



Simple Gifts

Andrew Grey

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THE snow crunched as Geoff walked between the trees, branches hanging heavy with white. "This one looks good."

Eli stepped up and knocked the snow off the limbs, sending white flurries flying on the breeze and right into Geoff's face. "Sorry." He couldn't stop himself from snickering.

"You think that's funny?" Geoff bounded toward his lover, arms gripping him tightly as he sent them both flying into a huge drift of white. Eli started to protest, but Geoff quelled it with a touch of his lips, capturing Eli's with his own. The snow, the cold, the wind—all vanished, as Geoff felt his lover beneath him, a soft moan mingling with the song of the winter birds. Geoff traced his tongue over the ridge of Eli's lips, the shape familiar, the taste known, the warmth home.

The winter wind picked up, its tendrils working beneath his layers, and Geoff slivered slightly. Pulling away, he got to his feet before helping Eli to his.

"We should decide and get back. It'll be dark soon," Eli commented as he trudged out of the drift, stomping off the snow. "The temperature's going to start dropping fast."

Geoff pulled Eli to him, chest to chest. "I'll keep you warm." He felt Eli shiver against him and smiled, knowing it wasn't entirely from the cold. After another kiss, they returned their attention to the Douglas fir standing in front of them. "I like it," Eli said, as he felt the

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soft needles.

“Me too.” Geoff picked up the canvas bag they’d brought with them and pulled out the saw, handing it to Eli. He held the branches up at the base and watched as Eli leaned into the tree and began to cut. A crack and a shift signaled that the tree was ready to fall, and Geoff held it upright as Eli cut through and stepped back. Geoff let the tree fall away from them and retrieved a length of rope from the bag. Tying it around the trunk, they put away the tools and grabbed the bag before dragging the tree along the row toward the road.

“Find a good one?” Old man Nichols smiled as they approached the office of the cut-your-own Christmas tree farm.

Geoff grinned as he displayed their prize before stowing it in the back of the truck. “How much do we owe you, Greg?”

The man made dismissive noises, “After all you helped out after the storm this year? You take it, and have a merry Christmas.” He patted both Geoff and Eli on the shoulders as he walked over to other customers emerging from the field of trees.

With a final wave, they climbed into the truck and Geoff started the engine, pulling out of the parking lot. Geoff turned on the radio and Christmas music filled the cabin of the truck as they drove the short distance toward the farm.

Pulling into the drive, Geoff parked near the house, and together he and Eli unloaded the tree, setting in the snow near the back door. “We’ll bring it in tomorrow.” Eli nodded his agreement as he opened the back door, holding it for Geoff.

The warmth of the house wrapped around him like one of Eli’s warm hugs, and after stomping off the snow, he slipped off his outdoor gear. Geoff then tromped into the kitchen, with Eli right

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behind him. Heading for the coffee pot, he poured them each a steaming mug.

“Did you get a good one?” Len called from the living room.

“Sure did. We’ll put it up tomorrow.” Geoff carried their mugs into the living room, setting them on the coffee table before sitting on the sofa. Thinking Eli was right behind him, Geoff looked around for his missing lover, then heard his footsteps climbing the stairs. Geoff retrieved his mug and sipped, the warm liquid finally thawing him from the inside. Turning to Len, he whispered, “I can’t figure it out what to get Eli for Christmas.”

Len scoffed. “And you’re asking me?”

Geoff shook his head; he knew better. “No, just hoping for some inspiration.” He shifted, getting comfortable as the images on the television flickered, capturing his attention.

The sofa next to him dipped, and Geoff handed Eli his coffee, moving closer to hold his lover as they watched the mindless chatter. Geoff knew Eli wouldn’t sit long—he never did, rarely watching television at all—so Geoff enjoyed the quiet closeness before Eli’s energy got the best of him.

The windows darkened as the light faded, and the wind picked up. Eli finished his coffee and, as Geoff expected, got up and put his mug in the sink before going back upstairs. Soon, thumping and bumps echoed through the house, and Geoff turned to Len. “I’ll go see what he’s doing.”

Len got out of his chair. “I’ll start dinner.”

Geoff followed the noise and found Eli in the closet of the spare bedroom, digging through boxes. “What are you looking for?”

“The things for the tree.” He didn’t add a “duh,” but it was clearly

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implied in his tone.

Geoff tapped him on the shoulder and pointed to a neat stack of four large boxes standing in the corner of the room. "I got them out yesterday."

Eli returned the boxes he'd dragged out to the closet and shut the door. "Would you help me carry them downstairs?" Eli picked up two boxes and began carrying them out of the room. Geoff didn't answer, but picked up the other two boxes, smiling as he watched Eli's backside, that butt flexing as he descended the stairs.

They put the boxes in the living room and Eli began digging through them. Geoff got out of the way and let Eli have his fun. He'd learned the year before that this was something Eli absolutely loved to do.

Papers were spread on the living room floor and Eli hauled in pine boughs he'd cut and gathered. Boxes were opened and ribbons, bows, and simple wooden decorations spilled out. Geoff rested on the sofa, listening to the sounds of home. He heard Len in the kitchen, the dishes clanking, and footsteps as Eli moved through the room, covering the mantle with pine boughs tied with gold and red ribbon. "Do you need help?"

"No," Geoff heard both Eli and Len reply as they continued their tasks. The aromas of dinner drifted in from the kitchen as the room filled with the scent of pine. Eli hummed softly to himself as he worked, tying sprays with bows that hung on the spindles going up the stairs.

Feeling guilty, Geoff got up and went into the basement, returning with the large tree stand, placing it in the back so it would be ready for the tree. Then, figuring "What the hell," he slipped on his coats and boots, took the stand outside, and fastened it onto the tree.

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Giving everything a good shake, he hauled the tree in the back door, through the kitchen, and to the living room, setting it in front of the large window.

Eli stopped what he was doing. "I could have helped."

"You were having too much fun." Geoff stood back, looking at the tree to make sure it was standing straight and tall.

"Can I decorate it tonight?" The childlike wonder in Eli's eyes was fun to see.

"You could." Geoff took off his coat and boots, putting them in the mud room and returning. "Or you could decorate it tomorrow." Geoff slipped his arms around Eli's waist, pressing his hips against his lover's butt, Geoff's chest to his back, as he kissed the base of Eli's neck. "I know something else fun we can do tonight."

Eli dropped the pine bough he'd been holding, and it rustled as it landed on the papers. Eli's hand slid along Geoff's hip.

"I'll take that as a yes."

Eli's head nodded slowly as Geoff nibbled on a warm ear.

"Hmm." A throat clearing interrupted them. "Dinner's almost ready." They both heard the amusement in Len's voice as they broke apart and walked to the kitchen for dinner. Geoff set the table, and Eli helped Len bring over the food. They sat down and dishes were passed. After filling their plates, they began to eat.

"I stopped by the bakery today." Len passed a plate of fresh bread. "Your uncle gave me a message."

Eli put down his fork, his attention riveted on Len. Eli's Amish family rarely sent messages to him. His father didn't approve of him living among the "English."

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“Your uncle told me that your family hopes you’ll join them for Christmas.” Geoff watched as Eli’s face lit up for second but then faded again. He knew that Eli missed his family, particularly at this time of year. But Eli couldn’t tell his family that he was gay. They wouldn’t accept him, but, more importantly, his family’s place in the Amish community would be threatened. The members would blame and possible shun his family if they found out, so though he visited them occasionally, it was always alone. Geoff knew Eli felt guilty that Geoff couldn’t come with him whenever he left to visit them, and even more guilty when he returned because of the omission he’d made to his family.

“I’ll see my uncle in the next few days and tell him I’ll visit right after Christmas.” Geoff saw a sadness behind his lover’s eyes, a sadness he hated.

Geoff felt Eli’s hand slip into his and he knew that his lover had once again chosen him over his family, just like he’d done eighteen months earlier, when he’d left the community to be with Geoff. He held Eli’s hand as he ate slowly, watching his lover’s reaction. Gone was the smile and excitement of a few moments earlier, now replaced with conflicted emotions, sadness, and what Geoff knew had to be a touch of the “what-ifs.”

Geoff breathed a sigh of relief as the conversation around the table shifted to the farm and how the cattle and horses were doing, as well as a discussion of grain stores. Len commented between bites, “If this cold weather keeps up, we may need to buy additional feed.”

“It won’t. They’re already calling for a thaw early next week.” Len nodded at Geoff’s words, knowing the weather could be fickle. “But I’ll make some calls just in case.” That would ensure they wouldn’t need the additional feed.

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Conversation continued with general farm topics and upcoming work and plans discussed and agreed to. Geoff and Len lingered over coffee while Eli put his dishes in the sink and disappeared into the living room.

Finishing his coffee, Geoff got up and started loading the dishwasher and cleaning up the kitchen while Len carried his coffee into to the living room. Geoff heard the leather chair creak and the television switch on.

Geoff watched from the kitchen as Eli worked, his movements now perfunctory, mechanical, the joy and excitement from an hour before gone. He hated that. One of the things he loved about Eli was his excitement and enthusiasm, whether he was cleaning stalls, teaching his students how to ride, or flying across a field on his horse Misty. He did everything with such joy and energy that when it was wasn't there, the room seemed dull and the light a little dim.

Geoff tried to stop himself, but couldn't, and a huge yawn stretched his face before he could suppress it. "That'll wait until tomorrow." Geoff stepped forward, his hands stroking Eli's shoulders. "Let's put this away and go upstairs." Eli's heart definitely wasn't in what he was doing any more, because he just nodded his head and wrapped up the pine boughs in the paper before placing them outside on the porch and walking quietly upstairs.

Geoff went out and made a final tour of the barn before coming back inside and closing the house up for the night. After a quick good-night to Len, he headed upstairs as well.

Their room was dark, and Geoff cleaned up quietly, climbing beneath the covers in silence. Eli's warmth immediately extended around him and arms hugged him close.

"Sometimes I wish I knew how to be in two places at once." Eli

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pressed his back to Geoff's chest, and he used the opportunity to encircle his lover in his arms, stroking the warm skin with his hands.

"You don't have to, Tiger. You know I'll understand."

Eli rolled in his grasp, their eyes meeting and Eli's lips touching his. "I know." Geoff felt Eli's hands on his body, pulling him close, and the lips became more insistent, almost demanding. Geoff knew what Eli wanted and he gave it to him. Taking him into his arms, he returned Eli's near-frantic kiss, stroking his lover's hair and hot, smooth skin. He loved everything about Eli, this man who had given him everything possible and given up more than anyone could ever expect.

"Geoff, please...."

He kissed his way down his lover's body, savoring every inch of skin as it passed beneath his lips: the smooth skin on top of hard muscle on Eli's chest, the hard nubs tickling against his tongue, the ridges and softness of his belly as it heaved with every breath Eli took. "Just relax and let everything fall away. Just feel and know how much I love you."

Eli nodded and gasped in the darkness as Geoff ran his tongue along Eli's length. This was the sensual communication of love. They could see almost nothing; they didn't have to. Tongues and hands communicated everything they had to say. Geoff slid his lips over Eli's crown, slowly taking the shaft into his mouth. He could feel Eli's body vibrating with excitement as he took him deep; small whimpers and sighs of passion filled the room. Eli began begging and pleading, but Geoff kept him on the edge, wanting it to build.

"I need...."

"I know what you need, and you'll get it, but first I want to love

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you.” He couldn’t see Eli’s face, but he imagined his eyes half closed and clouded with passion, his mouth open in an expression of awed ecstasy. He’d seen it before and he hoped he was making Eli feel that way again.

“Yes, love me the way I love you.” Eli’s voice was raspy and hoarse as he gasped for breath.

Those simple words almost broke Geoff’s tenuous hold, but he managed to keep himself under control. Pulling back, he shifted on the bed, bringing their lips together, kissing his lover with everything he had, pouring all the love and care he felt for this incredible man into that simple declaration of complete, soul-bound love.

Eli’s arms wrapped around his neck and his legs encircled his waist, cocooning him in his lover’s undying love. Geoff could feel Eli’s lips pounding against his, the kiss almost bruising from Eli’s intensity. Geoff ran his hands down Eli’s hips, fingers sliding over the firm butt to tease the small pucker of skin. He felt, rather than heard, Eli sigh against his lips as he teased a finger inside. The excitement ratcheted up, and it felt to Geoff as though Eli’s body was trying to pull him deeper.

Geoff slicked himself quickly and pressed past his lover’s entrance, Eli’s body practically pulling him the rest of the way. They shared their breath as Geoff and Eli began to move together, their bodies knowing instinctively what the other wanted and needed. No words were spoken, but the sounds they made were like a concerto of loving passion. The pleasure built until neither could contain it any longer, and Geoff cried out as he filled his lover, while Eli climaxed between them.

They couldn’t move—were afraid to move. Geoff didn’t want to break the physical connection between them, but slowly their bodies

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separated them and he rested back on the mattress, pulling Eli close as they shared gentle, loving kisses. It didn't take long for Geoff to hear Eli's breathing even out and he knew his incredible lover was asleep, finally relaxed, the conflict within at bay for a while. But Geoff lay awake, staring at the ceiling, wondering how he could help. "Maybe that's what I can get you." Now he just had to figure out how to do what Eli needed.

Eli rolled over, mumbling something in response before falling back to sleep. This time, Geoff's mind quieted, and he, too, nodded off.

\* \* \*

GEOFF woke to a silent, still house. The clock on the nightstand read two-thirteen. Eli was sound asleep as Geoff slowly got out of bed and put on his robe, slipping out of the room and down the stairs. The tree stood dark against the window, now decorated for Christmas day, the presents under its branches ready for morning. He only glanced at the tree before heading to his office and pulling Eli's present out from under his desk.

Removing it from the box, Geoff carried it to the living room and set it near the tree, next to the small stack of presents for Eli's family. Geoff knew which packages those were—each was a small box wrapped in plain paper. Eli had made each of the gifts, and Geoff didn't know what some of them were. But he knew they were very personal for the recipient, and he hadn't wanted to pry.

Opening his gift to Eli, he placed all of the small, plain packages inside, and then closed it up again. Then he walked up the stairs and back to their room, climbing under the covers without waking Eli and falling back to sleep.

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THE bed shifted and Geoff woke to find Eli climbing out from under the covers. “Merry Christmas!” Eli leaned over and kissed him good morning.

Geoff returned the kiss and yawned before pulling a willing Eli back into bed. “Merry Christmas!”

Eli giggled as Geoff playfully groped him. “The animals need to be fed, regardless that it’s Christmas,” Eli protested, but made no effort to get away from Geoff’s embrace.

“I know.” Geoff sucked gently at the base of Eli’s neck before loosing his grip and climbing from beneath the blankets. “The guys should be here soon to feed the cattle. I’ll make sure the horses are set if you’ll feed the dogs and get breakfast ready.”

“Deal.” Eli padded to the bathroom and Geoff watched that tight bare butt moving across the room, his attention returning to the job at hand only once the bathroom door closed. Then he sprang into action; there was plenty to do.

Pulling on his clothes, he headed downstairs, got his outdoor coat and boots on, and headed through the yard to the barn. The sky was as blue as could be, not a single cloud, the morning sun shining off the fresh snow. It really looked like Christmas.

Opening the barn door, Geoff greeted the majestic heads that poked out from their stalls. Each horse received a pat and a treat as Geoff made his way down the line, adding hay and water to each manger.

At Misty’s stall, he stopped and opened the door. “Sorry, girl, but today isn’t a holiday for you.” She whickered as Geoff closed the stall

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door and rubbed her nose, slipping off her blanket. "You and daddy are going for a ride today."

Stepping out of the stall again, Geoff carried the blanket to the tack room and retrieved her saddle and a fresh blanket. Returning to the stall, he got Misty saddled and ready, then closed the door behind him as she began munching at her breakfast.

Out front, Geoff heard cars pull into the yard and the tractor engine roar to life. The guys were there to check on the cattle before hightailing it back home to their families.

Finishing up, Geoff stepped outside and closed the barn door. Without thinking, he looked over the farmyard, taking in the snow and the crisp air. As he looked at the house, he smiled when he saw the lights on the tree blink on and noticed Eli's face looking out of the window like an expectant child. Geoff thought himself the luckiest man alive because of the man standing in that window, and his resolve firmed as he trudged back toward the house.

Len greeted Geoff as he entered the kitchen, Len's still-sleepy partner Chris sitting at the table, smiling and watching every move Len was making. This was a great Christmas: Len had someone special again, and he had Eli.

"Geoff," Eli's voice called from the living room. Geoff kicked off his boots and stripped off his coat before following the voice of the person he loved most.

"What is it, Eli?" The tree sparkled in the sun and Eli was down on his hands and knees underneath it, digging around in the gifts.

"I can't find the gifts for my family." Eli sounded upset.

Geoff knelt next to him, a hand on his back. "They're under there; it's okay."

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Eli's face turned to look up at him, curiosity clearly evident.

"I'll help you get them in a few minutes." Geoff moved to the sofa and patted the seat next to him. Once Eli sat down, Geoff began, "I thought a long time about what I wanted to get you for Christmas, and I settled on this." Geoff reached behind the tree and pulled out the gift he'd placed there during the night.

Eli's eyes widened when he saw the pair of supple leather saddlebags. Geoff placed them on his lap and watched as Eli's fingers glided over the soft leather. They were simple and undecorated, but fine. "They're beautiful," Eli gasped.

"Look inside."

Eli opened the bags and scowled in confusion when he saw the gifts packed inside. "I don't understand."

Geoff took Eli's hands. "Every day I have you in my life is like a gift. The best gift I could have, so I hope I'm giving you something special today. Misty is saddled in the barn and the trailer is on the truck, so you need to get dressed.

"Where are we going?" Eli's confusion deepened.

"I'm driving you and Misty to within a mile of your family's home so you can spend Christmas with them." He handed Eli a cell phone. "All I ask is that you be back for dinner tonight." Eli looked stunned and remained silent. Geoff broke the silence. "I know I can't go with you, but this is important—for you and for them, Eli."

"But what about you?"

Geoff let his forehead settle against Eli's. "We'll have the rest of our Christmas when you get back." He hoped he'd made the right decision, and then knew he had when he felt Eli's arms around him, pulling him close and hugging him hard. He had made the right choice.

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“Thank you.” Eli whispered the words in Geoff’s ear. Geoff returned the hug knowing that this time he was putting Eli first, the way Eli always did for him.

“You need to get ready.”

After a quick kiss, Eli became a bundle of energy, rushing upstairs to change into heavy winter clothes. Geoff smiled as he watched, knowing how happy he’d made his lover.

Geoff met Eli in front of the barn, and he looked on as Misty was led into the horse trailer and secured. Then they both got into the truck and Geoff pulled away from the farm.

The roads were clear as they made their way through town and out toward the Amish community. About a mile from Eli’s family’s farm, they stopped the truck and unloaded Misty. Eli swung up onto her back, and Geoff handed him the new saddlebags. “Call me when you’re ready, and I’ll come pick you up right here.”

“Thanks, Geoff.” Eli slipped off a glove.

Geoff took Eli’s hand in his. “You’re welcome. Merry Christmas, Eli.” Geoff let Eli’s hand slip from his and stepped back as Eli urged Misty forward. He watched Eli for a few minutes, thinking how lucky he was before getting in the truck and heading back to the farm. Every day, Eli gave him the greatest gift possible, his unconditional love. Eli had repeatedly chosen him over his family. Geoff smiled to himself as he realized that this time even though Eli would have chosen him again, he didn’t have to.

\* \* \*

“GEOFF, will you stop pacing?” Len scolded, as Geoff turned, flopping down onto the sofa.

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“Why hasn’t he called?” Geoff checked his watch for the umpteenth time in the last ten minutes before getting up to go stare out the window. The afternoon was already waning and the sun and clear sky from earlier in the day had given way to clouds that looked heavy with snow. To make matters worse, the wind was starting to come up, and if it continued, would start to drift the roads closed.

The phone in Geoff’s pocket began ringing. “Finally!” He flipped it open.

“Geoff, I’m starting out now.” Eli sounded off and Geoff couldn’t place his tone.

“Okay. I’ll leave now and we’ll meet up where I dropped you off.” Geoff closed the phone and began rushing around to get his gear before heading to the truck. After a quick check in the back to make sure he had blankets and feed for Misty, he climbed in the cab and pulled out onto the road.

Geoff drove as fast as he dared, the snow starting, wind blowing it in front of his headlights. The last of the light was fading as he arrived at where he thought he’d dropped Eli off.

The snow was coming down harder, but thankfully the wind hadn’t picked up. Getting out of the truck, he looked through the snowstorm, but didn’t see Eli. *Was he in the right place?* He looked around—it appeared to be.

Getting back into the truck, Geoff began moving slowly forward, hoping he’d meet Eli. The snow made everything look different and he wondered if he was in the right spot. Had Eli somehow passed him? He craned his neck, looking all around him for landmarks, but the temperature was dropping and the snow was coming down harder, silent and cold, covering everything in a uniform blanket of white.

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Then, he saw a large figure materialize in the gloom, and he breathed a huge sigh of relief as his headlights illuminated Eli and Misty. Stopping the truck, he got out as Eli dismounted.

“You had me so worried.” Geoff grabbed Eli and hugged him hard.

“It wasn’t snowing when I called you.”

Geoff nodded and turned his attention to the task at hand. “Get her saddle off, and I’ll get the blankets from the back. We need to get home.”

Eli went right to work, pulling off the saddle and putting it in the truck. Geoff got the blankets and put them over Misty’s back before leading her into the trailer and securing her. Closing the door, he heard Eli get into the truck. Geoff got in as well and pulled out onto the road. He drove at a steady pace, the snow blowing in front of them.

Their luck held until they were through town, and then the wind came up. Snow began blowing wildly across the road. “We’re almost there.” Geoff was straining to see.

Eli didn’t say anything, his eyes watching the road, helping Geoff spot any obstacles. Finally, they pulled into the farm yard, bringing the trailer up next to the barn. They’d made it. Opening the back of the trailer, they unloaded Misty and led her into the barn to her stall. “Is she okay?” Eli fussed as he felt her legs and changed her blanket.

“I think so,” Geoff replied, “It wasn’t too cold, just snowy.”

Eli continued fussing, making sure she had hay in her manger and tepid water to drink. The barn was warm and they were safe. Geoff let Eli fuss awhile longer before leading him outside.

“Go into the house; I’ll be right behind you.”

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Eli nodded and hurried inside while Geoff parked the truck and followed quickly behind him. Len and Geoff's entire family were in the kitchen, relief plain on their faces. "I think you got back just in time," Len said as everyone stopped working to exchange hugs and wishes for a Merry Christmas.

"It was still sunny when I called Geoff to pick me up." Eli looked guilty as he took off his coat before giving his own hugs and greetings.

"The storm came up so fast. Don't worry about it. You're home now." Len squeezed Eli's shoulder.

The house was full of family: aunts, uncles, their children, even Geoff's cousin's newborn baby, sleeping in his mother's arms. Geoff watched as Eli looked around, and he saw the confused, conflicted look that had been present on Eli's face for the last week or so slip away.

Geoff smiled and took his lover's hand as Eli led him into the office just off the living room and closed the door. "Merry Christmas." Geoff felt Eli pull him into a soft kiss. "Thank you."

Geoff was suddenly confused. "For what?"

"For letting me see my family today. It meant a lot, but not in the way I expected." The sound of laughter drifted in from the living room as Geoff returned the kiss.

"How so?"

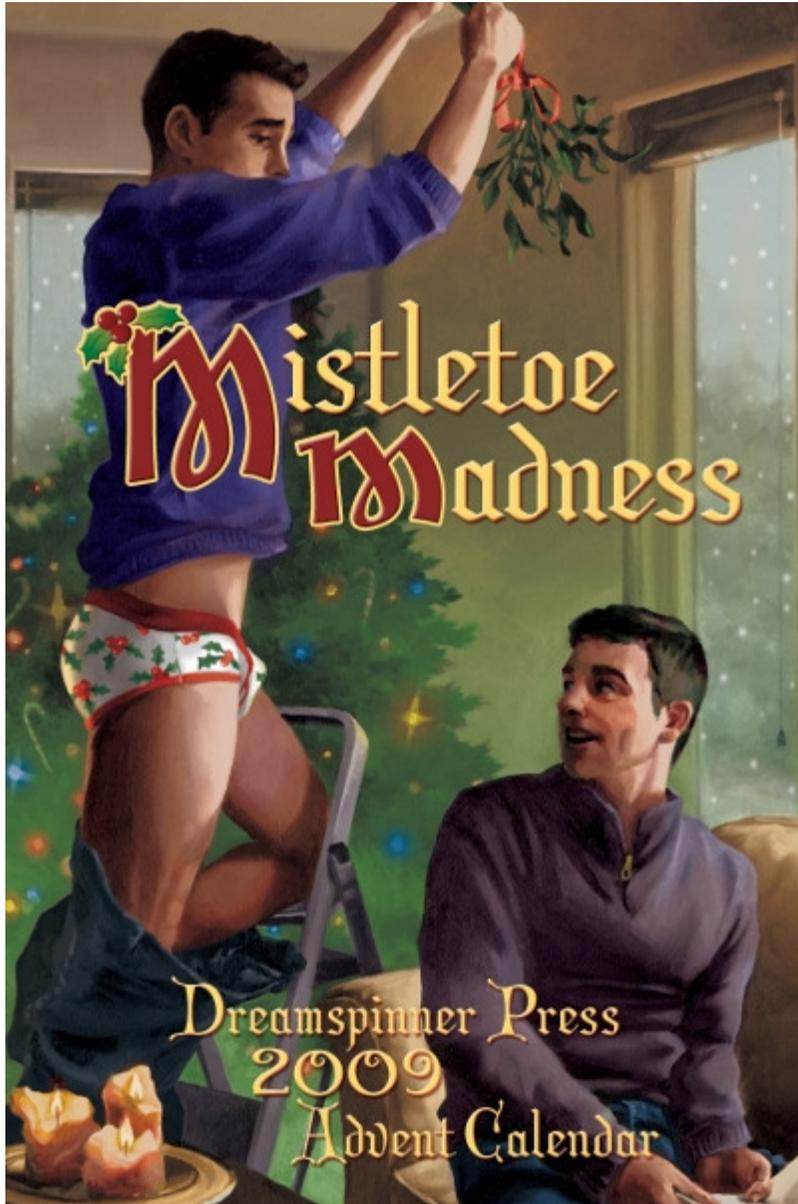
"I realized that as much as I sometimes miss them, they don't really know me and they'll never know who I am." Geoff was about to say something, but Eli quieted him with a finger. "I need to say this. I realized today that you are my family. They raised me, but you love me for who I am and that makes you, and them..." Eli nodded toward the door as they heard more laughter and a baby's giggle, followed by

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adult cooing, “my family.”

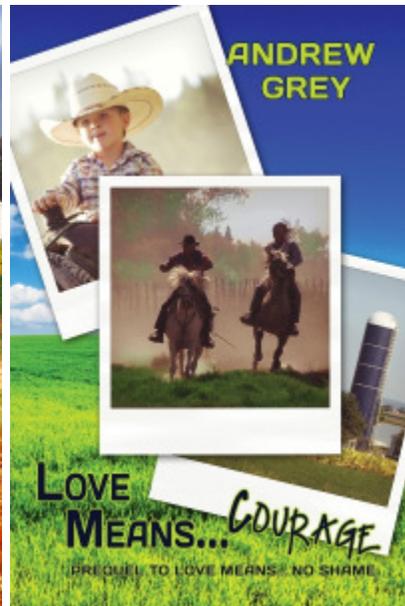
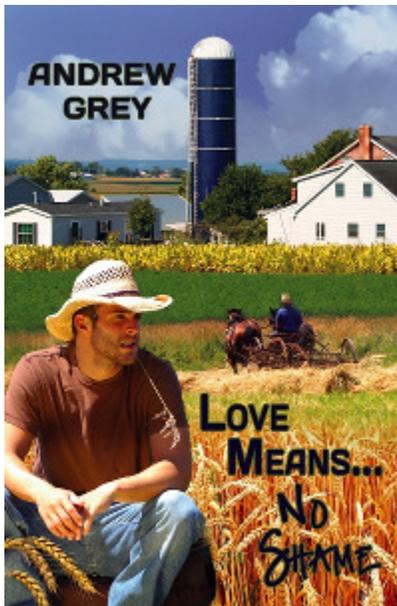
Geoff found himself overwhelmed as his cheeks were cupped and his lips kissed. He’d started out by giving Eli the gift of family, and instead, Eli had given it back to him.

# Got Mistletoe Madness?



The Dreamspinner Press 2009 Advent Calendar is available at <http://www.dreamspinnerpress.com>.

Read more about Geoff, Eli, and Len in  
the *Love Means...* series  
by Andrew Grey



ANDREW GREY grew up in western Michigan with a father who loved to tell stories and a mother who loved to read them. Since then he has lived throughout the country and traveled throughout the world. He has a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and works in information systems for a large corporation. Andrew's hobbies include collecting antiques, gardening, and leaving his dirty dishes anywhere but in the sink (particularly when writing). He considers himself blessed with an accepting family, fantastic friends, and the world's most supportive and loving partner. Andrew currently lives in beautiful historic Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Visit Andrew's web site at <http://www.andrewgreybooks.com> and blog at <http://andrewgreybooks.livejournal.com/>. E-mail him at [andrewgrey@comcast.net](mailto:andrewgrey@comcast.net).

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