truffle she was about to consume.

"Finally taking my advice and laying off the sweets?"

Spinning around, Angelica stood face to face with Billy. She couldn't believe her eyes. "What are you doing here?"

Raider cursed his rotten luck. Not only were the elves doing shooters, but they were also daring each other to table dance. Luckily they all enjoyed their New Year's party far too much to not take his threat of canceling the event seriously.

He almost had the group prepared to get back to work when he spotted Angelica at the dessert table. She was staring in his direction, and he wanted to believe that the hungry look on her face had nothing to do with the chocolate she held. But instead for him and all the things they could be doing together.

"Hurry it up gang. Back to work." And back to his master plan of seduction. A few more dances and kisses like the one she'd given him earlier, and this was going to be one very

merry Christmas indeed.

After shooing the last elf back into the assembly room, Raider rubbed his hands together and turned back toward the direction of the refreshment tables. Only Angelica wasn't standing there any longer. He quickly scanned the room and spotted her by the bedroom door. With another man.

"What the—" Raider didn't finish the thought when he saw the terse look marring Angelica's features. She wasn't happy. Who was this guy, and what had he done to cause that look on her face?

He was going to find out. Being head elf made it his responsibility to make sure all the guests had a good time. At least that was what he told himself to rationalize the anger that was threatening his composure. The feelings had nothing to do with jealousy. Elves didn't experience those types of feelings. They did not wish ill will against others, especially around the holidays.

Still it only took a few quick determined strides for Raider to cross the room. He opened the door just in time to witness the power of Angelica's right hook.

Maggie Nash

"That's for believing that loser Bob!"

The man, who could only be her ex, struggled to his feet just in time to cop one in the solar plexus and land on the floor again.

"And that's for not trusting me you...you... you emailer!"

Raider couldn't help but smile as he signaled to Dudley and Carson. *Good for you Angelica, you show him you deserve better.* His fellow elves arrived just as she sat down on the bed, her hands covering her face.

"Please help this gentleman to a cab. He won't be staying."

Dudley's eyes widened. "What happened boss?"

Raider looked over at Angelica and saw her flinch. "Nothing. He just had a little too much to drink."

Angelica didn't move a muscle as the boys dragged her groggy ex boyfriend away. Raider quietly closed the door and walked over to the bed, sitting down beside her. She turned to him and he wrapped his arms around her and eased her head against his chest. He could feel her body shaking.

"Hey, honey...he's not worth it. Don't cry."

She shook even harder and he thought he heard a snort. A snort? He gently pushed her away, looking into her face. What the heck? She wasn't crying, she was laughing.

"Sorry Raider. It's just really funny. The look on his face when I called him an emailer!"

"Honey, he was winded by that left hook of yours. That was lack of oxygen."

Her laughter faded. "You think? Did I really hurt him?"

"Oh yeah. That's a mean punch you pack kiddo."

Her face lit up like the Christmas tree in the hall. "Good. I want him in pain. He deserved it. The pig."

This was great. Her eyes were opened at last about that bastard. He might have a

chance with her after all. He'd better get back out there to the party first though. The big guy might be full of holiday cheer, but he didn't look kindly on slack employees. He stood up, pulling her up with him. "Let's go back to the party. It's time for a celebratory dance."

Angelica couldn't believe how relieved she felt. It was really such a good thing Billy had followed her here and showed her his true colors. Thank the lord she he didn't actually ask her to marry him. She might have said yes and how bad would that have been?

Being here, her body closely molded to this gorgeous guy, she realized she felt happier than she'd been in a long time. Looking up into his sexy face she sighed. *He really is so yummy.* And judging by that impressive hardness, he thought the same about her. Oh yeah. This was going to be a great Christmas after all.

The music changed and before she knew it she was swept into Raider's arms for a tango. The dips never felt this good before. Hang on, she didn't know how to tango. In fact she'd never ever done the tango before.

"What are you doing to me Raider? You've put a spell on me."

His strong arms pulled her close to his torso once more as he locked fingers with hers and stretched their arms outwards. His face was inches away from hers and she could feel his warm breath on her forehead. "Oh no honey, you've put a spell one me." He tilted his face downwards and before she could answer him his mouth found hers.

Whoa baby! Sparks and tingles ignited on their joined lips and the crowd noises simultaneously disappeared, leaving just the two of them in the room. In slow motion his tongue ran along the seam of her lips and she opened fully to his invasion. The spicy flavor of Tequila lingered along with some cinnamon and nutmeg from the Christmas fair. After that first kiss she never believed it could get any better. She was wrong. This was magic. He was magic.

Inspiration took hold. She pulled back and sucked in a breath before speaking. He smiled down at her, his eyes full of desire. Desire she needed tonight after the kick her ego had taken in the last twenty four hours.

"Is that offer for a Christmas wish still open?"

His eyes flashed with fire and his nostrils flared. "Oh yeah. Whatever you want honey.

Just ask”

“Okay. I’ve changed my mind. I do want a Christmas wish.”

“As I said, anything you want.”

She blushed, but she wasn’t going to pull out now. This was her night to live a little and do something just for her. It was now or never.

“All right then. I’ve decided that I want to try those tequila body shots now.”

Kara Griffin

Raider all but pulled Angelica back into the room where he'd taken her earlier. He allowed her to proceed before him, and then he closed the door firmly shut. He leaned back against the door, locking it, but still keeping his eyes on her. She didn't seem to have any reservations this time. He approached her with a quick step.

"Why don't we get that dress off?" Raider ran his hands along the red slinky material of her dress, lifting it to her hips. He shifted his hands to unzipper it, and glided the material over her head. The sexual tension between them was as tangled as a set of Christmas lights. He needed to reassure her, he realized when he heard her nervous sigh.

"Relax, sweetheart. This is going to be fun." He took her hand and led her to the bed, but didn't force her onto it. Instead, he kissed her. He flicked his tongue against hers, teasing her response. Her subtle movements made him aware just how shy she was. He'd have to get her to shake that off, especially if what they were about to do – would happen.

Raider broke off the kiss and grinned mischievously. Being an elf, he could work his magic and make her experience sex like she never had before. He nudged her to lie on the bed, and took a few moments to admire her beautiful breasts, the way they swelled and rounded, like the most delicate holiday ornaments. He wanted to caress them, hold them and admire them, but would wait for the perfect moment. He lifted the tequila in a toast, then ran his hand along her neck, between her breasts, over her navel and stopped.

She smiled, and made a tempting sound from her mouth. Raider felt the twitch in his pants, and knew it would be painful, if he didn't release his peppermint stick soon. He lifted the bottle and began pouring a good amount of tequila on her navel, making sure to fill her belly-button.

"This is going to taste so good, my mouth is watering already."

Angelica couldn't help moaning when the cold liquor puddled on her navel. She instantly became aware of every sense in her body, even the place between her shaking legs.

As Raider's mouth moved closer and closer, her body tensed in anticipation of feeling his tongue against her skin. She sucked in a breath as he lapped his tongue near her belly-button.

"Oh, yeah, keep doing that." She couldn't manage anything more, only enough to let him know she wanted more.

He continued to press his velvety tongue around her stomach, licking, tickling, and making her cry out at the exquisite sensations. When his tongue jabbed at her belly-button, she almost came right then and there. Almost. She resisted the urge to shout. Now biting her lip, she whimpered when his hand slunk along her skin to her breast. He molded his hand around the curve and gently caressed her.

"Do you like that, too?"

She could only manage to nod. He used his tongue to trail a blaze of liquid heat from her navel to her breast. Her nipples seemed to extend, wanting to reach his waiting tongue. Noise from the partygoers rose, and brought Angelica back to reality. Now she'd turn the table on him, and give him the same treatment. Oh, this wish was turning out to be a dream come true.

"Okay, Raider, your turn."

Sarah Dickson

Raider desperately needed to get naked but he didn't want to rush her. Things were moving on very nicely indeed.

Her smouldering gaze raked his chest then down to below his waist. She licked her lips. "Take off your clothes."

"Your wish is my command."

He undid the buttons of his shirt and shrugged it off.

She gasped as her gaze fixed on his muscular naked chest. Working out definitely had its advantages, like now. A body to die for always made it easier to win a woman over.

Next he unzipped his fly. A straining cock against his fly wasn't a good thing to have. Whatever way he did this, Angelica would see all of him.

"You having a problem there?"

His grin matched hers. "You could say that."

She propped herself onto her elbows. "Can I help?"

Wearing only a red bra and a matching g-string with a reindeer on it, had sent his hormones into overdrive some time ago. "You're doing plenty as it is."

Carefully he eased his pants over his hip, making sure his shorts didn't come with them. He didn't want to scare Angelica off with his size.

Down to his knees he let go. The pants fell to his feet. He stepped out of them and made his way back to the bed.

Angelica could not stop looking at his cock. Free of the confinement of his pants, it twitched.

"Well. I'm sure the ladies aren't disappointed there."

"All in good time Angelica. Did you want me to lie down?"

She straightened. "Yes. I did say it was your turn didn't I?"

The bed felt firm on his back. Angelica leaned towards him a little unsteady too if her shaking arm was any indication. He should suggest she not drink any more. He should—

Cold liquid on his navel sent any messages of conscience to oblivion. Angelica was a grown woman who wanted a Christmas wish and it was up to him to grant it.

Her lips ran over the liquid, and her tongue lapped his belly button. He moaned softly. He could imagine those lips licking tequila somewhere else.

Patience.

Angelica ran a trail with her tongue to the waistband of his shorts. She looked up. "Hmm. I wonder what I should taste next."

He had a suggestion but it was her happiness that mattered. He would get what he wanted, eventually.

She toyed with the elastic then released it. "Hmm. Maybe later."

He wasn't sure to be relieved or not.

Her words began to slur. "I think I might have drunk too much."

"You sure have."

This changed things. He could not take advantage of a drunk woman. First he would need to sober her up. "Stay here. I'll be back in a jiffy."

Angelica could not believe how drunk she was getting. Well, maybe she could. She cursed as Raider opened an adjoining door.

It wasn't to the ballroom, but somewhere else. If she could only get up to take a peek, maybe she could find out.

The floor spun the moment she put a foot onto it.

Oh dear. I've really made a fool of myself.

A deep pink glow came from the room. What was he doing? Her head swan abominably so she lay down again.

The roof began to turn in circles. *Yup. I'm definitely wrecked my good luck tonight.*

A head appeared above her. *Who was he?* She blinked and Raider came back into focus.

Her gaze strayed to his hand and she saw a pink bubbly fluid in a glass.

"It's to neutralize the alcohol in your body."

Wow. She could do with one of those.

She tried to sit up but the room, and Raider swam around her again.

“Stay there. I’ll help you sit.”

Strong arms slid under hers and hoisted her up. He slid in behind to support her. Angelique breathed the leady scent of aroused male. She leaned into him. *Oh yeah. This was nice, very nice.*

“Drink this.” The glass appeared in front of her.

With both hands she took it, and sipped. It didn’t taste too bad either, like strawberry mousse.

“All of it.”

She did so and as soon as he took it from her, her head began to clear.

His hands slid around her waist. “You feeling better?”

Oh yes. What is that stuff?”

His lips ran over her hear making her tremble all over. “Let’s just say its magic.”

Sydney Somers

"Now, where were we?" Raider brushed her hair aside, his tongue warm and teasing as he burned a trail down the side of her neck to her shoulder.

Angelica shivered, leaning for fully against him. The heat from his chest seeped into her back, and his arousal nudged her bottom. She wanted to press her legs together to ease the tight ache building between her thighs.

A fist pounded against the door. "Raider, you in there?"

Face pressed to her neck, Raider groaned. "Perfect," he muttered, then set her beside him. "Don't move."

She watched him stand and haul on his pants. He stalked to the door, opening it just enough he could see the person on the other side, but keep her from view at the same time.

"We've got another problem."

Angelica slumped against the pillows. Just when things were finally starting to look up. She stared at the ceiling knowing he would turn around and tell her he had to go any second. Hushed voices prevented her from hearing what the particular trouble was. But whatever it was, it couldn't be good. Judging by the tight expression on Raider's face when he shut the door and faced her, not good at all.

"I have to go." He yanked his shirt on.

"Okay," Angelica said slowly, not sure what he expected her to do. Would he be long? Did he plan to continue what they'd started when he returned, or was this it? Disappointment lodged in throat. She scanned the floor for her dress. Slipping off the bed, she bent down to retrieve it only to have him beat her to it.

"Come with me?"

Angelica frowned. "I thought—"

"I'm not letting you out of my sight any more tonight."

Smiling in response, she felt a warm rush chug through her veins under his hungry gaze.

Raider tunneled his fingers through her hair to the back of her skull. He leaned forward, his obvious intent kicking her heart rate up. Fast and thorough, he kissed her until her toes curled and her breath trembled out.

On a sigh he drew back. "This won't take long."

Angelica quickly dressed and followed him out of the room. The party was still in full swing, but she only vaguely registered her surroundings. She was too busy studying Raider's face as though looking at him would give her more clues to the kind of man he was. Angelica told herself not to think beyond this moment, this night, but her overwhelming attraction to him made her curious. She wondered how he spent his Friday nights, what kind of movies he liked, what his least favorite food was.

Raider grinned. "What?"

Angelica ducked her head. "Nothing." It was silly to get her hopes up about anything happening past tonight, but she couldn't silence that little part of her that wished for it.

He led her down a long hall and through an empty kitchen to a sliding glass door at the rear of the building. Snagging a coat out of a closet, he draped it over her shoulders. "Let's get this over with."

A layer of fresh snow blanketed the stone pathway leading into the woods. This was the last thing he wanted to be doing right now. These guys had one job. A job they'd all drawn straws for and fair was fair. If they'd stopped screwing around they would have been done by now and could be enjoying the party. Instead of spending the rest of the evening memorizing every inch of Angelica's body, he was traipsing through the woods looking for their sorry asses. And sorry was exactly what they were going to be when he got his hands on their trouble-making necks.

"Where are we going?"

Holding tight to her hand, Raider led her down another narrow trail. Music from the party began to fade, drowned out by the still falling snow. "It's around here somewhere."

"What is?"

Raider paused and searched for any familiar landmarks. He hadn't been out here at night before and with the snow covering everything...

Angelica's hand trembled in his.

He turned around. "You're cold. I shouldn't have brought you out here."

Her soft smile warmed his insides. "I'm fine."

"Good." He tipped his head down and brushed his lips across hers. "I promise to get you warmed up very soon."

Moving faster, he veered through the trees on the left, then stopped. He glanced back the way they came.

"Please tell me you're not lost."

He rolled his eyes. "Of course not." They couldn't be lost. He knew exactly where they were. Raider turned around again. Didn't he?

The sound of splashing filtered through the trees. Then laughter.

Finally.

Raider whipped around quickly, so intent to kick their water-frolicking butts all the way back to the party, that he missed sight of the root poking through the ground. A root that caught his foot and sent him shooting forward. Which would have been fine if he wasn't still holding onto Angelica's hand. Her surprised yelp preceded them crashing to the ground in a tangled heap.

With the air knocked out of him, it took Raider a minute to roll to his side. He brushed snow off Angelica's cheek. "Wishing I left you in bed yet?"

Angelica laughed. "And miss all the excitement." She glanced past his shoulder, her mouth dropping open.

Craning his neck, Raider followed her gaze. A very naked elf, who Raider recognized as the rebel's ring-leader, grinned down at them.

"Hey, boss. You guys coming skinny dipping, too?"

Cynthianna Appel

Skinny dipping? In this weather? We're they stark raving crazy? Angelica sat up, involuntarily shivering. Raider sat up as well, wrapping a brawny arm about her shoulders. Curled against his rock hard pecs, she relaxed into a magical cocoon of masculine warmth.

"Alfred, you idiot!" Raider growled at the naked elf. "You know full well you all have an important job to do tonight. Can't the skinny dipping wait until tomorrow? Can't it wait until after Santa delivers presents to all the good boys and girls?"

Alfred defiantly placed his hands on his hips. Angelica tried not to stare at the rebel elf's rather long, corkscrew-shaped penis, but it was difficult considering how it bounced around as he spoke.

"Well, what about us? What about us 'good elves'? We work our buns off year 'round and what do we get? Not much! I don't think the jolly old man in red will begrudge us all a little dip in the pond, do you?"

"But Alfred it's Christmas Eve and —"

"Oh, come off it, Raider. You know how you'd love to jump into the elven waters. Think about it... All warm and bubbling and full of magical powers that will only accentuate your lady's love as she bathes in their silken mists."

Hmm... Angelica nose twitched as the scents of lavender and jasmine drifted toward her. Even now the cold of the snow faded into memory as the warmth and glow of the magical pond enticed her to rise from the snowdrift and approach it.

"Angelica — wait!" Raider cried. "Don't go near the waters! The magic is very powerful, and I'm afraid that you'll, you'll..."

She stopped on the banks. A dozen or so equally handsome male elves paired with an equal number of gorgeous female elves greeted her with face-splitting smiles.

"Oh, hello." She slipped off a shoe and dipped a toe into the iridescent liquid. "My goodness... It feels as soft as a lamb's coat and as warm as mug of hot cocoa. It's absolutely enchanting!"

Angelica couldn't help herself. It was as if she was possessed. She reached for her zipper and shrugged out of her red dress, tossing it over the branch of a nearby bush. Raider rushed to her side and grabbed her by the elbow.

"No, don't! Once you're in the waters you won't be able to come out until..."

"Until what, Raider?" Alfred chuckled. "You don't believe the myth about those that bathe together in the magical waters are forever joined, do you? And here I thought you were a modern thinking elf."

Raider frowned. "I am. I'm thinking of Angelica's health, that's all."

Alfred laughed harder. "Her health. Uh-huh. That's a good one."

The naked elf turned and dove into the waters. He swam under the bubbling surface until he popped up beside a squealing lady elf whom he had just goosed.

"Jump on in, Raider and friend! The water's fine."

Angelica reached out her big toe to dip it into the pool, but she hesitated. Sighing, she lowered her foot then turned around to embrace Raider tightly.

"I won't jump into the water if you don't want me to... I don't want you to think you'll be stuck with me forever if the legend Alfred mentioned is true."

"I wouldn't want to be stuck with you? How can you say such a thing?" Raider squeezed her, then tilted her chin upward for his lips to meet hers. His tongue danced and probed her sweetness, ringing a long held sigh from deep within her.

He really cares about me, she thought, thrilling at the idea that this devastatingly handsome and magical being really wanted to be with her. His kisses contained both passion and promise. At length, he pulled away.

"Angelica—I'd do anything to be stuck to you forever. But I'm not sure you'd want to be stuck with someone like me. After all, I'm an elf. I'm not exactly someone Donald Trump would hire on *The Apprentice*."

"Thank heavens!" She laughed. "I hate those stuffed shirt types. I like my man to work with his hands and to care for others." She began to unfasten his shirt. "You definitely know how to look after people—elves—whatever. And I'm dying with curiosity to know what else you can do with those strong hands of yours."

Angelica helped him out of his shirt then tugged on his trousers. He grabbed her hand before she could finagle him out of his pants.

"We can't be tarry too long here. I'm in charge of the party. I don't want Santa to think I'm shirking my duties."

"No need to worry about time, Raider ol' pal," Alfred called out from across the pond. "Trixie cast a time spell over the pool—just like Santa does when he delivers presents around the world. The minute you two step in, all time stops for you. Stay as long as you like and it'll only be a few moments in the real world."

"Wow!" Angelica jumped up and down and clapped her hands. "Out of those clothes this instant, mister! I've always wanted to stop time."

Raider quickly kicked off his shoes, socks and pants and dove head first into the pool. Angelica hopped in feet first. The shock of leaving the cold real world for the soft, warm bubbling waters quickly passed. Smiling, she breast-stroked over to where Raider floated in water up to his chin.

"You going to take off those wet things?" His voice came low and husky. "I've already divested myself of my boxers."

She looked up at a branch hanging low over the water. Sure enough Raider's silky underwear flapped like a flag in the gentle breeze.

"I feel like I'm hanging out at the beach rather than skinny dipping with a bunch of elves in a magical pond." She giggled. "Can Trixie cast a spell to dry our things before we re-dress so we don't catch pneumonia?"

Raider grinned. "If she can't, I'll give it a try."

Angelica licked her suddenly dry lips. She lowered herself into the waters and fumbled for her bra hook.

"Need a little help?" he asked.

"No, I can manage." She released her breasts from their prison and spun her red brassiere around her finger before tossing it over the branch. Then she lowered herself further into the bubbling brook.

"Anything else you need help removing?" He arched a dark eyebrow and slowly approached her.

“Maybe.” He came closer and pulled her into his arms. Her pointed nipples met his taut chest as his lips took possession of her mouth. His hands slid down her form, toying with the elastic of her reindeer printed g-string...

Elaine Charton

Angelica held her breath, she had waited what seemed to be a life time for this moment. Had it really been a short few hours ago, when she walked through the doors expecting the usual holiday party and finding so much more. She put her arms around Raider and whispered, "What's taking you so long?"

He smiled and she was naked. How the hell did he do that? She hadn't even felt his hands move.

"You feel them now? Don't you?" his voice hoarse with need. He stroked her slowly, inserting one finger then two, playing with her for as long as he could stand it. This was her Christmas wish and he wanted to pleasure her not just right now, not just tonight, but always.

"Raider!" She cried out, her legs wrapped around his hips. "Please."

She threw her head back, and he took advantage of her offer, kissing, licking, every spare inch of skin he could reach. When his lips surrounded one breast he slowed his strokes. He didn't want her to come...yet.

"Raider?"

"Yes, love."

"I need you." She tried to pull away from him, to take what she wanted, but he wasn't letting her.

"I'm here." He flexed his hips just enough for her to realize his game. He was rewarded with a swift intake of breath.

"Raider, if you're not inside me in fifteen seconds, I'm going to find myself another elf to play with!"

"Like hell you will!" With one swift move, he turned them so her back was against the pool wall and he was where they both wanted him to be.

"Oh my!" She knew he'd be good but was surprised at how good and how right he felt there. She urged him on, the pleasure they gave each other exploded as the rest of the world disappeared from their consciousness.

They stood wrapped in each other, slow caresses, bringing their passion back to life.

“Raider!” A deep, deep voice reverberated though the night. “Where are you?”

Marie Treanor

Raider's hands on her body stilled. His eyes, staring into hers widened with something like shock.

"Not now," he breathed. "Please not now..."

"He can't see us," Angelica reminded him unsteadily.

"Oh yes he can."

For the first time since jumping in she became aware of the other once-frolicking elves in the pool. Curiously silent now, they waded to the edge and began to climb out. They hung their heads, as if in shame and yet Angelica, lost in her own world of pleasure, was more conscious of the way their flawless skin glistened silver in the icy moonlight. Like Raider's.

"You have to go," she whispered. It was almost a question. Disappointment was so strong it amounted to grief.

By way of response, he moved within her again, slow and deep, making her gasp.

"Why? Had enough already?" he asked raggedly.

"No...never," she managed. And it was true. Despite what they'd just done, she was already desperate for more. She couldn't get enough of him, she would *die* if he stopped now...

"Raider!" came that voice again, more imperious than ever, but her lover never paused his long, deep strokes.

"Coming, sir," he threw over his shoulder, surely not loud enough to be heard, and yet through her involuntary gasp of laughter, she heard a more ominously threatening, "Raider!" from the shore, just before all coherent thought vanished into the rising cloud of sensation that enveloped her. This was like nothing that had ever gone before, this was—this was— *oh God!*

Oblivious, they slid under the warm, scented water.

Angelica never knew how long passed before she broke the surface again, gasping for breath, trembling all over with delight. Raider's arms were still around her though they were no longer joined. She thought at first, he was swimming with her limp, sated body in his

grasp—only then she realized that his arms and legs were as still as hers, and when she gazed into his eyes with mute alarm, she saw that his expression was merely resigned.

At the edge of the pool stood only one man. Big and tall, of indeterminate age despite the flowing white beard, he wore a long, dark red coat trimmed with white fur, its hood pushed back to reveal a head of wild, tangled locks the color of snow. It wasn't quite the Santa of her childhood imagination – less *ho-ho-ho* and more *yum-yum-yum* – but it was close enough.

Angelica's mouth fell open. This was all *real*! All this elf stuff, all this magic...How could she doubt it after what she had just known with Raider? And now...

Now the eyes of Santa Claus were incandescent with rage. Angelica felt the instant he relinquished his control of them, for Raider suddenly splashed wildly in the water before finding his footing. Hastily, he lifted her, pushing her up onto the bank, and hauled himself out.

Somewhere, Angelica was aware of the freezing snow under her feet, of the icy wind on her wet, naked skin, but chiefly, she was conscious of Raider's emotions—guilt, shame, defiance. And, surely, the same exhilarating joy that consumed her.

Without sparing her a glance, Santa flicked one hand towards her. Instantly, she felt warm and dry and when she looked down in astonishment, she saw that she was dressed again. Turning her gaze on Raider to share this new wonder, she observed with the first real stirrings of unease that his eyes were locked to Santa's. She had lost not only his *undivided* attention but all of it. Stupidly, she began to feel cold again.

"Well, Raider?" said the big man in red ominously. "I need an explanation."

Raider's lips opened as if he couldn't stop them, only then he closed them again, tightly.

"I see," said Santa. He eyed the gorgeously naked, shivering elf before him without apparent pity. Clearly he hadn't allowed Raider the same comfort against the cold as she had been granted. "Then *I* had better explain it to *you*. On my way here to collect the presents for tonight I encountered a cab carrying a guest of ours whom you had ejected from the party – without his wish being granted! He made his wish to me instead."

Billy? Angelica thought blankly.

Raider's eyes closed. "No," he said, his voice cracking with the first sign of weakness that Angelica had seen. Uncomprehending, it still broke her heart. "Please no. I'll do anything..."

"You've already done enough!" Santa roared. "The party is unsupervised, your staff are running riot ignoring the wishes of our guests for their own pleasure! Nothing is ready for me to take tonight and yet you, *you* are frolicking here as if you hadn't a care in the world! With the woman who is the dearest wish of the guest you threw out! I hope she was worth it, Raider, *because you are fired!*"

Pam Champagne

Fired? Raider was being fired because of her? Guilt battled shame inside her head and would have won except that anger joined the fray.

Angelica bristled. Who the hell did this man think he was firing Raider? *Santa Claus, my ass.* She straightened her shoulders and stepped forward until she stood toe to toe with jolly ole St. Nick. "Look. You've made a mistake here."

Santa frowned, his gaze burning holes in her skin. Angelica staggered two steps back and would have fallen into the pool if Raider hadn't grabbed her arm.

"How dare you question me, young lady?" Santa barked. Angelica swallowed the lump forming in her throat. No doubt about it. The man was in a rage.

At first Angelica thought Raider shifted from foot to foot because he was nervous, but she noticed his skin had taken on a bluish tinge. "Get dressed Raider," she ordered.

Now Santa really frowned. His face turned red. He didn't look so jolly. More like he was going to explode at any moment. "You..." he sputtered. You dare usurp my authority?" The only sounds in the dark was his heavy breathing and the low murmur from the rest of the elves who stood watching the scene unfolding in front of them.

"You fired him. Remember? He no longer has to stand here taking orders from you."

"Angelica," Raider whispered, as he yanked on his pants. "That's enough. I can fend for myself."

"Sir," Raider placed himself in front of Santa. "I'm sure we can straighten out this minor misunderstanding."

Angelica smiled. How sweet of Raider to want to protect her from Santa's wrath. To find a man who could satisfy her sexual needs and want to keep her safe. What more could a woman want?

"Misunderstanding? I find you and the rest of your cohorts ballicky bare-assed in the magical waters screwing women. And you call it a minor misunderstanding?"

Oh yeah. Santa definitely had a hair across his butt over this one. Angelica tried another tact. "Well what about my Christmas wish? I was a guest so I do get one. Don't I?"

"That's true," Santa relented somewhat. And what was your wish?"

She crossed her fingers behind her back and hoped Santa wasn't psychic. "I wished for a night of passion with Raider."

"Hmmm. That's the same wish the guy in the cab made."

She giggled. "Billy asked for a night of passion with Raider?"

"Don't be a smart ass," Santa warned. "He wants a night with you."

Angelica faced Santa with a hand on her hip and pointed a finger at his chest. "Well, he's not getting one."

"He broke her heart, Sir," Raider offered.

"Whatever. The problems between mere mortals are of no concern to me. What does concern me is the fact that it's Christmas Eve. And nothing's ready as it's supposed to be. I find every damn one of my workers involved in an orgy. And the supervisor right smack in the thick of it."

Raider cleared his throat and sneezed. "I admit it does look bad, Sir."

"And stop with the Sir shit."

"Don't speak to him like that," Angelica said. Concerned for his health, Angelica turned to Raider. "Are you catching a cold?"

"Oh for God's sake. Stop babying him. He's a grown elf." Santa turned to Raider. "You've got one more chance. " The red clad arm pointed to all the elves and their mates, who stood around in a circle, still naked and shivering. "Get these elves back working and have everything ready in two hours. If you can do that you've got your job."

"As for you young lady, you come with me."

Raider put an arm around Angelica. "Where are you taking her?"

"That," Santa emphasized the word, "is none of your concern."

Angelica still reeled from the shock of Santa's words. Where was he taking her? One glance at Raider told her that he'd not willingly leave her with Santa. She couldn't be the cause of him losing his job, not after the pleasure he'd given her in the pool. She squirmed with desire even thinking about it.

"It's okay, Raider. I'll be fine. Go do what you have to do."

Raider walked away with the other elves. She lifted a hand and waved when he looked at her over his shoulder.

“Well, Angelica, are you ready? Do people call you Angel?” Santa leaned his head back and roared with laughter.

Judith Gilbert

"Where are you taking me?"

Angelica rushed headlong through the woods to keep pace with Santa, who lifted his bearded chin and gave her a thorough look of displeasure.

"Where you belong."

"With Raider," she said in defiance.

"With your own kind. Don't you dare question my judgment in this matter, young lady."

The sharpness of his words pricked her heart. This man was nothing like the Santa she'd imagined as a child. Tears filled her eyes. "I know I'm a mere mortal, but there must be a way..."

In the blink of an eye, they stood in the ballroom. Across from them, Billy paced the length of the room. He turned, wariness in his eyes as he hurried toward them.

"Thank goodness he found you, before you did something stupid."

Santa chuckled and winked at her. "I have a lot of work to do. I'll leave you two alone for awhile, let you iron all this out." He placed a finger beside his nose and vanished.

She'd never call making love with Raider stupid. She got hot just thinking about him moving inside her, those long, sure strokes. On the other hand, her relationship with Billy was an entirely different matter. Not once had she felt real passion, the kind that sent her up in uncontrollable flames. She glanced at Billy. Yeah, stupid pretty much described why she stayed with him. "I did that by living with you for two years."

"That's anger talking. You had a right to slap me earlier. Why'd I listen to Bob when he told me you cheated? Why didn't I punch his lights out, see what he said as nothing but accusations, instead of accepting them as facts?"

"Because you're an ass?"

"Okay!" His lips tightened into a thin, angry line.

He acts like a jerk and he's mad at me.

"You had some nerve asking Santa for one night with me."

"I can explain. The old coot said if I attended the party I was entitled to one wish and it would be granted. It sounded like a good idea at the time." He rammed his fingers through his hair. "I don't guess you'd like to. . ."

"Are you serious?" She huffed out an angry breath. "Go to hell."

His eyes flashed anger as he took a step toward her. "Look, what do you want from me, Angelica? I'm sorry. I can't undo the past."

"Neither can I."

She thought of Raider. The way he listened, comforted her when she cried. The way he touched her, so patient, tender, caring. The way he met her every need, even when she demanded he take her within fifteen seconds or she'd find another elf, as if any one else would do. A bubble of laughter rose inside her. Pure joy, warmth filled her. She smiled.

"What did you do with that freak?" Billy's mouth turned down in a distasteful snarl. He glared at her.

A picture of Raider played across her mind like a hot, summer breeze. All six foot four of him lay sprawled across the bed, naked. His eyes drunk with need as he watched her. His long, hard corkscrew-shaped erection was poised, ready to enter her, give her more pleasure than she'd ever imagined.

She lifted her chin in defiance and stared at Billy. "I threw myself at him, seduced him and demanded satisfaction."

"You're joking. You wouldn't sleep with that son-of-a-bitch."

"Why not? I slept with one for two years."

"Hell. H-he must have used something on you. Some trick. Some magic spell. Dammit it, Angelica, this isn't like you. I-I mean, you wouldn't willingly sleep with an elf. For God's sake, he isn't human."

Like a giant chasm growing wider by the minute, Angelica saw no possible solution to their problem. Raider was an elf, immortal. She was human, mortal. One day death would separate them. "I wish I was like Raider. I'd give anything not to be human."

"You bitch. You'd choose that bastard over me?" He laughed, the sound laced with bitterness. "I take it back. I wouldn't screw you if you begged for it."

"Billy!" The deep voice echoed like angry thunder across the ballroom.

Lynn Warren

"Would you care to explain this?"

Billy turned slowly at the sound to find Santa and a group of very angry elves staring at him. "I thought you were going to leave us alone."

Santa smiled a very thin, nearly sinister smile that made Angelica wary. There were at least seven elves with him and Raider stood in the background his amazing eyes bright with anger. She could tell by the way Billy's body stiffened he was looking for trouble. Santa put his hands on his hips and frowned. "Now Billy, you've been a very bad boy this year. Cheating on your girlfriend and to top it off lying to Santa." The jolly ol' elf—who wasn't terribly jolly at the moment—took a step forward. His elf brigade stepped forward as well.

"Back off, Santa. This isn't any of your business."

Wagging a finger at him, Santa tsked. "You should know better than that, Billy. This time of year, everything is my business." He stopped beside Angelica and turned a genuine smile on her. "I am sorry, my dear. This young man isn't worth your heart or your effort."

"Don't I know that." Angelica glared at Billy, "I think you'd better leave. While these guys give you a chance."

"Do you think I'm scared of some prissy elves and an old man?" Billy grabbed her upper arm and yanked her forward. "We'll leave. Together."

Santa shrugged and a twinkle appeared in his eye. "Now, you've made a mistake." Using his gloved hand Santa pried Billy's fingers away. Holding him like he was a rag doll, Santa turned to Raider. "I owe you an apology. You and Angelica." He passed Billy off to Alfred and another elf with platinum blond hair. "Show him how to clean the reindeer's stalls. And then give him a lovely parting gift for Christmas."

The elves smiled and took Billy away. He struggled for a moment but elves evidently possessed a superior strength. The remainder of the elf brigade followed them leaving Raider and Angelica alone with Santa.

"I'm not surprised he cheated on me, you know? Not after all his pretend outrage and bullshit." Angelica was over being angry. She really didn't want to waste anymore time on a

man so unworthy of her. "I can't even begin to tell you how happy I am that I came to your party tonight Raider."

The tall, deliciously sexy elf wrapped his arms around her. "It's still going on, love. We can go back anytime."

"Then let's get out of here. I was having the best holiday ever." Angelica wound her arm around his waist and snuggled closer.

"One moment," Santa raised one finger giving them both a stern look. Then he smiled and Angelica nearly melted into a puddle. Boy, he could sure turn on the charm when he wanted. "You made a wish earlier, Angelica. Was that a true wish or one made out of spite?"

Angelica glanced up at him, considering. Had she really meant it? Did she want to be an elf and live at the North Pole? Did Raider even want her after tonight? Or was she just a one night stand for a sexy elf who didn't want Christmas Eve to go to waste? So many questions flooded her brain it made her dizzy. She leaned harder against Raider who tightened his hold on her. She licked her lips. "I don't know. Is this just a holiday fling?" Her eyes sought Raider's and waited. "I hate to put you on the spot but this is my life here."

Raider's brows drew together. "What did you wish for?"

"I wished to be an elf and stay with you."

"Really?" He opened his mouth, closed it then opened it again. "I don't know what to say."

"Well you ought to say, 'Angelica, that sounds fantastic' and be done with that." Santa boomed.

Raider grinned, "It does. Sound fantastic."

"I don't want to pressure you."

He pressed a hard kiss on her shocked mouth. "I'm glad you did-now I don't have to. I want you to stay with me, Angelica. Always."

"Angelica?" Santa peered down at them and from out of no where a piece of frosted mistletoe appeared in his hand.

"Yes, oh yes...I never thought I could fall for anyone so fast, Raider. But I'm so happy I did." Angelica wrapped both arms around his neck and stood on her tiptoes to kiss him.

His mouth was warm and his tongue deliciously hot as it swept in and tangled with hers. Her fingers tangled in the ends of his hair as she slanted her head to get a better taste of him. He tasted of mulled wine and spices, warm and fragrant with just a hint of clove.

The air around them shimmered and she swore she heard bells tinkle in the distance. The night seemed frosty with winter although Angelica could've sworn it was clear earlier. She broke the kiss and gasped for breath seeing steam come from her lips. Glancing around at the enchanted world bathed in blue light from the moon, she blinked. "Where are we?"

Raider opened his eyes and looked around. "On my front porch." He gestured to a beautiful Tudor style home nestled against others in a mystical forest. "What do you think?"

"Oh it's amazing." Like something out of a movie, Angelica brushed a long strand of hair out of her face and tucked it behind her ear.

"Ha ha!" Raider pointed at her and chuckled. He reached for her hand and pulled her to the door.

"What?" Angelica looked around wondering if she'd stepped in something. "What?"

Raider opened the door to his home and grinned. "Welcome home, Angelica." He swooped his head down and ran his tongue over the tip of her ear.

Angelica shuddered as her body turned to a flash bomb instantaneously. Spasms rolled over but didn't crest. "Omigod!" She gripped the front of Raider's soft shirt. "What on earth was that?"

"Not 'that', *those*." He urged inside the warm home where a fire glowed gently in the massive hearth. "Those are elf ears. And you've got them now, my darling."

"I'm an elf?" It came out more like a squeak than she intended. "Really?"

"Yes and all mine." He put his hand on the door. "Now let me show you just how sensitive those ears can be." He drew her into his arms and closed the door behind them.

In the distance, reindeer bells jingled and Santa roared with a hearty laugh, "Merry Christmas to all. And to all, a good night!"

The End