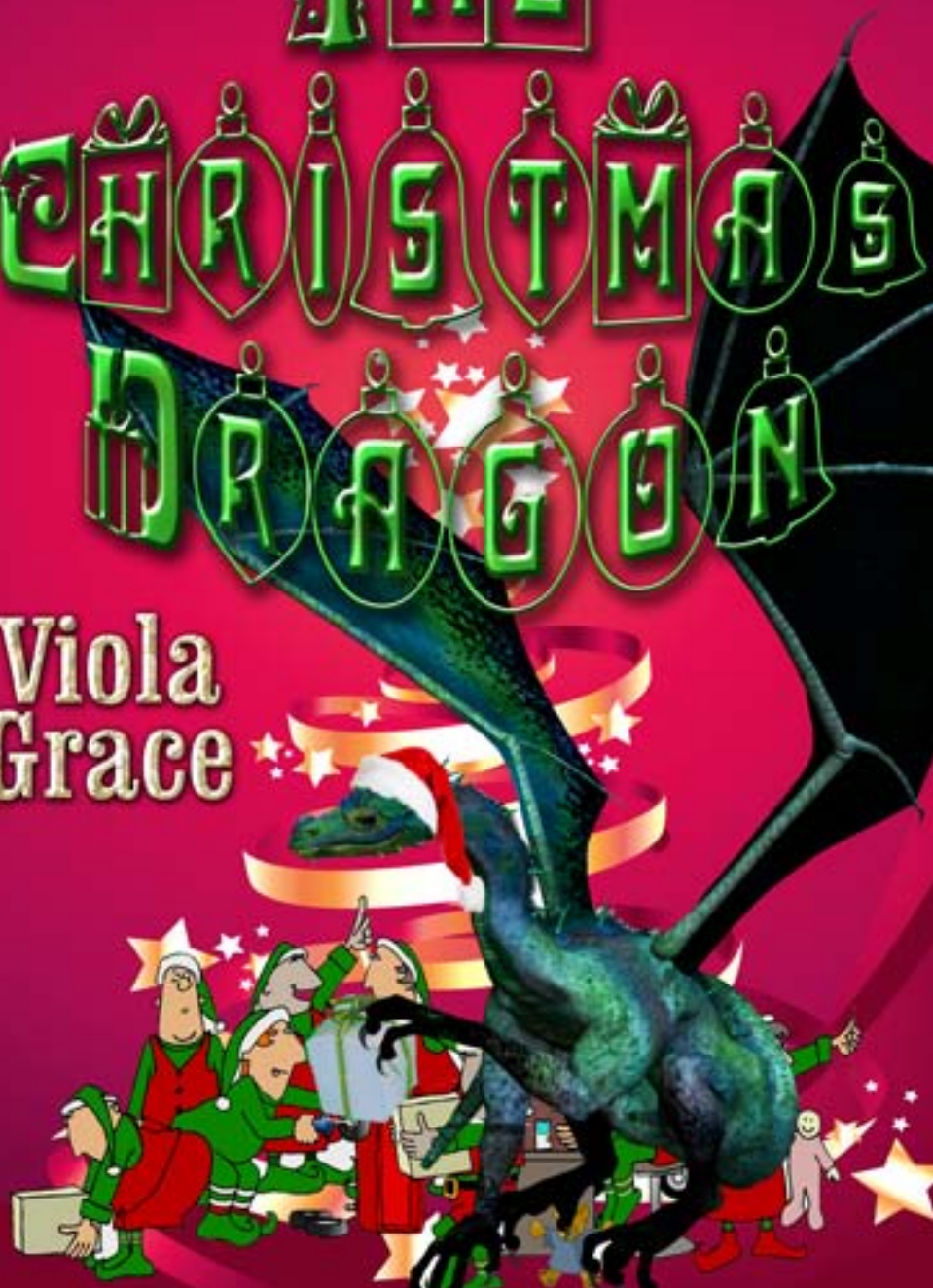


THE CHRISTMAS DRAGON

Viola
Grace



With Sahn-Tah Keelas on his honeymoon, the Christmas Dragon is going to have to deliver all the toys. Too bad he doesn't have the Oldest Elf's stamina. He collapses on Maggie's front lawn and has some severe explaining to do.

Will she believe that the flying lizard means no harm even after he shows her his naked, helpless and hunky human form? Time for strategic application of the Santa hat.

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The Christmas Dragon
Copyright © 2009 Viola Grace
ISBN: 978-1-55487-439-2
Cover art by Martine Jardin

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Published by eXtasy Books
Look for us online at:
www.extasybooks.com

The Christmas Dragon

By

Viola Grace

Dedication

To my Aunt Mary who lost her battle with breast cancer this fall. Her love of life, joy, fun and family will be an example I will try to live up to for the rest of my life.

Merry Christmas, Mary.

Chapter One

Maggie listened to the gentle crackle of her fire and hummed along with the Celtic Christmas Carols that were playing. It was a solitary Christmas for her this year. Her sister had succumbed to breast cancer during the summer and it had been hard for her to keep her mood cheerful during the holidays.

Mandy had been bright, happy and the kind of sister one could only dream of. She had caught the tumour too late and the rounds of chemo had only slowed her inevitable death. Until the end, she had tried to keep Maggie's spirits up, the sick ministering to the depressed and hopeless. It would have been funny if it hadn't been so bittersweet.

This Christmas, instead of friends and family, Maggie was at her mountain cabin and watching the wonders of the winter world. Each day of life was a miracle and the constant references to her sister's demise were a quick way to wrench her out of the holiday spirit. She remembered Mandy

with every breath that she took, but wanted to remember her life, not her death. Life in the mountains did just that.

She had decorated the cabin just the way she liked it, with fresh boughs of evergreens and big blue bows. Judicious dashes of red and silver completed her décor and created a beautiful effect. More than one tear fell as she decorated, but she pushed on through until she had a home that felt and smelled like Christmas.

Her last step was to go and find a tree. That would wait for the morning. Only an idiot wandered around the mountainside at night.

It was odd to be woken with a crash, but that was definitely the sound that went on and on through the otherwise silent night. “What the hell?”

She was out of bed and slithering into her jeans and boots in a matter of seconds. Her coat went on over her nightshirt and she pulled her earmuffs on while she made for the door and grabbed the high-powered flashlight. Whatever had made that crash was big and if an aircraft had landed in the area, she wanted to offer what help she could. Outside, she grabbed her toboggan and hauled it behind her. There was the noise of still-falling trees to follow and a bright blue glow that radiated from the crash site.

Something had hit hard. The path she was following was large enough for a commercial aircraft, but when she got within two hundred feet, the glow suddenly winked out. It was obviously not a fire. She moved as quickly as she could with the toboggan banging along behind her.

The snow had been planed flat so she didn't have to watch her footing as carefully as she otherwise would, but she still stumbled to a halt when the crater appeared in front of her. Inside the vast hole in the snow was a figure. As she stumbled down the slope, it turned into a man. A very naked man.

Well, he wasn't naked precisely. He was wearing a Santa hat and that was all.

She rolled him over and checked him from head to toe. Part of her would have considered it a fun occupation under other circumstances, but for now, she breathed a sigh of relief at his lack of broken limbs and discoloration.

He should have been blue or white with cold, but he wasn't. That worried her. His pulse was strong so she took a chance and loaded him on to the toboggan and tucked her jacket around his torso, and with a twist of her lips, she put the Santa hat over his endowments. It would keep her gaze on the path in front of her.

She hauled him back to her cabin, smiling with

relief as they regained the warmth provided by the banked fire. With only her pyjama top to heat her torso, she was shivering and sweating at the same time. Not a good combination in cold weather.

Maggie pulled her cargo into the area in front of the fireplace and stoked the blaze. The embers flared to life and she added wood slowly to the fire until it was crackling happily again. With the matter of heat taken care of, she turned back to her guest and removed her jacket to replace it with the blanket she kept on the sofa.

Steeling her nerves, she shucked her gloves and muffs to start checking his limbs for breaks that were not obvious. His muscled limbs felt wonderful and shockingly warm under her hands, but they were intact. His arms and shoulders would have done credit to a Greek statue, but they were whole and very hard.

She tilted her head and assessed his cleanly chiselled jaw line and the light curls of his wavy, black hair. It was so dark as to be blue and it set off the bronze of his complexion perfectly. The wings of his brows arched over his deep set eyes and blade of a nose. It was kind of fun to examine him as he was unaware, but as she touched the locks on the side of his face, the point to his ear stunned her. Her fingers reached out to touch and at that moment, his eyelids flew open.

Her hand was caught in an iron grip and he turned to one side, dropping both the hat and the blanket. "Where am I?"

"You are in my cabin in the mountains. I found you in a crater."

"A crater? Really? I must have been hauling." He blinked his deep blue eyes and his thick lashes caressed his cheeks. His gaze raked over her from head to toe and he quirked his mouth. "Interesting fashion choice."

Blushing, she followed his gaze to the almost transparent top, well-worn and well-loved with a kitten on it. His focus seemed fixed on her visible nipples so she crossed her arms. "I was asleep and I heard this crash. I went to see if I could help."

"And you found me and dragged me back here on this conveyance? You are a brave woman to be running out into the dark and cold to offer help to strangers." He shifted toward her and freed himself from the wooden bars of the toboggan. His obvious erection was now within touching distance.

With her face flaming from his proximity, she grabbed for the hat and flipped it onto his stiff cock. "Put that away. It's a little early in the morning for me."

He reared back and then laughed loud and long.

Maggie started out enjoying his laugh and then

got a little creeped out when she saw the canines that her boy was sporting. Fangs and pointed ears? This was a little intense for her. She must have frostbitten her brain. "What's your name?"

"Syrus. What is your name, my lovely rescuer?" He knelt in front of her and, though she was on her own knees, he towered above her.

She had known that he overlapped the toboggan, but anyone who wasn't a toddler would have. He was huge and that damned hat was pointing straight at her. "Maggie. Maggie Konrad. Are you sure that you are alright? You were probably exposed to whatever crashed there. Maybe a meteor or something."

He chuckled, a deep rich sound. "I am afraid that I was the cause of that crash. The explanation will have to wait until I get something to eat. I don't suppose you could accommodate me?"

"Of course. I will warm up some cinnamon buns and then make you a proper breakfast. Is bacon and eggs okay with you?" She scrambled to her feet and grabbed the buns she mentioned, popping them into the microwave for a few seconds. The generator and power supply had been one of her favourite renovations. It made coming to the cabin so much more comfortable.

"Anything relating to pigs and chickens is fine. Thank you."

Blinking at the mental image that he brought

out of a barnyard breakfast, she set the buns on a plate and handed it to him, then scampered back to her bedroom to pull on a bra and shirt.

“Aw. Did you have to?” His mouth was crammed with pastry, but he spoke perfectly clearly.

“Have to what?”

“Cover your breasts. I think they are lovely and they certainly increased my appetite.”

In a move that she could not have predicted, he licked a crumb off his cheekbone. There was no way that a human tongue could have reached that spot. She picked up knife from her block and stood with her back to the counter. He was looking at her curiously when she blurted, “What are you?”

Chapter Two

“Please calm down, Maggie. The knife wouldn’t hurt me anyway.” He sat and kept munching on the cinnamon buns. “Did you really not see me?”

The knife stayed pointed at him. “See you? Sure I saw you. I saw you naked in a crater.”

“Ah. Well, I am a dragon. I was practicing for Christmas when I ran out of energy and fell asleep.” He shook his head dramatically. “I swear I don’t know how Sahn does it.”

“What?”

“Sahn-Tah Kelas. Your Santa Claus. He has requested this year off his regular duties so that he and his wife can have a belated honeymoon. I was doing a dry run of the route last night when I crashed.” His grin could have melted concrete. “Fortunately, you found me and are taking wonderful care of this poor, scaly creature.”

He was nuts. That had to be it. “You don’t seem

to have scales."

"You are not seeing me in my proper form. This one is easier to get assistance in. Part of me must have been able to sense you coming."

His tongue did that flick again and although she was frightened, part of her was fascinated. With a body that buff and a tongue with that dexterity, he could keep a woman warm in cold weather for hours or possibly days. Shaking her head violently, she put the knife down carefully, glaring at him. "You are a nut and I need you to return to the naked snow commune where you came from or get out of my imagination."

He laughed. "If that is your wish I will be on my way. Thank you for the food. Next time, I look forward to a proper breakfast."

"There will be no next time. You will disappear and I will be able to get on with my Christmas. I have planned to be alone this holiday and once you go, I will have everything that I want. So go. Poof. Turn into ether." She flapped her hand at him and waited.

Syrus crossed the distance between them and took his hand in hers. "I thank you for your kind heart and your hospitality. Be well and Merry Christmas." He brought her hand to his lips.

The warm kiss and flick of his tongue sent heat flaring through her that rivalled the flames in the fireplace. He gave her a jaunty salute, put the red

hat on his head and splendidly naked, he walked to the door. One more wave and he was gone.

She blinked furiously, then moved to the window. His nude highness stood in her front yard in the light of false dawn and changed into a blue dragon larger than a greyhound bus. Maggie's knees buckled as he took off and headed north. His great wings scooped pillars of air that made the snow dance and cover his tracks. Soon all traces of him were gone.

All except his half-eaten cinnamon bun.

* * * *

"Syrus, what the hell took you so long?" Walther was the soul of courtesy, normally. This close to Christmas, he got a little testy. With Sahn-Tah away from the Pole, nothing was running as smoothly as it should.

Shifting from his dragon to human form was difficult when he was this exhausted, but the bit of warmth and sustenance he had received from Maggie had gone a long way to helping recharge him. "I collapsed after the trial run. Making it to all the drop points is a tricky proposition and I may have to do the run once or twice more to make sure I can do it on the day." He stretched and tossed the hat over to the butler. "The stealth charm on this thing needs to be turned up if it is to

hide me.”

“I will get the elves on it.” The butler flipped a velvet wrap to Syrus.

Smiling slightly, he wrapped it around his hips. Walther was a bit of a prude, but no sense antagonizing him. With Sahn gone, the staid elf was in charge.

“Were there any additional difficulties?”

“No. Well. I was seen by a very attractive human. She thinks I am a figment of her imagination, but she did feed me.” He was still intrigued by Maggie and it was showing. The wrap around his hips was rapidly becoming a tent.

“You were seen by a human? You will need to take her memory.” They were walking through the halls, dodging the frenetic delivery elves and passing the Nice and Naughty room.

“How do I go about that?” He knew the answer, but wanted to play a little before he agreed to go back to Maggie.

Walther sighed heavily. “You take some of the crystal snowflakes and put them under her pillow. She will sleep and when she wakes, she won’t remember you. Wear the hat while you plant them and you won’t have a problem.”

Ahead of them was the Wish Room. Westa the spirit of Luck, was already inside with her husband, Henry, the dragon, Kevik, and his wife,

Holly, working on bringing the wishes of children into the real world with touches of Christmas Magic. Holly was the spirit of Judgement and as such, was ideally suited for the job of granting wishes from children who needed more than a simple present during the holidays. Sometimes life was not as simple as adults liked to think and children could not be pacified with a simple toy.

It was something that Syrus was glad he didn't have to deal with. This was a one time trip for him. He had crossed over from the magic world of Underhill for the purpose of helping out an old friend. Once that was done, he would return through the portal and have this as a memory of a good deed. A good deed and the memory of Maggie.

That one human woman kept teasing at his senses. Her taste was incredible, fresh and magical. If he didn't know better, he would think that she was something more than human. Her body was perfectly suited to his hands and that was just judging by eye. If he actually got his hands on her, he would be able to confirm it in a most pleasurable manner. He looked forward to being proven right.

"What are you thinking about? You are pitching so much wood I am going to fetch an axe."

Walther's irritated voice came to him and Syrus

stilled the churning maelstrom of his thoughts. Time to create a plan of attack that would allow him access to his human while he went through the motions of executing the Christmas deliveries. "I was thinking about human women and their curves. It is a topic that springs to mind from time to time." He grinned. "And so other things spring up. Dragons have needs, you know."

"As do elves, but we engage in a courtship before surrendering to rampaging lusts." The sneer was unmistakable.

"I am not surrendering to lust. I am merely becoming intimately acquainted before I go any further." Chuckling at the knowledge that he had to see Maggie at least one more time to wipe her mind, he embraced the possibilities. It was truly a magical time of the year.

Chapter Three

Her preparations for the day were almost complete. Maggie only needed one more thing before sundown to gear up for the holiday and then it would be all warm cider and a night by the fire. It was time to get her tree.

Maggie pulled on her boots, parka and gloves with a jaunty toss to her scarf. She was on her way to kill a tree. She had her toboggan and her with her, nothing else was really needed for her procedure. Time to choose the best pine for her purpose.

The red glow of the sun threw marks in the snow into sharp relief. Upon further inspection, the snow had formed large Godzilla style footprints. They were mostly filled in and were probably the reason for her weird dream that morning. Dragons. Yeah right. It was about as likely as having her garden gnomes come to life and doing her yard work.

Shaking her head at the fanciful turn her thoughts had taken, she moved away from the dragon prints and off to the stand of trees. The first tree was too tall. The second was too lopsided. The third reminded her of her fourth grade teacher. The fourth tree was just right. Six feet tall with a big bushy base. She started hacking at the base and it shook snow on her with every stroke. When it dumped down the back of her shirt, she squealed and jumped back. Dropping her axe, she shook it out as best she could with her parka in the way.

"What is it? What is wrong?" The deep baritone hummed out of the darkness.

Maggie shrieked and looked down for the axe. It was deep in the snow and she couldn't get it out in a hurry. "Who is there?"

"Syrus. We met this morning." He came out of the shadows to meet her wide-eyed gaze with his own.

"You are dressed. I distinctly remember you being naked." She was stupefied. His dark shirt and pants looked centuries out of date and yet perfectly suited him. His hair blended with the fabric and framed his face. She was going to say more when the tree she was working on shifted alarmingly. She squeaked in surprise when he swept her into his arms and away from the falling pine.

"Why are you chopping a tree in the dark? It is most unwise."

"I started when it was light. I would have been done if you hadn't surprised me." She was a little defensive and mildly irritated that the thickness of her clothing kept all contact with his body in her imagination. *Damn it.*

"You are very light," he said it almost absently as he shifted her to one arm and grabbed the tree with the other. "Where did you want this tree?"

"Ideally, in my house in one piece. It's my Christmas tree. Tomorrow, I decorate it and put the presents my friends gave me under it."

He began striding to her cabin, her cradled with one arm and the tree with the other.

"My axe, the toboggan..."

"I will retrieve them later. A holiday tradition isn't something to die over and you cannot see in the dark like I can." Irritation coated his tone and he stopped at her door.

She could opened it for them. Inside, he slid her down his body, the puff of her coat seemed to frustrate him so he removed it. Maggie shucked her gloves and touched his skin for the first time. She cupped his jaw line and stroked his flesh, amazed at the smoothness of his skin. No five o'clock shadow or trace of a beard dared to interrupt the texture of his skin.

She traced the outline of his wide mouth with

her fingertips and his tongue flicked out to touch her, taste her. Evidently he liked what he tasted because he sucked her fingertip into his mouth and twisted his dexterous tongue around it. He stroked her digit for a moment and then released her.

"I see you are less frightened of me this evening."

"I have decided that if I have gone insane I am going to enjoy it."

"Well, far be it from me to deny you your hallucination."

Apparently, for an imaginary dragon, that constituted foreplay because he lifted her up and wrapped her limbs around his waist, then walked her to her bedroom with his erection rubbing against her clit through her jeans.

They hadn't even kissed, but her body was pulsing with arousal at his nearness, his touch. She wanted him inside her and he wasn't even real. Perhaps her mind had truly gone around the bend, but at this point she didn't care.

"I don't know if I care for this current fashion of women wearing trousers. It does restrict my access somewhat." Syrus worked at her clothing closures and peeled her shirt back while letting her jeans fall to her hips.

"You are a fast learner."

"I have incentive and I love your underwear."

The clothing in question was a brilliant red with green bows. It was her holiday set and her dream had left her in a hormonally active mood. She loved lingerie when she was already feeling sexy, it made the mood last longer.

She was going to blush at his frank and assessing stare, but he flipped her onto the bed and got rid of the boots that were impeding her progress to nudity. A startled yelp was all that she managed before she broke out into giggles. His hands weren't even cold and they should have been from his time outside. He had to be a dream.

He removed his shirt and Maggie was once again treated to his rock hard pecs, biceps and rippling abs. He seemed to have muscles on his muscles and she was not complaining. She leaned up on one arm.

He pressed her down with a hand to her collarbone. "Stay down until I tell you to move. It is important or I may lose control while feasting on your delectable body."

That sounded like both a threat and a promise, but she reluctantly did as asked. He didn't disappoint her trust. His hands stroked her over her festive underwear, awakening nerves between her fingers, toes, breasts and belly. Her entire body was singing with fire and sparks of heat that had her skin pebbling and her limbs shaking.

Everywhere his fingers touched her, fire

bloomed. Her panties were wet, her breasts taut and heavy and all he had done was touch her. *Oh God, I am in trouble here.*

He knelt at the foot of the bed and hooked his thumbs beneath the sides of her panties to strip them off her completely. Once she was exposed to Syrus, he widened her thighs and pulled her to the end of the bed, right at mouth level. All of her early morning fantasies were coming true as he pulled her into position and heated her core with his breath. He was breathing her in.

Her suspicions were confirmed when he said, "I love your scent. Fresh and sweet with a hint of the wild ocean. I think I will love your taste just as much."

It was all the warning she got. That long and bifurcated tongue burrowed into her channel and lapped against the upper edge of her womb. It took him only three strokes to find her g-spot with that long tongue and then her world dissolved in the heat of arousal and need. She wanted release, wanted more and wanted him inside her. Something had to give.

She gasped and locked as her orgasm hit her, waves breaking in her body, separating heat from release, inch by inch. His tongue kept stroking, drinking up every spasm as her body shook in silence.

When her back lowered from its arch, Syrus sat

back on his heels and licked his lips. "That was wonderful, but I wanted to make you scream. Instead, I got silence. Why is that?"

She was dazed and let him take off her bra and lay her against him. "I had a boyfriend. He hated noise, hated to hear me. So I dumped him. But the habit stayed."

"Would you mind if I helped you to break that habit?"

His hands were stroking her, lazily waking the fire in her body one touch at a time. "I think that breaking bad habits should be a laudable pursuit. Feel free to pursue it."

Maggie twisted to move his hand where she wanted it and when he didn't get the hint, she grabbed his hand and moved it onto her breast. She led him to massage her gently, the way she liked by massaging his hand over hers until he was doing it just right.

"Remember, if you stop making noise, I will stop touching you and I don't think you want that."

His voice was rich and dark in her ear and before she knew it, she was lying face up on top of him with his erection weeping gently against her spine.

He massaged her hands, arms, breasts and belly. Each limb and body part getting a full contact treatment until she was giving him every

gasp, sigh and groan that she could muster.

She came again when he nibbled his way down her neck, this time she shrieked in reaction at the double stimulus of the pointed teeth on her neck and his fingers circling her clit.

Maggie could feel the precum coating her lower spine as she writhed against him. She wanted him inside her so badly that if he hadn't been holding her down with one hand on her belly, she would have been astride him and riding him to a second orgasm.

"That was lovely. You make the most wonderful noises when you get close to your precipice, all high and desperate. If I hadn't wanted to listen first, I would be in you right now."

She chuckled weakly. "It is currently my fondest wish that your slick cock be sliding into me with deliberation and yet I am on my back and held in place. This dream sucks."

Unceremoniously, she was dumped onto the bed and he was holding her wrists above her head as he slowly thrust into her. Her body yielded reluctantly but enthusiastically to the heat now stroking her from within. It was fabulous, beautiful and just the tiniest bit uncomfortable. She moaned in pleasure and he groaned in response.

Sweat coated them both as they moved

together, strove together to reach the pinnacle of intimacy in the shattering moment. He surged against her faster and she gripped his hips with her thighs, pulling him into her as hard as she could. Her hands were restrained so she arched her breasts against him to get some friction on her sensation-starved flesh. He moved up her body, almost hovering over her, but pressing his cock against the base of her clit. They rocked together and she gave him all the sounds he wanted, demanded, forced from her.

When she came again, he swiftly moved down to bite her again and her moan moved into a shriek as her body arched and spasmed from the conflicting signals it was receiving. He kept moving in her as her body shuddered in reaction until every single ounce of pleasure was drained from her.

She slumped under him and felt the hard press of his weight on her chest. It would have been suffocating if he hadn't been bracing himself on his elbows. Dragons must weigh more than humans because she could not remember being crushed into bedding like this with another man.

Despite the discomfort, she still made a noise of complaint when he moved off her and curled her against him. She was suddenly cold without the flame of his presence inside her.

It was peaceful curled against him with his

body touching hers from shoulder to calf. She breathed deeply, evenly and all too soon, felt herself slipping into darkness.

* * * *

“Damn it. It was too quick.” Syrus was speaking out loud, but Maggie was lost to the world. An hour in her bed would feel like seconds. The crystal snowflakes were his first task when he arrived, before he went into the woods to find her. The damned things were too quick.

His lover was now lost in a dream of ice castles and crystal mountains. When she woke, it would be with a memory of a dream and nothing else. He would have been wiped from her memory and he didn’t care for that.

At least he could finish her errands and retrieve her axe and sled. She might not remember where she left them the next day.

He yanked on his clothing, cursing the tight fit over his reawakened erection. Just being close to that woman shook the edges of his control and he liked it. He liked it far too much for his own peace of mind.

The bracing air of the winter night didn’t faze him. It was a brisk reminder that he was the Sahn-Tah for this year. He had to get back to the workshop, but he couldn’t make himself leave this

woman until she was settled and prepared for the blizzard he could taste on the wind.

Syrus easily located the axe and sled, hauled them back to Maggie's cabin and then went to split enough wood to last her for a few days. He didn't want her to have to brave the storm with no one to depend on.

If he couldn't be with her, he needed to know that she was safe. A perverse instinct that he engaged in by splitting enough logs with his shifted form to last her most of the winter.

Back in his human shape, he opened her cabin as quietly as he could, delivering several armloads in a relay that took up a good portion of her living room by the time he was done. At least she would have wood.

Wood. The Christmas tree. Maggie had laid out a metal stand or frame, it was fairly obvious that the tree was to go inside it and be supported by the screws. Grumbling, he lifted the tree and inserted the trunk into the base, screwing the supports into place. Satisfied that it would hold, he let go and watched the tree sag to the left.

"Shit." He straightened the tree and tightened the bolts again. Better, but still not straight.

Fiddling with the tree took hours before he was satisfied that it was perfect for Maggie. He had cheated a bit and used magic to hold the tree in place as well as keep it fresh, but he was pleased

with the end result.

The last time he had been this proud of himself, he had just learned to make the shift from dragon to human. The tree did look splendid though. He sat back on his heels and admired his work, distracted by the precision until he heard Maggie stirring. "Hell."

It would ruin the effect of the snowflakes to have her see him when she woke up. Cursing quietly, he let himself out and shifted forms.

He lifted off as silently as he could, circling until dawn exposed him in all his scaly glory. It wouldn't do for him to be seen, despite him desperately wanting her to break the magical hold of the mind wipe.

He would have to chalk their one encounter together under fond memories. He had to go and practice delivering toys. The Workshop beckoned.

Chapter Four

Being hung-over had never felt like this. Maggie staggered into the bathroom, running the water for the shower. Her whole body ached and it was with great relief that she stepped under the pounding spray. She felt sore, sticky and rumpled.

The twinge between her thighs made her think of the last time she had had sex, but that had been over a year ago and her body didn't have that accurate of a memory. Shampooing and then soaping her skin made her aware of every bruise, raw patch and even a few punctures. "What the hell?"

She finished her shower and wiped the mist of the mirror. There were marks on her neck, purple and red, her nipples were chafed, and the inside of her thighs were red. Individual marks worked down across her torso, but they had no obvious source.

The puzzle had her frowning as she dressed, but when she entered her living room, it was clear what had happened. She had let the tree fall on her while setting it up. There was no other way that she would have no memory of bringing the tree in, let alone setting it up.

Maggie touched the marks on her neck. She must have been punctured by the tree and the sap and needles must have irritated her skin. It seemed logical.

Stretching and satisfied with her conclusion, Maggie got her ornaments and lights out of the closet in preparation for decorating her tree.

She had a plan, and now it was time for breakfast. Funny, she didn't remember eating all the cinnamon buns.

* * * *

Syrus was pacing the crystalline halls of the Workshop. He wanted to be back with Maggie, but his own actions had made that impossible. Walther had finally approved his last speed trial so Syrus needed to wait for Christmas before he could even imagine seeing Maggie again.

If he was going to woo the human, he would need a plan, and a gift. Lingerie was too intimate, a robe too concealing. What would a woman of her calibre want for Christmas from a man she

had never met? He was going to have to research her wants and wishes. Time for the Naughty and Nice Room. Dancer was on duty today. The reindeer smiled at him, but looked a little concerned as he entered.

"Syrus, may I help you?"

"Yes. I am looking for information on a human."

Her lips twitched. "This is a good place to start. Do you have a name?"

"Maggie Konrad."

"Age?"

He blushed. He had no judgement for human ages. "Adult? Living in a cabin in the mountains."

Dancer smiled, her dimples showed.

Her human form was rather cute, but he preferred Maggie's elegant limbs, lush curves and dark sexy eyes.

"I can find her without that. What do you want to see?" As she spoke, her hands were working a keyboard that lit up with every keystroke. Soon a picture of Maggie in real time was floating on a monitor above the reindeer's head.

"I want to know what she wants for Christmas. What her wishes this year have been? Has she been naughty or nice?" He didn't take his gaze off the screen. She was sitting and reading a book, occasionally sipping from a mug. His marks were still visible at her neck, but it had been two days

and they were fading.

"Well, she has been very nice for the better part of ten years. There was a spike of naughty this week, but it faded in a few hours. Oh..." Dancer fell silent.

"What? What's wrong, what does she need?"

"She was wishing for her sister's life. She is alone now. Maggie Konrad has no Christmas wishes beyond peace in her life and time to reflect. I have a list of designer items that she wanted before her sister fell sick, but afterward all of her wishes were for others." Dancer looked a little sad. "Christmas holds no magic for her anymore. That is rather depressing."

"Not everyone's life revolves around the holiday, Dancer. Can you give me the list of items?" He was getting an idea. It would take some severe negotiations, but he might be able to pull it off. "Thank you. What was her sister's name?"

"Mandy. Amanda Konrad."

"Thank you again. You have started some ideas."

"You are welcome. We are all grateful that you took on the delivery this year. Anora was driving Sahn-Tah nuts. If they didn't get out of here, she would have turned from the spirit of Christmas to the Christmas crank."

Syrus chuckled and nodded. He had places he

needed to be. Moving with purpose, he entered the manufacturing wing. He had some elves to intimidate.

* * * *

A blizzard had moved in and stranded her, but Maggie had obviously prepared for it on the night she couldn't remember. There could be no other reason for the immense mound of stacked wood next to her fireplace. Two days of howling wind and blowing snow went by with her tucked safely inside a nice warm cabin with cups of hot chocolate and a good book.

Christmas was rushing up on her, but she was content to let it come. She was ready to spend her first holiday alone since she was born. Mandy had always been there, decorating, primping the house and redoing all the seams on Maggie's gingerbread house. It had been frustrating, but the morning of Christmas it was all worth it. The tree had sparkled with the ornaments, the air was scented with cinnamon and apples and the packages under the tree shone in the early light.

No matter how simple the present, the magic surrounding a Mandy Christmas had always sparked in the air. Maggie wiped at her tears as they fell again. The closer she got to the holiday, the more her heart broke.

She had honestly imagined that she would be able to make it through the first Christmas alone without having her mind rebel at the thought. She was wrong. The storm outside ended as her internal one began. Each day would now be a fight to keep calm and keep moving forward.

Getting up to make some popcorn and start a movie, she heard a noise. A scraping on the front porch. Cautiously, she moved toward the door when the sound happened again.

Grabbing a shawl against the cold, she took a deep breath and opened the door. Her porch bore no evidence of the blizzard and a path had been ploughed through the snow and from her car to the main road.

She was staring in amazement because until the porch was scraped, she hadn't heard a thing. When a dark figure descended in her yard, wearing blue scales and a jaunty Santa hat, she felt her mouth hang open.

A dragon over fifty feet long from nose to tail stood patiently while she gawked at him. When she took a few steps forward, he extended one paw with long and deadly claws.

This gift is for you. In return for your kindness. The words sounded in her mind.

There was a small parcel in his claws and she stepped forward to take it. "What kindness?"

You will remember in time, but for now, take this as

the first of three gifts for you from the Christmas Dragon.

The box which looked tiny in his grasp, was huge in hers. "Shall I open it here?"

You may open it later and tell me what you thought of it when I come to deliver the next.

"You are coming back?"

For three nights. Tonight was the first. I wish you a good evening, beautiful lady.

"Thank you?" She didn't know what else to say.

He nodded his great head and took off skyward.

Maggie watch him until the blue of his hide melded with the sky and then she walked back into her cabin, carrying the present that had just been delivered by dragon.

Chapter Five

The box was real. There was a tremendous sigh of relief when she tugged at the big silver bow and the blue sides of the box fell open. Inside were a series of documents and a few smaller parcels. “What the heck is this?”

The first document made her heart hammer in her chest. It read, *This is to establish the Mandy Konrad memorial fund for counselling the families of breast cancer patients.*

Tears tracked down Maggie’s cheeks as she went through page after page of donation records. Each document was an affirmation from someone who had shared her loss and had donated to the worthy cause of helping others through their time of need.

The next package made her laugh. It was the image of her sister and herself making faces at each other, but it was depicted in crystal. Her mother had hated that photo, but they had loved it and as soon as the tech evolved so that they could

make copies, they did. It had been Mandy's screensaver for three years.

The other boxes yielded the ballerina ornament that she wanted when she was seven and the game *Operation* that her mother had refused to get her.

At the bottom of the box was a card. *It is alright to celebrate Christmas past. It does not make the present any less magical, just different.*

With the tears flowing freely, she set up the game and started to play it solitaire style. Laughter eventually replaced tears as she realized that the noise the game was making was driving her nuts. She persevered and eventually gutted the poor fella with barely any buzzing at all.

The clock on the wall displayed that it was after midnight so she took her ballerina ornament and climbed into her nightgown. Time for bed. If the ballerina was with her in the morning, then a dragon might be visiting her in the evening. That alone was worth pushing through the day for.

She woke to a ballerina flashing her tutu. It was going to be a good day. But if Santa got cookies, what would be suitable for a dragon bearing gifts?

Her day flew by as she worked on a compromise. She worked on mincemeat tarts. The filling contained suet so it had a meat related product and the fruits would count toward

sweetness. Using her grandmother's grinder was fun, even if it took her a while to figure it out and she endangered her fingers more than once. The result was well worth the effort and gave her something to eat as the sun slowly sank behind the mountains.

After sundown, she jumped at every sound, waiting for the noise that would let her know he was there.

In the end he used light not sound, to announce himself. A bright light danced outside her windows and when she stepped into the snow, the sky erupted in light. She had seen Aurora Borealis before, but it had never been like this.

Out of the flaring sky, he appeared, his great wings silhouetted against the bright panorama. The Christmas Dragon was glowing blue and that triggered something in Maggie's memory. She couldn't put her finger on it, but she had seen it somewhere before.

"Hello. Good evening." A curtsy was out of the question, but she did incline her head. "The sky is beautiful. Is that your doing?"

It is. I am glad you are pleased. Did you enjoy your gift of Christmas Past?

"I did. Thank you. It was all very thoughtful. I now know why my mother refused to buy that game though."

The dragon chuckled.

It was a comforting sound, a cough mixed with a gargle.

It was fun selecting it for you. The elves thought I was mad.

"There are elves involved here?"

They are servants. You need not worry about them. They work for Sahn-Tah and I am taking his place for the holiday.

"So you are calling the shots. Oh, before I forget, I made these for you." She held out the plate with the tarts on it. "They are mincemeat. Fruit and suet. Would you like one?"

I would like them all, if you would. The enormous head came closer, closer and slowly the jaws opened. *No one has baked for me before. Thank you.*

"Don't thank me until you taste them. You may not like them." Extending her hand forward, she tipped the plate above his delicately protruding tongue. He flicked them into the recesses of his mouth and began to chew.

They are tasty, lovely and sweet. As is their creator.

She was suddenly blushing under his regard and hugged the empty plate against her chest. "You are welcome. I like to bake, but seldom have someone to eat the product. So thank you for the compliments."

And now for your gift, my lady. As he had before, his claws extended with another present, wrapped as the previous one had been.

“What does this one symbolize?”

His teeth showed in a draconic grin and with his hat cocked at a jaunty angle, he took to the skies.

It's your Christmas present.

As his wing beats faded, a shiver drove Maggie back into her cabin with the present balanced on the empty plate. When her door closed behind her, the lightshow stopped.

Giggling with anticipation, she snuggled into her couch and opened her newest acquisition. As the bow released the sides of the box, she gasped in surprise as a fountain of presents spilled into her lap.

Some felt like fabric while others felt hard. She went for the hard ones first and her instinct was correct, it was chocolate. Expensive chocolate. When Maggie smelled the heady sweet and pungent aroma of the cocoa, it was a prelude to her first taste. The chocolate exploded on her tongue, melting through her mouth and trickling down her throat. She moaned happily.

Her happy place enveloped her mind, buzzing her along on endorphins as she opened the next box.

A pair of earrings in the shape of dragons winked at her, the silver flashed in the firelight. She giggled, then laughed out loud. The rest of the gifts followed that same theme. A dragon

necklace, bracelet, stuffed dragons, dragon candle holders, a dragon diary and dragon pyjamas covered with tiny fire breathing winged creatures.

It was quite a haul. By the time she was on her third chocolate, she noticed that even they were little dragons.

“Oh my God.” The laughter was unstoppable. She sat in her mound of dragons, wearing the dragon pyjamas and toasted the dragons that appear in the dark to deliver presents. Her present Christmas spirits were up.

* * * *

Watching her from the Naughty and Nice Room was his newest favourite hobby. Syrus had never enjoyed anything more than watching her enjoyment, except being there in person to witness it. The joy that she found in her gifts was the same joy that he found in her, the joy of discovery, of surprise and of being appreciated by someone else.

Today, Prancer was on duty, but she simply punched up Maggie's name and left him alone to watch her go through the presents. Maggie's reaction to the chocolate almost unmanned him. He wanted to be scented delicately, to have her lick him softly and then to take him deeply into her mouth. Those few thoughts had him ready to

come, but by the time she had worked her way to the stuffed dragon that looked like him, he had relaxed and was smiling at her image on the big screen.

For this moment in time, he had made her happy. Tomorrow's gift would see if he could be part of her future. His final visit on Christmas day would allow her to choose her future with him or without him.

If she chose wrong, he would have to persuade her to change her mind.

Chapter Six

Wearing the jewellery the next morning seemed a good way to start the day. Seeing how much he ate, she turned the tarts into pies and made more of the mix just in case. She hoped he hadn't been lying when he said he enjoyed it, it was very hard to read his scaled expressions.

A few times during the day, she realized what she was doing and shook her head at going completely around the bend. It was only the brush of the earrings on her neck combined with the cheerful stare of the stuffed dragon that kept her mind on baking. With the pies cooling on her countertop, she micro waved a few snacks and had dinner.

Time seemed to flow past her at an accelerated rate. It was after she had washed the dishes and was settling in that her delivery dragon announced himself.

I am on my way to you, but this time there are two parcels so I will land closer to your cabin. You need

only open the door.

Scrambling to her feet, she grabbed the pies and dropped them onto a tray. She placed the tray next to the door and took a deep breath. Maggie swung the door open and there was the dragon. Well, his snout. His hat was still perched on top of his head with a jaunty angle. "Good evening. I baked some pies for you, but I don't know if you were telling the full truth about enjoying them."

I enjoyed them very much. The larger quantity is appreciated.

He must have been telling the truth because his mouth immediately opened and his tail lashed in anticipation. She dropped three pies into his mouth, removing the pie pan before abandoning them to his jaws. Being this close to the munching was a little disconcerting, but the genuine gleam of enjoyment in his eye was rather satisfying.

Those were even better than yesterday. Practice is good for you.

"Well, they say it makes perfect. I have two more pies if you would like them."

Please. They are preparing me for a night of cookies and milk, and I have to tell you I am a little lactose intolerant. I may have to skip the milk.

The image of a dragon farting his way across the sky had her giggling. She grabbed the last two pies and returned to the dragon in the doorway. He opened his mouth obligingly and in went the

pies. His tongue flicked out to get stray crumbs and that gesture was remarkably familiar. Again, she knew she had seen it somewhere before.

There are two parcels today. His clawed hand reached in and dropped a four foot by four foot box in front of her Christmas tree. It was shiny and blue, the same as the others. The second gift that he pushed into her home was almost as tall as she was.

You must open the red gift at dawn on Christmas morning. Not before, not after.

"But I can open the blue one today?"

If you wish to. Any more pie?

The wistful tone in his projected voice made her smile. "No. No more today, but I can prepare something for Christmas morning." It was only two days away.

I would appreciate that. It is very seldom that get to have food made specifically for me. The treat has been my greatest joy this season.

"As your visits have been for me. Do you just fly through the mountains delivering gifts to women who are alone?"

That sounds like a wonderful hobby, but no. I came here for you. You seemed to need to remember the magic of Christmas. Who better to do that than a dragon?

"You definitely have a point there, I am really believing in the unbelievable this year." She

wanted to touch him, but didn't know if it would be rude. "Can I touch you?"

Certainly. My scales are tough so you can be as rough as you like.

Under his scrutiny, she blushed. It was a little hard to reach out to touch with him watching, but she managed. His scales were hard and very smooth. One overlapped the other in a tight pattern that still allowed him to move and twist as he pleased. His tongue lashed out and licked her hand, making her jump back in surprise.

You taste like pie.

"Is that a good thing or a bad thing?"

A good thing, but don't worry, I never bite the hand that feeds me.

"I thought you said no one had cooked for you before."

I am testing the theory that I never bite the hand that feeds me.

His saurian smile was wicked as was the laugh that trickled into her mind. Maggie put her hands behind her back to be on the safe side.

Aw. I was having fun.

"And freaking me out at the same time."

Sorry. I rarely socialize. This time with you has been a treat for me and as much as I would love to spend the night chatting, tomorrow is Christmas Eve and I have to get some rest before my flight. I will see you Christmas morning. He began to back out of the

doorway, his tail held high and his wings tight against his back.

Maggie followed him out onto the porch and watched him fluff his wings out for flight. "Thank you for coming by again. It was nice to have you visit."

Thank you for your hospitality, not many would offer it to a dragon in their front yard. I wish you the joy of the season, Maggie Konrad.

"The joy of the season to you as well, Christmas Dragon. I hope your Christmas Eve goes smoothly."

He inclined his head in one of those formal bows and took to the skies. As he flew out of her sight, a shower of stars followed him, then came to her yard and broke into a thousand glittering shards. Each shard formed a pixie and as she watched, they danced in her view.

Standing on her porch with the glow of the fire behind her, lighting the drifts with a warm cascade of colours, Maggie watched the pixies dance in the snow. Tears flowed down her cheeks, but they were tears of joy at the sheer wonder of the magic that she had been given.

This was truly a holiday to remember.

The pixies had shooed her inside when she began to shake with cold. A handful of them followed her and made sure that she sat in front of

the fire with a cup of hot cider in her hands. When she was warm and relaxed, they got her attention again.

Tiny piping voices squeaked as they engaged in the occupation of leaping up and down on the large blue box.

"So you want me to open it, I suppose?" At their fervent agreement, she tugged on the ribbon and stepped back while the box fell open as its siblings had.

The boxes and packages that spilled out covered the base of her tree and half her floor. It would take her most of the night to get through all the gifts and even longer to clean up afterward. She looked at the pile. Six. She would open six and save the rest for Christmas Eve. But which six to choose?

"Can you pixies help me out? I want to select six to open tonight and the rest I will open tomorrow." The little creatures looked disappointed for a second and then nodded with enthusiasm. Diving amongst the packages, they pulled one after another to the top of the pile until she had her six.

The pixies had a hard time deciding which one to have her open first and a tiny little fistfight broke out.

"Okay. No fighting. You can go back and play with your friends outside. I will be fine in here.

Thank you for your help.”

How they managed to open and close the door would forever be a mystery, but they did it and soon, she was alone. Well mostly alone. She was able to see the tiny faces pressed up against the glass from where she sat. Her window was now a theatre for pixies.

Sighing and laughing at the same time, she tugged on the wrappings of the first gift. “Oh my.” If asked for the colour of the negligee she would have to say that it was clear. The palest of blue silks which would be rendered transparent when held against skin.

The saving grace to the gown was a robe that would create enough contrast to give the wearer the illusion of modesty. Each item had a tiny embroidered dragon at the base of the neck and Maggie felt her lips give a wry twist. It was fairly obvious who was providing all these gifts, but what could a dragon want with her?

The next parcel opened to reveal a deliciously soft emerald green shawl that she wrapped around her shoulders immediately. The scent of the fabric was familiar, masculine, but familiar. A tiny dragon tag was on it as well.

The box that she dragged to her next was large and it contained a black velvet cloak with a silver dragon clasp. It was a piece of clothing from another time, but it was beautiful.

Another stuffed dragon was in the next parcel, but he was holding a jewellery box. The box held a pair of earrings made of tiny versions of the dragon's scales.

A smaller, flatter box revealed a necklace to match the scaled earrings. When she touched the stones, she felt them warm under her fingers.

The last box that she had designated for opening yielded up the most practical of all gifts. A black forest cherry cheesecake that was chilled but not frozen. After a few judicious nibbles, she placed the rest in the fridge for the next day. No sense stuffing herself before she went to bed.

She banked the fire and went to bed after one longing look at her pile of presents and the big red box with the great white bow. There would be time for them tomorrow.

* * * *

At the Workshop, Syrus groaned in reaction as her fingers stroked the scales he had sent her. A dragon's scales were only given to those that they loved because they tied the mate to the dragon in perpetuity. The mating jewellery was made from scales around the male's member and pulling them out to create the items was painful. Very painful, but well worth the effort.

Unfortunately, in the hands of a mate who

didn't know what they were, it could be a little uncomfortable. Each scale was still tied to the point from which it had been torn. Her light stroking was effectively caressing the base of his cock. If she did the same the next day while he was delivering gifts, he would go out of his mind before arriving at her cabin.

A Christmas Dragon was hard enough to pass off, let alone one with a raging erection.

Chapter Seven

Lingerie seemed to be the dragon's gift of choice. Bras, panties, more negligees and an item that was made of silk, but defied description. The silk ropes also gave her pause. She was going to hide those on Christmas morning. Just having them in her vicinity made her uncomfortable and just the littlest bit intrigued. Bondage had never been something that she played with in the bedroom and she had no idea what was on the dragon's mind. He wouldn't fit into the cabin, let alone into *her*.

Blinking at that thought she checked the time and quickly plugged a Christmas Carol into her DVD player. Midnight was almost upon her. It was almost Christmas and she had been unwrapping presents all day. Sure she had delayed it to one per hour, but time had flown. She idly caressed the scale necklace and earrings, wondering to herself if the Christmas Dragon was

making his rounds.

* * * *

In Britain, three villages stopped cold when a dragon roared in frustration, the villagers hiding indoors until the morning.

* * * *

The red box with the big bow taunted Maggie, but she held firm. A diet of chocolate-covered coffee beans kept her wide awake and jittery until dawn. The moment that she saw the light fingers of dawn, she jumped to her feet. The robe that she had put on after her three AM shower swirled while she sprinted to the big red box. Her hands trembled as she grabbed the bow and yanked with gusto. The sides of the box fell away and what was left took her breath away. Wearing nothing but a Santa hat, a familiar face on a mouth watering body smiled at her.

“Merry Christmas, Maggie. Do you remember me?”

A shattering of crystal in her thoughts let the memories return and in an instant, she was in his arms. “Syrus. You left.”

“I had a job to do, only this once. I am back now. Are you enjoying Christmas?”

If her eyes were shining as brightly as his, she would be surprised that he wasn't blinded. "I am. You did all of this?" She waved at her robe and negligee and his appreciative look made her blush.

"I would do all this and more for you if you would just say the word." He knelt in front of her and pressed his lips to the silk over her belly. He slowly rose to his feet, trailing kisses as he climbed.

She was trembling by the time that they locked together in a kiss. His long saurian tongue teased her lips apart, demanding entrance that she gladly gave. Her knees were buckling as her body grew warm and pliable in his arms so he simply lifted her and took her to lie in front of the fire.

"I do love this colour on you." His murmured words preceded his untying her robe and sliding it open.

"That would explain why you chose it." Her last word ended on a gasp as he took one of her taut nipples into his mouth and suckled at it through the silk. He lapped at the other and then sucked them in turn. The wetness between her thighs was dampening the silk, a flaring blush caught her cheeks as he snaked one hand up to separate her legs and found her wet and slick from just that small contact.

Maggie moaned as he worked at her with his

fingers. Two and then three fingers slid into her, building her tension until she screamed. She arched her back and bucked against his hand as her orgasm rushed at her in a firestorm of sensation.

She was barely back to her senses when she felt him move onto her. As his thighs pushed hers apart, she flexed her knees to let him in. The hot probing of his cock brought her attention fully to his face as he possessed her. That is what it was, a possession. He was taking his place in her mind, her heart and her body within that one moment where he waited for her invitation.

She hooked her heel around his lower back and invited him in.

He did not need to be asked twice and soon the inexorable slide to release started within her again. This time when she screamed her release, he was with her, groaning and pumping his hips into her until she was limp and satisfied.

He raised his head tiredly and looked into her dazed eyes. "Merry Christmas, Maggie."

"Merry Christmas, Syrus."

Warm and wrapped together in front of the fire, they both got some much needed rest.

"So how was delivering presents to all the boys and girls? Did you have fun?" She was idly stroking the necklace he had given her and

couldn't understand his sudden intense look. Her dragon was more than able to make breakfast, even after noon. "Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Those earrings and necklace are a traditional dragon courting gift. They are tied to me. You stroke them, you stroke me." He looked down at his fresh erection and then back at her.

Her hand snapped away as if burned. "I am sorry."

He laughed. "I am not. Of course, you are responsible for me frightening half of Britain, but other than that there were no issues."

"So what will you do when I return home? Will you forget all about me and find a new woman alone in a cabin to play with?"

Syrus looked angry. "I will go where you go. I have already set up a company so that I can blend into your world."

That surprised and warmed the part of her that had begun to think of this as a fantasy fling. "What kind of company?"

"Syrus Designs. Fine lingerie for the woman who wishes a little more fantasy in her life."

Her dragon was so strong, so brave. He was frying the bacon while naked. That was a true warrior. She smiled for a moment and then realized what she was wearing. "You designed all these?" Her hand took in the silk that she was

wearing as well as the neatly folded piles near the tree.

"I did. The elves helped with manufacturing, but Walther has set up my company and factory only a few blocks away from your home. I also have a rather large house that is being decorated as we speak. There should be a nice big bed in place by the time we get back to civilization."

"Are you sure that you want little ol' me? Not someone more exotic?" She began to fiddle with the earrings and necklace. "I mean, you are the Christmas Dragon, you could have any woman filling your stockings."

He took the bacon off the heat and turned to stride toward her. "Maggie Konrad, you have my heart, my soul and any part of my body you wish. You are the only thing I would ever want to find under my tree. Stockings or not." He had caught her and was taking her negligee off with precise movements. He flipped her over his shoulder, grabbed the velvet cloak and threw it down under the tree. He laid her on the velvet and positioned her precisely.

"What are you doing?"

"I am opening my present." With a chuckle and no other warning, his long tongue flicked out and began to feast between her thighs.

Weaving her fingers into his hair to hold him to her, she noticed the tiny pixies watching in the

window. Laughter bubbled up and all she could think was, “Merry Christmas too all and to all a good... Oh!”

Author's Note

This is a story related to last year's Holding Holly and The Oldest Elf. In those tales, we first see the Workshop and meet Sahn-Tah Kelas.

Twisting the origins of Santa was fun, having a dragon pinch hit on deliveries was even more fun. I hope that you have enjoyed the Christmas Dragon and that you have a very Merry Christmas of your own. Dragon on your doorstep in a hat, or not.

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About the Author

Viola Grace was born in Manitoba, Canada where she still resides today. She really likes it there.

She has no pets and can barely keep sea monkeys alive for a reasonable amount of time. Her line of day job tends to be analytical which leaves her mind hopping to weave stories. No co-worker is safe from her character analysis.

In keeping with busy hands are happy hands, her hobbies have included cross-stitch, needlepoint, quilting, costuming, cake decorating, baking, cooking, metal work, beading, sculpting, painting, doll making, henna tattoos, chain mail, and a few others that have been forgotten. It is quite often that these hobbies make their way into her tales.

Viola's fetishes include boots and corsetry, and her greatest weakness is her uncontrollable blush.

Her writing actively pursues the Happily Ever After that so rarely occurs in nature. It is an admirable thing and something that we should all strive for. To find one that we truly like, as well as love.

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