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Gift Exchange

Bonnie Dee

Holiday eBook Freebie

Note to Readers: Happy holidays, whichever ones you celebrate! I hope you enjoy this interlude featuring characters from my "Countess" series. To find out how the countess and her paramour got together, read *The Countess Lends a Hand*. To find out what happens next, read *The Countess Lends a Hand*.

Gift Exchange
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Rough stubble lightly abraded the tender skin of her inner thighs as Chris rubbed his face between her legs. La Comtesse de Chevalier shivered and bit her lower lip in anticipation of the slow slide up to her pussy and his warm mouth caressing her there. But he surprised her by heading the opposite way.

His soft lips glided down to her knee. He kissed the back of it while he scooted his body lower. What game was her beloved up to tonight? Meredith waited with pent breath to find out. The room was silent but for the pelting of icy rain against the windowpane and the hiss and crackle of burning logs in the fireplace. The heat from the fire was slowly drying out the tree boughs on the mantel which wafted a sharp pine scent throughout the bedroom. Could there be a more perfect Christmas Eve than this with Christopher back from his travels just in time for the holiday?

Without stopping to wash away the grime of travel, he'd dropped his bags in the hall and strode straight into her waiting arms. He'd given her a long, passionate kiss then lifted her in his arms and carried her upstairs to their room, kissing her all the way. It was a wonder he could navigate the steps or the hallway. In fact, there was a bit of bumping into walls and knocking her into the doorframe as he rushed to get her to bed.

Meredith laughed as he tossed her on the mattress. She sprawled there in her virginal white linen nightgown, gazing up at him with seductive eyes guaranteed to make him frantic with lust. His fingers fumbled with the buttons of his coat. At last he jerked the heavy greatcoat off and flung it on the ground then sat on the edge of the bed to work his muddy boots off his feet.

She loved how her professor looked with several days' worth of tawny stubble shading his jaw. His brown hair was longer than ever, covering the back of his neck. He looked wild and primitive—like some hill tribesman from the Arabic land he'd just visited. One would never look at him now and see a Cambridge-educated botanical scholar. The reserved Christopher Whitby whose father had essentially "hired" her to make a man of him was certainly all man now, but it wasn't Meredith's doing. She might have released his sexual nature, but it was he who'd helped her to become a better woman.

"How was your trip?" she asked. "Did you find what you were looking for?"

He merely grunted as he stripped off the rest of his clothes. "Can't talk now." And he burrowed between her legs, pushing her nightshift up past her hips. After he'd kissed her belly, hips and thighs until she moaned, he murmured, "Ah, here it is. This is what I couldn't find on my trip."

Meredith reached down and tousled his hair before falling back against the pillows to revel in the pleasure he gave her with his mouth and hands. But that was when he began moving farther south rather than toward her sex.

She opened one eye and peered down at the endearing fall of his hair over his forehead and the slice of his handsome profile. He nibbled her calves and her ankles, his hands caressing both legs as he went lower. Sitting up, he took her foot in one hand and kissed the instep, the arch, the heel and each toe.

The touch of his mouth was like bird wings fluttering against her. The tickling reminded her of the time he'd tortured her bound body with flicks of a feather. She groaned and wiggled her foot. He kissed the top of it then turned to its mate, giving it the same loving treatment.

"Since when have you become a foot fetishist?"

"Since I bought you a pair of embroidered Moroccan slippers and fantasized for days about how your feet would look in them." He sucked her pinky toe into his mouth and her stomach flipped.

"Really?" Meredith pushed up on her elbows. "Where are they? I want to see them."

"Downstairs in my bag along with your other Christmas presents, or at least some of them. I have one in my coat pocket." His slow smile roused her curiosity.

"Get it!"

"Shh. Not yet. Lie back and let me make love to you first."

She sank back into the pillows and relaxed, content to let Chris take control this time, although she had plans of her own for him later. That was why they were a perfect match, sexually. On any given encounter either of them might be in the power position. It kept things interesting.

He returned his attention to her foot, kissing and sucking on her toes. The soft tugging sent tickling minnows of lust wiggling in her belly. Her pussy clenched and released, wet and slippery. She stared through heavy lidded eyes at the enchanting sight of her lover worshipping her feet.

At last he set them on the bed and moved up to lie above her, gazing down at her. His eyes caught glimmers of firelight and sparkled like sapphires. "I don't want to travel without you again. *Euphorbia resinifera* was just another shrub after all, not nearly as interesting as hearing you complain about the desert heat would have been."

"Are you saying I'm a bad traveler?" She raised her brows. She thought she'd done well on their trip to China, hardly mentioning her seasickness during the voyage and rarely whining about the living conditions or the cold in the mountains.

"I'm only saying I don't want to be without you for so long ever again."

Meredith understood exactly. She'd become attached to Chris despite her best early efforts to push him away and now couldn't imagine ever doing without him.

He kissed the tip of her nose then settled his mouth over hers, soft nibbles and flicks of his tongue coaxing hers to respond. They kissed and kissed like first time lovers, content to do only that for a time. But she felt the thickness of his cock pressing against her pussy and after a while his hips began to move. His heavy length glided up and down her groove, rubbing over her erect clitoris with every stroke.

Meredith moaned and arched her bottom off the bed to meet his slow thrusts. She was open and ready and his cock was swollen with need. There would be plenty of time to take their time later, but right now she needed him inside her.

Braced on his arms and once more gazing into her face with his beautiful gemlike eyes, Christopher guided himself to her opening and entered with one strong thrust, filling her completely. She gave a sigh of satisfaction and gripped around him, welcoming him home. He slid easily into her like a sword into a sheath—or in keeping with a more botanical theme, like a hummingbird's beak into a flower.

Meredith smiled and wrapped her arms and legs around him, pulling him to her. Her breasts mashed flat against his hard chest. She could feel his heat through the thin lawn of her gown. Her nipples were sensitive to the brush of the fabric and his chest rubbing against them.

He lowered his body, pressing his face into the crook of her neck as he thrust against her. The warmth and moisture of his breath blew against her skin, and she murmured near his ear, "Fuck me harder, my love. Fuck me!"

She knew coarse encouragement mingled with endearments drove him wild. There was still a trace of the modest professor in him, enough to be shocked, titillated and highly aroused by her use of crude language. Considering some of the things they

did together, it was odd that spoken words still had power over him, but she was glad they did because she enjoyed using them.

“Harder. Fuck me. Fill me. I need all of you inside me.” Meredith was arousing herself as well as her lover with each imprecation, and she meant every one of them. She couldn’t get enough of his cock, now ramming into her. Her body strained for the moment of bliss which seemed nearly unattainable yet always inevitably arrived.

Chris grunted and pushed. She moaned and thrust, and suddenly her climax burst through her like an unexpected gift of sparkling diamonds. She jerked and shuddered, digging her fingers into his back. Her feet locked together around his waist and she bucked against him.

Driven to greater heights by the sounds of her orgasm, he groaned and plunged into her twice more before he released. His cock pulsed, warm wetness gushing inside her, and she sighed. This was the bliss she’d reached for even more than her own climax. Perfect happiness was here within her embrace, twitching against her, sweating and panting on her neck. Without Christopher, her life would be dark and her heart constrained in a box once more.

For several long moments they lay melded together by salty sweat. She loved his weight pinning her to the bed and hugged him even tighter before finally unlocking her heels and letting him go.

Chris flopped onto his back with a sigh and gazed up at the blue canopy over the bed. “How I’ve missed this view.” He glanced sideways at Meredith. “And this view.”

She posed for him, eyes seductively downcast, lips pouted, tousled hair streaming over her shoulders. The ribbon lacing her night shift had come undone and her tits were half spilling out of the gauzy garment. She knew she looked the wanton and knew he loved the look.

His eyes gleamed with desire as if he hadn’t just given in to it. “Lovely, but you’re so much more than that—clever and witty, tender and giving, opinionated, bossy, vulnerable and self-doubtful. Madame la Comtesse, you are a bristling bundle of contradictions all wrapped up in a beautiful package.”

She blushed, not because she wasn’t used to hearing compliments from men, but because Christopher was utterly sincere when he offered them. Flattery and flirting weren’t his forte. Instead, his heart lay open and beating before her—honest and true and hers for the taking. It was a heady thing. It was what made her love him.

“Enough. You’re an incorrigible romantic.” She slapped his chest lightly. “Time for the gift giving.”

“Haven’t I just given you a gift?” he asked, eyes widened in mock surprise.

“What’s in your coat pocket?” Meredith sat up and crossed her legs, feeling his spill wetting her inner thighs and loving the dampness because it marked her as his.

“All right, my greedy mistress.” Chris rose and went to his discarded greatcoat. His ass clenched as he bent over to retrieve her gift from the pocket. Then he turned and strode back to the bed, his cock dangling, at ease and sleepy now between his legs. Oh how she adored him, both front and backside.

Meredith caught her breath as she saw the size and shape of the box in his hands—black, small, square. Could it be what it looked like? Was he going to propose after she’d told him firmly that she’d love and be faithful to him, but would never again be any man’s wife? Her heart had changed and her certainty wavered since making that pronouncement, but she’d been scared to admit her new perspective to him.

He knelt on the bed and offered her the box. “Something unusual I picked up in a marketplace in Morocco.”

She took the box and opened the lid. Two acorn-sized shiny brass balls connected by a silver chain lay on a piece of cotton batting within. "Oh!" She reached out her finger and stroked the smooth, cool surface of one of the balls. "What are they?"

"Hah!" he crowed, grinning. "It's finally my turn to show you something new in the bedroom. These, my darling, are called *ben wa* balls. I was told they're from the Orient, and they're used to stimulate a woman's—or a man's—intimate places." He paused then added. "Inside, you understand? To be, uh, held within. It's said to be very arousing in a subtle way."

She looked up at him with raised brows. "And who exactly informed you of all this? Did you make new friends while on your journey?" She was teasing, of course. Her trust in Chris was absolute, but nevertheless a surprising flare of jealousy shot through her at the fantasy of some foreign woman demonstrating the sexual device to him.

His smile widened. "The vendor at the booth was a gentleman from the East with wrinkles and missing front teeth, extremely attractive in his own way. His accent was thick, but eventually, and with enough gestures, he explained the concept."

Meredith picked up the balls by their connecting chain and cupped them in the palm of her hand. They were lighter than she'd expected and made a small tinkling sound as something inside rolled around. "Like little bells! So, I hold them inside my pussy. And what do I do if the chain breaks?"

"I suppose I'd have to go in after them." He crossed his arms over his bare chest and grinned some more. "The student becomes the teacher at last."

"You are inordinately proud of yourself, aren't you?" She suppressed any disappointment she might have felt at the unexpected contents of the box and leaned forward to kiss him. "Thank you for the present, and now there's something I want to show you, but we have to go downstairs."

"Meaning clothes?"

"At least your dressing gown I think. The servants would be unfazed by your nudity but you might catch a chill."

She wrapped her dressing gown around her shift while Chris slipped back into his breeches and tossed on his shirt, unbuttoned. Together they walked down the corridor and the grand staircase. At the bottom, Meredith made him close his eyes.

"I'll lead you the rest of the way." She took his hand and guided him to the conservatory at the back of the house. The glass-protected microcosm of plant life was warm and fragrant, even on such a vile, chilly night with freezing rain coating the panes. Meredith knew the Latin names of many of the plants now. It was impossible to be around Chris and not learn some of his discipline.

She led him down the gravel path and stopped him near the fountain in the center of the room where the Areca palm grew. It wasn't much taller than her, but Chris had told her someday it might grow all the way to the vaulted ceiling.

"All right. Open your eyes." Meredith squeezed his hand and watched his face as he beheld her creation. "Happy Christmas, sweetheart."

His gaze traveled the length of the tree and a smile curved his lips. "This is our Christmas tree?"

"It seemed better than cutting down an evergreen which never did anyone any harm and dragging it into the house. Foolish German custom." She studied the cluster of palm trunks wrapped in scarlet and gold ribbons and the long green fronds festooned with delicate glass ornaments and paper spangles of gold. She'd used the lightest decorations she could find so the big leaves and delicate branches could support them.

"It's beautiful and perfect for us." Chris chuckled and glanced around at the rest of the greenhouse. "This place brought us together; I think it's fitting we spend our Christmas right here."

"That's what I thought so I prepared for it." She took his hand and pulled him farther down the path to a clear space in the lush profusion of plants. She'd laid a quilt piled with pillows there.

As she dragged him down with her onto the soft pallet, she added, "If you're hungry, I'll send for a meal, and if you'd prefer to wash up from your journey first, I can have a bath readied."

He shook his head, rolling onto his back and pulling her on top of him. "I don't want anything, but to lie here with you and enjoy being home. It's the best gift of all."

"I don't know, Oriental sex toys make a pretty good present, too," she teased, leaning to nip his chin.

He captured the back of her neck and tipped his head up to kiss her. "There are more souvenirs in my bag, but nothing as interesting as the *ben wa* balls. I knew you'd really enjoy them...in a humorous way, although you might enjoy them for their intended use as well."

He stopped talking then and gave her a deep, languid kiss that stole her breath and left her melted on top of him like marmalade on toast.

"Mm," she moaned as she pulled away at last and rested her head on his chest. "I did miss your kisses."

"And I missed you curled up beside me in bed at night."

I would spend every night and every day for the rest of my life beside you. Ask me to marry you now and my answer will be different.

There was only the sound of sleet pelting against the glass that formed the cocoon of growing things all around them.

"Happy Christmas," Christopher said, at last breaking the silence. "I love you."

"And I love you, Professor Whitby."

Author Biography

Whether you're a fan of contemporary, paranormal or historical romance, you'll find something to enjoy among my books. My style is down to earth and my characters will feel like well-known friends by the time you've finished reading. If you're used to a strong alpha male in romances, don't expect it here.

While my heroes are manly, they're not aggressively macho. I'm interested in flawed, often damaged, people who find the fulfillment they seek in one another.

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