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Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-sizzling*.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT WARMS THE HEART

Victoria Blisse

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those dedicated gift givers who do show Christmas spirit every day of the year. Your kindness is what inspired this story, thank you.

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Chapter One

"Excuse me?" A timid male voice echoed outside her tollbooth.

She looked through the be-tinselled window and past the mini-Christmas tree and glanced down on a guy in a car. She opened her window to let in the rush of cold night air, and the spiel spewed from her lips, "Hello, there! My name is Jodi. How may I help you?"

"I've just come from work, and I've got no change," he stammered. "Well, in fact, I have no money at all." His cheeks flushed, and he looked down to the side of his blue Ford Escort.

Jodi got fee-jumpers coming through on a regular basis. It depended on her mood at the time as to whether she'd let them through. This fellow looked genuine enough. He was obviously embarrassed to ask, and the look of desperation in his Christmas-blue eyes seemed genuine.

"Well, since it is the season and all that." Jodi picked up a couple coins and slipped them into the slot. The gate responded swiftly and quietly and lifted up out of the way.

"Thank you so very much, Jodi." The man smiled as he put his car into gear. "Thanks a lot."

The smile he flashed her was enough to make her tummy do flip-flops. Combined that with the way he actually remembered and said her name, well, she was a goner. Jodi was partial to a good crush. A bit of fantasy to make her heart pound appealed to her, and what did it matter that not one of those crushes had ever turned into something more, not even a kiss? No one wanted to kiss a weird loner like her.

That was why she worked on the toll, even though it wasn't the most challenging of jobs a person could do. Jodi didn't care. She just wanted to spend time by herself and read. She didn't actually do anything much. Once or twice, she might have had to produce some change, but then, not many cars came across so late at night—at least, not through the old-fashioned pay booth.

The taxis-taking revellers to Liverpool clubs and parties zoomed through the mechanical card gates. In fact, most people used the card gates. One swipe of a special access card or your credit card and you were through, no searching for change involved. Really, the

manned booth was only kept on for the older generation and those who came out without their cards. That was a small fraction of the population by day, but by night? Jodi could have counted on her hands the number of cars through most nights, and some nights, on just one finger.

So she read. She wasn't a reading snob. She read whatever held her attention. It just happened that *Jane Eyre* was one of those books. Jodi had devoured books since she was old enough to recognise letters. She would read anything and everything as a child, and often begged, stole and borrowed books to feed her craving.

Many people think that late-night tollbooth work must be lonely. Actually, if anyone said anything to her, they usually said, "Don't you get lonely out here on your own all night, love?" And Jodi always replied that she had her books, so she was never alone.

Jodi had dealt with spending a lot of time on her own for many years. She came from a single-parent family. Her mother had been drunk ninety percent of the time and passed out on the sofa for a good deal of that. Jodi just got on with life.

Her mum had died, so, at the age of sixteen, Jodi had looked after herself in her own home, working to earn money and go college to further her education. At eighteen, she got the tollbooth job, and for a satisfying five years, the tollbooth job had kept her in books and DIY materials for her home.

Jodi was good at looking after herself, and that was probably why she was single and had no friends to speak off. She only trusted herself and cut herself off from the rest of the world, though she *was* friendly and polite. She would talk to anyone and pass the time of day with them. She would help anyone in need or distress and she never complained. She just wouldn't let anyone she didn't know get close to her.

* * * *

The night after the sweet stranger set her imagination alight, Jodi was in her booth again, and she had something a bit more modern in her hand, *Bridget Jones's Diary*. It was one of her favourites and came out whenever she felt the burning hot sensation of fancying someone new.

Actually, 'burning hot' seemed like the perfect descriptor for the feelings 'No-Toll' guy evoked. Jodi tried to work out why he consumed her thoughts so, in such a new way. Sure, crushes had come and gone in her life, but never had she felt this intensely about a man she barely knew. She didn't even know his name, but every time, she thought of his dark frame and those light, frosty eyes she felt an unusual body-encompassing shiver of pleasure that centred right in what corny romance novels would call her 'feminine core'.

In fact, she was very aware of what lay between her legs. She was wet down there, her plain knickers were soaked and the damp material clung to her lips. She snaked her fingers down the front of her black trousers with the intention just to simply separate the clinging material from her flesh. As her fingers crept down over the wiry hair 'down there', her index finger just caught the top of her clitoris and a mellow jolt of warm fire made her stroke her finger there once more.

Masturbation was not something Jodi knew very much about. Pleasure had always been found in the written word. She rarely felt the need for any form of sexual relief, but this was one of those rare moments, and she soon became lost in a sexy daydream.

'No-Toll Guy' stood at the booth window, his car broken down and he was asking her if she could help. She walked out of the little cabin and over to the sad-looking blue car.

She didn't even get to open the car bonnet before he was overwhelmed by her sexiness and kissed her passionately. She imagined him pushing her back, 'til she sat on the front of the car, his body between her outspread thighs. The kissing deepened. His hands reached out, slipped under her short skirt, manoeuvred into her tight, lacy panties to rub and stroke and caress her heated flesh—

"Good book?" A voice startled her from her fantasy, and it was 'No-Toll' guy.

She whipped her hand out of her pants, her cheeks flushed red with embarrassment. Her heart thudded, and the same pulse echoed in her groin. "Not bad, thanks," she replied and smiled brightly. Too brightly, she suspected.

"I've got my change tonight," he said and waved a big, fluffy-gloved hand at her, inside of which was a pile of coins. "I've got what I owe you here, too."

"Oh, it's okay." She smiled. "No need to repay me."

She thought of all kinds of smutty things she could add, and her cheeks flushed yet more, but she uttered not a one of them for fear of rejection.

"Are you sure?" he replied as he looked up at her quizzically. His light-brown hair took on a bronze halo-like glow in the bright street light.

"Positive," Jodi insisted and nodded her head in emphasis, which made her earrings dance and jingle.

"Okay, then." He smiled. "I'll put it in the charity pot at work."

"Where do you work to be coming home so late?" Jodi asked, the question slipping easily from her lips. Her curiosity piqued, her arousal pulsed less frantically now, but it still throbbed and her mind reeled with images of his body on hers. "If you don't mind me asking that is."

"I work in the children's hospice," he replied. "I'm there from around six p.m. to around five or six a.m. most days."

"Ah, right. Sorry for being nosey."

"I don't mind." He smiled. "It's nice to be talked to by an adult once in a while, you know?"

"Yeah, I know," Jodi replied. "I really, really know."

"My name is Mike," he added as he slipped the change into the machine. "See you, Jodi."

"Bye, Mike," she called as he rolled up his window and chugged through the lifted barrier.

Mike. It was nice to have a name to go with the fantasy.

Jodi flushed and buried her head back in her book and her hand back into her knickers. Where had she been? Oh yes, Mike was probing her mouth with his tongue and her wetness with his fingers. She imagined him pushing her back on the bonnet of his car, pulling open his pants and thrusting into her. She saw him above her, eyes closed, mouth pulled into a grimace of lust, and as she imagined him so roughly taking her virginity, she came all over her fingers.

She sighed, pulled her hand out of her knickers and continued to read. It was a good fantasy, certainly, but she doubted it would ever come true. A handsome man would never fall for a curvy freak like her.

Jodi began looking forward to seeing Mike every day and eagerly waited for her daily dose of fantasy. Usually, he arrived around five a.m. She found herself in smarter work gear more often. Pretty tops and trousers instead of the sloppy tracksuit bottoms and the old sweater she had usually thrown on. She tried to make the most of her large breasts and also wore lipstick to pretty up the parts of her Mike saw as he came past the booth.

Today, she wore a V-neck sweatshirt in a deep, dark Christmas green that she felt highlighted her eiderdown skin and complimented her green eyes. She had on her favourite Santa earrings. They looked jolly from the front, Santa smiling hung over the edge of the hoop. At the back, however, you could see the tops of his buttocks above his pants and a shocked ginger cat with its claws stuck into old St Nick's moonie. Jodi had a wicked sense of humour.

Five a.m. came and went, and there was no sign of Mike. When Jim arrived to take over for the morning shift at seven a.m., Mike still hadn't been through. It seemed strange for her to worry about a man she only shared odd pleasantries with early in the morning, but Mike had been so regular for the past few days, it did worry her that she'd not seen him. It also upset her. What would she use for masturbation material before bed now?

It was funny. She'd gone so long without needing any kind of sexual stimulation—even her crushes of yesteryear didn't bring around such need for passion and release—but just one look at Mike made Jodi need sex. She was now enjoying quite the active solo sex life. She was discovering things about her body and her arousal that she'd had no idea about before, and with each passing day, she longed all the more for Mike's touch.

Just as Jodi said her distracted goodbye to Jim, a familiar car pulled up at the booth.

"Hey, Mike," she called with a relieved note in her voice. "You're late today, aren't you?"

"Hey, Jodi." Mike smiled and put his car into reverse, making it growl and spit like an angry cat. He brought it to a stand still away from the tollgate. "Yeah, it's the Christmas thing. So many folks want time off around now that I did some covering today and stayed on a few hours. Are you finishing now?"

"Yeah," she replied with a smile as her heart thumped so loudly she could hear it.

"Do you fancy finding somewhere that serves up good, greasy, artery-seizing food?"

"Well, that'd be nice," Jodi replied with a nervous smile and walked around to the passenger side of the car. She waited for the click then she climbed in. "I thought you'd gone automatic," she quipped as the bar lifted up, and they drove off into the tunnel.

"Geez, no," he replied. "I can't afford that kind of money up front. That's why I stick to the good old coin toll. I don't trust computers, besides, I like the personal service you get with the coin toll, you know."

Jodi was fairly positive there had been a compliment in there somewhere, and her cheeks reacted to it. She flushed red and thought she must look somewhat like Great Aunt Sally but without the pigtails.

"I've never been one for computers either," she confided. "I hated using them in college. What's wrong with good old pen and paper? And eBooks—don't even get me started."

"I noticed you read a lot," Mike added as he carefully kept to his lane, his gaze glued to the road in front. "I don't have much time to read now, but I used to read so much."

A pleasant conversation on favourite books and authors ensued, and Jodi settled back in the worn-brown passenger seat and looked out into the tunnel around her. The light did strange things down there. It was as if it knew it was under water. As she looked around, it seemed everything took on the hue of an aquarium crossed with a public pool—the influence of all those white tiles probably—and she half-expected to see a shoal of fish easing by at any moment.

They came out into the early dawn, the black of the sky tinged with lighter grey edges, the stars fading back and the streetlights mellowing from maintenance-coat neon to milder, orange juice tones.

"Where are we going?" Jodi asked and wondered how she'd get back home from Godknew-where in the centre of Liverpool. She lived on the other side of the water.

"Just a little café." Mike smiled. "Where abouts do you live?" he asked.

"Oh, the other side of the tunnel, actually," she replied.

"I'll drop you off at the train station once we've eaten then, yeah, so you can get back." Jodi let out a sigh of relief. "That would be fantastic, thank you."

It wasn't like her to jump into a stranger's car and even less like her to be on the wrong side of the Mersey when she needed to get her sleep.

The silence dragged on for a while as Mike stopped and started through the city centre traffic lights. Jodi tried to think of something to say, but her mind was so consumed by his light, spicy scent and his thigh so close to hers that, in the end, Mike beat her to it.

"So what are you doing for Christmas?" he asked and pulled into a quiet, slightly dogeared street.

"Nothing much," she replied. "My mum died years ago, I never had a father and I have no other family I know of. It will just be me and a turkey again."

"Oh," Mike replied, an answer Jodi was used to.

She never beat around the bush when telling people about her life. She found that it was the best way to do it. People were initially shocked but had less inclination to pour sickly sweet sympathy on her. She never knew how to deal with sympathy. It made her feel uncomfortable.

"I'm on my own this year, too," he said. "Well, every year really. I was an orphan, you know. Never knew my family. So I don't really miss them. Sounds callous, I know, but it's true."

A silence fell, but it wasn't awkward. It was the silence of two kindred spirits recognising each other and their pain. The two comments that had said so much needed space to expand into.

The greasy spoon was wittily—or predictably—called 'The Greasy Spoon'. It was a small, red-fronted café with a yellowing 'Open' sign in the window. When Jodi walked inside, she was hit by the smell first—mostly grease with a hint of bacon—and the sound second. She could hear the crick-crack of the bacon frying and that was it. The room was silent. The third thing she noticed was that every stare in the place was directed her way.

"Ah, eh, Mikey." A harsh, spittle-filled male voice piped up. "Who's the lady?"

"Hiya, Lee," Mike said. "This is my friend, Jodi."

"Ah, eh, Jodi." Lee leered at her, his dark beady eyes running over her frame. "It's real nice to meetcha." His Scouse accent was so harsh even Jodi, as a local, needed to concentrate to work out what he was saying.

He wiped his hand on his apron and offered it to her from behind the old, brown, melamine counter. She took the proffered hand, shook it warily and was very conscious of the sticky feeling of his fingers on hers.

"Whatcha having, Mike?" His focus changed as he swept a small stub of yellow HB pencil down from behind his ear. Jodi hadn't seen it there until that point, because his large ears stuck out so much from his bald head.

"I'll have my usual, Lee," he replied. "And Jodi will have?"

"A big breakfast. Extra bacon no tomatoes. I don't like fruit in my fry-ups."

Lee looked at her with newfound awe.

"Oh, and a big mug of tea and a couple of rounds of toast. Cheers."

Jodi walked off to find a table as Mike paid for their meals. She took her coat off before sitting down.

"Well, Lee really likes you," Mike stated as he sat down on one of the melded-to-the-floor, plastic chairs across from her. As he slid in, his leg bumped into hers. She apologised, but it took a moment for her to move her knee so that their legs were no longer touching. Her mind filled with images of her naked legs wrapped up with his, his gentle touch rioting through her senses and making her crave for a lustful touch. He smiled, uneasily, and she grinned back over the yellowing melamine top that might well have been white, once upon a time a very long time ago.

"Is that a good thing?" Jodi asked with a nervous giggle.

"Well, yes. It means you'll get bigger portions, and they'll be properly cooked. Lee likes me, and I'm not dead yet."

When the food arrived, it looked, well, interesting. Jodi wondered what the bad option would have looked like. Grease, in her mind, was meant to be consumed in vast quantities, now and then, all in one go. This was easily her grease ration for the whole of next year.

"This is a first," Jodi said after munching on the corner of a piece of stiff, fried bread, "I've never been out to breakfast with a customer before."

"Well, it's good to know I'm a unique experience," he replied. "And I have never been to breakfast with a beautiful tollbooth assistant before either."

The compliment did not go unnoticed, and Jodi's cheeks flushed as red as the thin, cheap tinsel festooning the window beside them. *After this grease*, Jodi thought, *I'll be turning as green as the cotton-covered baubles too*.

Again silence as both parties assessed the opposite person. Neither had really seen the other in daylight before. So, since morning had truly broken, they were seeing each other in literally a new light.

Jodi thought Mike looked a little nerdier in the light of day, but under the bright white top that he wore, she could see the outline of his surprisingly pert muscles.

Mike saw the dark-green of Jodi's eyes properly and was amazed by the intensity in them. She looked paler by daylight and much more delicate.

Both decided they still liked what they saw and continued to munch away happily, forking in fried egg and bacon as if it were their dying meal. The radio suddenly blared into audio range, and Jodi started singing along.

"A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight," and Mike joined in with the, "walking in a winter wonderland."

"I like Christmas," Jodi said. "I like the pretty decorations." Then she raised her hand and leant in. "Present company excepted," she whispered, eyeing the tatty Christmas tree and its few dog-eared baubles. "And the food. Ooh, I love the food. I'm making mince pies later, a few hundred of 'em probably, for the old folks by me. It's my festive goodwill thing. I've made the Christmas cakes already. I'll ice those and bake mince pies."

"That's thoughtful of you," Mike said, smiling. "It must take a long time to bake all that."

"Well, not really," she replied. "And I enjoy it. I love the smiles on the old dears' faces as I bring them their Christmas treats. So many of them are on state pension and can barely afford to feed themselves, let alone buy luxuries. I see it as doing my bit, you know?"

Mike nodded his head.

"I mean, you can always think that someone else is looking after the poor and needy of the world and go on with your life. But what if no one really is? I think it's best to make sure to do something myself. I'll bake some cookies for the kids at your place if you think they'd like them."

"Oh, they'd love cookies," Mike said, a smile spreading across his face. "Thank you. I'll take them in on Christmas day with their presents."

"You give them all presents?" Jodi asked, but she wasn't surprised, he was obviously the kind and generous type.

"Well, yeah, but someone else gives them to me first. I just take them into work for the ten or so kids who are normally still with us. Some are just too sick to go home to parents, others just don't have them."

"So Santa drops them down your chimney, eh?" Jodi quipped. "You should give him directions to get there himself."

"I have," Mike replied, seemingly in all seriousness. "But he says it's better that I take them in."

Jodi giggled then noted Mike wasn't laughing.

"Ah." She smiled. "Some kind benefactor guy drops them off at your place then, as an anonymous donation?"

"Sort of. The benefactor *is* Santa, though. Really. I know it sounds completely insane, but for the last couple of years, he's been waiting for me when I get in from work with a big sack of presents. Every time, he poses for a picture, and every time, I take the photo to work, it just looks like some plump old man in a false beard. It sure as hell isn't a false beard, though."

He laughed a little awkwardly. "I gave it a good hard tug and almost made him curse. Anyway, working on the toll, surely you've seen him. Or does he have a pass?"

Jodi chuckled. "He flies, silly. No need for using the tunnel. But yeah, I did see him, I think, last year. I was in my little booth, and it was so cold. My heater had packed in, and I couldn't get it to work. I was taking more than a little nip of the homemade eggnog I'd brought with me that night to see in the festive season, and I swear I heard bells. So I opened up my frosty window, and there was a pack—a herd—a whatever of reindeer pulling a big, bright red sleigh with massive sacks on the back is called. And, well, Santa in the middle. 'Ho, Ho,' the guy said beaming. 'Merry Christmas, Jodi!' And then he flew off. The heater came back on, and the room was instantly warm again. A big plate of food sat steaming on the side, too. My God, it was the most delicious meal I have ever eaten."

Jodi stopped for breath. She was amazed she'd said all that. She had sworn she never would. Mike was the first and only person she'd told that tale to. He nodded his head and smiled.

"I thought I might have had far too much eggnog though, but it seemed too real to be a dream, you know?"

"Yeah, I totally know," Mike agreed, glad that she understood and didn't think him a kook.

Before they split company, they arranged to meet again in a few days time for a Christmas Day drink and a chat. They didn't talk about spending daytime hours together, but Jodi hoped that she'd be able to convince Mike to spend the whole day with her. She planned to buy in a bigger turkey and more trimmings just in case. If he didn't turn up, well, there'd be plenty of leftovers to see her into the new year, as well. She was in a positive frame of mind and couldn't wait for Christmas Day to arrive.

It would be the perfect seduction, she decided as she lay in bed that night, touching herself. She was consumed by Mike, and the new found lust that coursed through her veins was like an addictive drug that kept her longing for more and more. She never seemed to find the sexual satisfaction she needed with her own fingers.

She would meet him on Christmas Day and persuade him back to her house. She'd set the food cooking, and they would drink wine and talk, and she would be brave. She'd place her hand on his knee and lean in for a kiss then all their pent-up lust would explode, and they'd rip off each other's clothes.

He'd be so gentle with her, kissing her neck and breasts and setting her alight. He would make her come with his impassioned thrusts, and she would coax his orgasm from him. They'd eat then make love again, and it would be the most perfect Christmas ever. Jodi was determined to make it so. She would go mad if she didn't do something about the lustful itch that lay constantly in the pit of her stomach.

* * * *

Christmas Eve passed slowly for Jodi. She had plenty to keep her occupied, but it seemed as if every minute was an hour long. She couldn't wait to get to work. She couldn't wait to finish work and to spend time with Mike. She passed out the last few remaining Christmas goodies to the elderly on her own street, enjoying the smiles and heartfelt thanks she received at each household. She even enjoyed the bitter, icy cold that had her bundled up in scarf, gloves and hat. It seemed right to have such weather on Christmas Eve. It made the day more festive.

Picking up last minute food and gifts in town was a pleasure. The Salvation Army band played carols, and the jolly notes reverberated around the square, giving comfort and joy to the hassled shoppers hurrying through. Jodi did not hurry. She savoured the music, flipped a contribution to the bucket and shared a smile with the musicians.

She wished harried shoppers "Merry Christmas" as they bustled past her. Some smiled and wished her the same, but others tutted and rushed on. She'd been asked many times before why she was so happy at Christmas. She was alone, she'd had such a hard childhood, so what did Christmas hold for her?

She always replied with one word. "Hope."

Yes, Christmas Day was never anything much in her home. Her mum had celebrated on Christmas Eve and would sleep it off on Christmas Day. Jodi would clean up after her and would open the gifts she found in the stocking hanging by the chimney. They had been small toys, and Jodi had assumed that some charity had dropped them off, but she'd cherish each one. She would always receive a new book that she would spend the rest of the day reading and a mince pie that she would eat with her jam sandwich for lunch.

It wasn't much, but the whole season was one of lights and shows and joy. Jodi would enjoy the run up in school—the decorations, the nativity play and the visit from Santa. The Christmas party was the highlight of her year, and she loved how everyone was happier and kinder in those last few days of the Christmas term. It gave her something to look forward to.

So it had continued through the years, Christmas was something to save for and look forward to. It was hope, and a person cannot find real happiness until they find real hope.

Jodi was on her second glass of eggnog. Now, that was impressive, since many people passed out before they'd finished the first one. Although there was Aunty Betty, a lovely old lady Jodi took a delivery of Christmas food to every year. She swore by eggnog and made a massive batch of Jodi's special recipe every winter, to keep the chill off apparently. She was heading up to her ninetieth birthday, so maybe she was right.

It was definitely keeping the chill off Jodi. Her cheeks had a hint of dark-pink to them, and she danced around her little tollbooth singing to herself. Well, she danced in one place really, as with the addition of a tall stool for Mike to sit on when he came in after work, there was not much floor space left.

"I don't want a lot for Christmas," she crooned as she replenished the plate of mince pies and Christmas cake before her.

She'd only had a few cars through that eve. One was full of student-party revellers who'd adored her baking so much they'd come back for seconds, and the other was a car filled with a young family off to visit relatives for the holidays. She gave the children special Santa cookies and listened as they breathlessly told her all about what they'd asked Father Christmas to bring for them.

"All I want for Christmas is yoooooouuuuuuuuu."

"Well, I wouldn't mind you in my stocking, either," said Mike as he arrived, jolting Jodi from her revelry to reality.

"Oh, hey," she giggled. "Come on in. The eggnog's fine!"

"I can see." Mike smiled back and made his way around the back of the booth. He squeezed past Jodi to sit on the stool, which made her tummy do rollovers in the process.

"You've finished early," Jodi commented as Mike took off his bulky coat and hung it on the back of the door, which made the space even cosier.

"Yeah, it was so weird. A new guy started today. He was only a short chap and, well, apparently, he's working tomorrow all day, too. So yeah, I've been given the rest of the day off."

"Cool." Jodi nodded and smiled and became nigh on certain that her specially basted turkey and homemade stuffing would lure him in, as he'd have nothing to rush home for. Then maybe he'd give her a stuffing. She knew she was tipsy just by thinking that lewdly. The eggnog must have done its trick. Or maybe it was just being with Mike. He seemed to be pure inspiration for erotic thoughts.

She poured another glug of eggnog for herself and filled up a plastic cup for Mike, too.

"Mmm, that's yummy," he remarked and took a sip of the unctuous concoction. "Have you been busy tonight? Has Santa been through yet?"

"Ho, ho, ho!" Jodi quipped and elbowed Mike teasingly in the ribs. "No, not yet, but there's still time!"

"Aye, when do you finish tonight?"

"Well basically, when I want really. Christmas Day, we just leave the barrier up here so anyone can pass through. I am free to go whenever I like, but only after midnight. Which, luckily, it now is."

"Fair do's."

"Well, if you want, we can go to my place and have some more eggnog and nibbles and stuff." Jodi smiled coyly.

"Well, that sounds cool. It's a bit, um, snug here, isn't it?"

"It's bloody cramped." Jodi snorted slightly and, in doing so, decided it was time to stop consuming the eggnog, at least for a while anyway. "Let's go. You driving?"

"Yeah," Mike replied. "I've only had a sip of that eggnog. Blimey, Jodi, it's strong."

"Thank you." She beamed, taking it as a compliment. "A sip shouldn't take you over the limit." They laughed. Their voices were light and carefree.

Mike opened the door and held it open, as he'd been taught to do. He couldn't understand those women who thought it degrading to allow a man to help them. It just seemed like a refusal of common courtesy, really. He'd hold the door open for man, woman or beast. No sexism there.

He'd felt nervous as he said, "Yes," on a whim to Jodi's invite, but he wondered if maybe he was taking advantage of her clearly tipsy state? Well, he wouldn't take advantage, Lord no. He'd gone without carnal indulgence for this long, he'd not push his advances on someone who was not interested. What worried him was the fact she might be a little shocked to find herself with a bumbling virgin. Surely a curvy beauty such as Jodi would be far more experienced than himself?

Mike obviously didn't realise that Jodi was thinking those exact thoughts. Being a loner for so long meant she'd never gotten this close to a guy before, never invited one home for eggnog, nibbles and 'stuff'. Ever.

* * * *

As Mike revved up the engine, Jodi laughed.

"She takes a bit of encouragement in the cold." He grinned and turned the key once more. A promising, growling, thundering noise started but finished off like a decrepit old cow farting which was not so good. "I think she's not for going," Mike sighed. "Damn it."

"Ah well, we could walk to my place, I guess." Jodi tipped her head to the side as she thought of options. "Or get a taxi. But no, that'd cost a fortune."

"How long will it take to walk?"

"An hour, an hour and a half? Something like that." Jodi nodded her head.

"I guess it's doable." Mike groaned. "I just don't really feel like it."

Jodi placed her hand on the crook of Mike's arm.

"Shush, what's that noise?" she said, her eyes and nose crinkled up in concentration.

It was bells. She could hear bells, and they were getting closer and closer.

"What noise?" Mike asked, but Jodi waved her hands manically at him and told him to shush.

"Roll your window down," she instructed. "Look and see what it is."

She rolled down her window and stuck her bobble-hatted head out into the cold night, feeling Jack Frost trace a pattern over her cheeks with his icy fingers. She turned her eyes up to the sky but saw nothing and pulled herself back into the relative warmth of the car interior.

"Well, it must be the eggnog then. I think I'm hearing things." She shook her head and sighed.

"Ho, ho, ho! I wouldn't bet on that," a loud booming voice proclaimed from just outside Mike's side of the car.

Jodi tilted her head to see around Mike, and there, sure enough, was a big, round, jolly old bloke in a red suit edged with white fur. He even had a fluffy candyfloss beard.

The man sat in a rather large sleigh, and yes, there were sacks upon sacks of stuff in the back. To the front was a pack—a herd—a...well, a lot of reindeer, pawing the ground and snorting warm blasts of steam from their nostrils.

"Well, hello, Santa!" Jodi was beyond shocked and had reached flippant hysteria.

"Do you two need a lift somewhere?" Santa bellowed. It was the strangest noise, loud but comforting, like the sound of a loved one's car pulling up on a late night, or the whinny of a friendly horse.

"Well, yes," Jodi said and took the lead as Mike still seemed stuck in 'mouth-gaping awe' mode. "If you wouldn't mind."

"Not at all. Hop in."

Jodi opened her door and left the car.

Mike sat in stunned shock, still not quite sure what was really happening, and he wondered if just one sip of Jodi's eggnog had been too much.

"Come on, silly." Jodi chuckled and pulled open his car door. "Haven't you always wanted to ride in Santa's sleigh?"

"Well, actually, yeah." Mike found his voice as his 'damn it and just go for it' mode kicked in.

"Thanks, Santa," he added as he helped Jodi to climb up onto the step and into the interior of the sleigh.

Jodi was amazed by how warm and comfortable it was inside and commented so to Santa.

"Well, it's all down to the Elves really," he chortled. "They're lovely you know, always thinking of my comfort. We have some kind of mystical central heating thing going on, and fur-lined seats, lovely on the bottom. Better than the old bare wood. Oh, did my bottom ache back in those days."

With another jolly chuckle, he flicked the reins and suddenly the sleigh was in the air and Mike looked down on the bright-lighted vista below. "Wow," was all he managed to squeeze out, as his mind tried vainly to take it all in. He struggled to believe and was convinced he'd wake up at any moment.

Jodi was having a whale of a time and chatted away to merry old St. Nick as if they were long-time friends. She'd always been good at adapting to things. She was never fazed by anything and took every moment as it came. This moment was something special, and she wanted to enjoy it all to the limit so she'd be able to always recall the magic in the future.

"I hope you two don't mind, but I have a few more house calls to do before I can drop you off." Santa smiled broadly as he quickly whipped the reins once more to bring the panting reindeer to a stop.

"No problem." Mike smiled. He had gotten over the shock and had started to enjoy being snuggled up next to Jodi in a flying sleigh.

Jodi backed him up. "We're in no particular rush."

"Okay. I'll be back in a moment." The large figure leapt out of the sleigh with surprising nimbleness, rooted around amongst the sacks and found the one he was looking for then disappeared down the closest chimney.

"Okay, this is weird." Mike shook his head.

"It is a bit," Jodi replied. "Nice of him to give us a lift, though."

"He probably likes the company. I guess it gets a bit lonely at times."

Nine antlered heads turned and fixed Mike with disgruntled stares.

"Oh well, sorry. I forgot about you guys." He laughed nervously, and the reindeer threw back their heads and snorted then look towards the chimney again.

* * * *

A few stops later, Santa passed Jodi a big thermos flask. "This place is massive. I'll be gone a while. Help yourself to this. It's Christmas spirit. I get so much left out for me, I can't drink it all. So I save it up in here. It's a good brew but strong. Oh and if you like." Santa flicked down a little door, like a glove compartment just in front of Mike. "In there is a plate of cookies. I get lots of those, too. Oh, but just look out for the really homemade-looking ones. The little children make them themselves, and they're cute but rarely tasty."

He chuckled again and leapt off onto the snow-covered turret of the European-looking castle below.

"Any idea where the hell we are?" Jodi chirruped with a lighter soul than she'd had in a long time.

"Not a bleeding clue," Mike replied also feeling the strange, light-hearted soul business and resigned to enjoying it to the fullest. They both collapsed laughing then Jodi unscrewed the cap of the old, red tartan-patterned flask.

She inhaled and moaned, "That smells so good." She moved in closer to Mike, his body pressed up along her arm. "Smell," she commanded.

He slipped his nose just above the flask opening and moaned softly, too. "It smells so sweet and...and good." He could think of no other way to say it.

Jodi poured a large drop into the flask lid and offered it to Mike, who offered it back to her for the first sip.

He watched her thin but sensual lips as they clasped the edge of the plastic cup and observed the way her eyes closed in enjoyment as the liquid coursed down her throat. He felt the stirrings of arousal in the pit of his stomach. A moment later, he realised why she looked so happy in that moment. Drinking from Santa's flask was like drinking liquid joy.

A pleasured growl fell from his lips. "So good," he gasped.

Jodi nodded and giggled. The small sip of Christmas Spirit went straight to her head and, unexpectedly, to her pelvis, too.

Jodi was not usually a particularly sensual woman. She had never understood the attraction of touch and closeness. She'd always recoiled from the touch of her mother, the touch of strangers felt alien and uncomfortable to her, and she'd never had any other touching experience. But at that moment, she craved touch. She wanted something she wasn't sure about, but she knew she had to feel Mike's touch—everywhere.

The Christmas spirit worked in a similar way with Mike. He felt stirrings he'd not experienced in a long time. A childhood full of abuse put him off sex. In his mind, it was a dirty, degrading act used to wield power over someone smaller and weaker. He had been subjected to sexual abuse from a man, but it had put him off all kinds of sexual activity since. However, he found he was feeling something, a stirring, a gentle warming of want.

"That's potent stuff." He coughed and reached into the glove compartment for a cookie. At the same second, Jodi did the same thing, and their heads met with a soft thud.

"Sorry," Jodi apologised and moved her head against his until they were face to face.

She'd really meant to move away and disengage then carry on and pick up that cookie, but magically, her lips met his, and all she could feel was him. His arms wrapped around her and pulled her closer. Gently, he cradled her to his chest. His lips danced tentatively on hers with such grace and lightness it made her feel dizzy with new, powerful emotions.

"Err hmm!"

A Santa-sized cough barked from the side of the sleigh, and the newly lip-locked lovers parted—well, their lips did at least. Mike kept an arm around Jodi's waist to keep her close to him. That touch was too important to be lost. He needed to feel that connection, the reminder of that kiss. *Dear God, that kiss had been perfect, just so perfect.* It was like snow on Christmas

morning or the feeling you get when you open the wrapping on that gift you never knew you wanted but is exactly the right one for you.

The night carried on in a similar way. Santa did his seasonal duty, and Jodi and Mike snuggled close, drank Christmas spirit and shared kisses—hot, searing kisses and slow lingering ones. They felt a burning need to be joined together.

* * * *

Jodi stretched her arms above her head and felt the deliciousness of soft, downy fur rubbing against her body. It excited her nipples to a height of sensuality she had never thought possible. Then she remembered the Santa ride of the night before.

She opened her eyes and was greeted by a large skylight through which she could see various bright stars, lightening then fading as the sun of a new day dawned.

She looked left and saw Mike. His eyes were still shut in sleep. He was snuggled down below the same fur-lined blankets as herself. The bed they were in seemed vast. It was made of wood, beautifully carved with holly and mistletoe and robins. The room was all wooden and filled with brightly coloured Christmas decorations. It felt like home.

She glanced back towards Mike and found his eyes open.

"Morning." She smiled awkwardly.

"Hey," Mike replied his brows knitted with confusion. Where the hell was he? Why was he in bed with the most beautiful girl he'd ever met, and he also wondered, did they do 'stuff' last night?

"I think we just slept," Jodi stated, her cheeks flushed scarlet. "But I don't remember getting into bed."

"No, neither do I," Mike replied. "Which is disconcerting as I am now, kind of, naked."

"Yeah, me too." Jodi chuckled. "This wins the award for the most unusual Christmas morning ever, in my books."

"Yeah, ditto." They drifted into silence then Mike noticed something. He reached up to the bedpost beside his head and pulled down a stocking. Inside was a note and two Satsumas. Dear Jodi and Mike,

Good morning and welcome to my home. I hope you've had a good night's sleep. I will come and explain all to you when I bring your new clothing.

Merry Christmas!

Love, Santa.

Mike read it aloud, and Jodi laughed. "Well, at least now we know."

They lay still for a moment in silence, the uncomfortable kind of silence that builds up to something. The kind of silence that becomes deafening if left for a long time. Both turned and rolled to their sides at the same moment. Their noses almost touched in the middle of the pillows. They looked up and down each other's faces then their hands reached out and tentatively touched.

Lips followed and locked together. The rest of their bodies followed suit until the shock of feeling soft, warm flesh against soft, warm flesh made the virgin lovers sigh with long-denied passion. Jodi felt a ball of emotion in her stomach, like nervousness, but the kind gotten before a pleasurable event. It overwhelmed her, making her giddy and eager. She pressed strongly against Mike's hard body. As her pelvis pressed to his, she realised just how hard he was. In curiosity, she reached down a hand and gently caressed the stiff wand of flesh. It felt sticky at its top, and it throbbed against the tips of her tentative fingers.

Mike could barely contain himself, a primal growl rolled from between his lips as Jodi's hand wrapped around him. He had never felt such pleasure before. He had experienced nothing like Jodi's loving, tentative exploration or their intimate sharing. He moved his lips to her neck then down to her shoulder as she stroked and caressed and explored. His hands fell to her breasts, and he spent a moment twisting the little hardened nubs between his fingers. That elicited great pleasure, or so he deduced from the way Jodi writhed and squeezed him harder.

He moved his lips lower and curled his body so she could still touch him. His lips pressed against her breast and moved to her nipple. Slowly, gently, nervously, he kissed as he reached his goal. He felt the unique hard yet softened nub in his mouth. He rolled it around his lips and flicked out his tongue to taste its sweetness.

Jodi's mind filled with heat. Her whole body had become a thing controlled by the hardening buttons upon her chest. With every lick and suck, she felt her body move of its own volition. It writhed and wantonly offered itself to yet more licking and sucking and touching. His hand dropped lower. To her tummy. To just below her tummy. She waited, panting, waited for the unknown as those fingers reached lower, ruffled through the short curly hair and into her dampness.

His fingers searched in a land unknown, exploring her virgin territory for the first time. They shook and panted, simultaneously, in nervous excitement. As his fingers slid along the slickness of her lips, her thighs opened wider to allow this new settler deep into the heart of her country.

His fingers slipped through the surprising wetness of her folds, and gently, they bumped over a small hillock. That little bump made her back arch in pleasure as the electric shock seemed to zap through her being. His finger retraced its steps and ran repeatedly over the little wet hillock, enjoying the feel of Jodi's body as it shook beneath him.

In a moment of bravery, instinct and need, he rolled between her thighs. He knew where he wanted to be. He wanted to be embedded and sheathed in that warm wetness. He took himself in hand, ran his hardened member up and down her wet slit and searched for the entrance.

Little did he know that his searching was divine pleasure for Jodi. She opened her thighs wider and lifted her hips as she mewled with an urgency she had never felt before. She felt empty. She needed something inside to fill her, and she needed it desperately.

As if on command, Mike slipped inside the warmth. He moved in, a little at a time, the warm walls of her virgin vagina stretching to accommodate him. He'd often heard words like 'pussy' and 'cunt' bandied about, but he had never uttered them. He'd thought them vulgar and rude, but in that moment, he knew his cock was slipping and sliding into her cunt, her wet, warm, welcoming cunt. The word was not vulgar, he realised, just primal and animal. It was perfect when used in its proper context. Its explicitly sexual nature was violated whenever it was used as a swear word or a throw-away descriptor.

The closest Jodi had gotten to sex before was Mills and Boon, and although in her mind, she knew this was not the perfectly synced lovemaking of a romance novel, she identified some of the emotions from the words she had read. She felt herself blossoming, her body

inviting the hard invader. She was filled to overflowing. Her hips bucked up as he pressed down, and her world exploded with every thrust. She had once read an erotic novel and been unimpressed, but now, the language flowed back into her, and finally, she understood.

As the feelings built steadily to a crescendo, she dared to peek from below her eyelashes, and she saw the brightness of Mike's blue eyes, looking back into hers. She smiled as he did. Their gazes locked as their bodies undulated together.

She could see her emotions written in his eyes. She saw lust, awe and wonder, as well as uncertainty and a momentary flash of worry. She reached out and rubbed the doubt from his brow. Her hand gently cradled his cheek, and although they were joined so lewdly, her touch on his cheek seemed much more intimate.

He gasped, and she felt him expand within her and was overwhelmed by emotion. Her pussy clenched, sending jolts of pure pleasure from her clit to her mind and through to Mike, who growled as he emptied his ecstasy into her.

As the flood of feelings, senses and emotions died down, they lay in one another's arms and thought about this first, this beginning. Both knew it wasn't record-breaking or technically perfect, but both also knew it was only the start, the start of something quite magical. They breathed deeply and rhythmically, as their bodies wound down from the sexual frenzy of before.

"Wow," Mike said to break the silence. "Are you all right?"

"Yes," Jodi replied, rubbing her body against his side. She was still feeling sexual, as she had not hit the peak she knew was not too far away. She could not find the words to voice the need though.

"You are amazing." He turned to face her, and she lifted her head so he could slide his arm beneath it. The other hand lazily stroked down her side, and tThe gasp she let out encouraged him to trace a lazy pattern over her breast and nipple. She squirmed against him and unconsciously pressed her pelvis against his thigh. He realised then that she still hadn't come.

"Where do you need my touch?" he asked, knowing she needed release but not knowing how to give it to her.

She took a deep breath and lifted her thigh to hook it over his. She was open to him then, and she snaked her hand down his arm, pushed his hand between their bodies and guided it to her spread lower lips. Cupping his hand with hers, she guided him up and down her slit. He soon picked up on what she wanted, stiffening his fingers to exert pressure on the tiny nub of flesh that made her gasp and sigh with pleasure.

"Yeah, like that," she groaned, close to orgasm. Her forehead touched his, and her gasping breaths tickled his lips as he discovered the primal thrill of arousing another.

He watched her face, screwed up, eyes closed, bottom lip loose and listened to her soft mewls and gasps as his fingers stroked and teased her, closer and closer, to her peak.

"Yes," she babbled. "Yes." Her cries got louder. "Yes!" She screamed out her completion as her body clenched, and she pulled Mike tighter into her embrace.

"You all done now?" he grinned and kissed her on the tip of her nose.

"For now." She giggled, her cheeks flushed with exertion, excitement and tinged with a little embarrassment. She pulled away from Mike, closed her sticky thighs together and took a moment to appreciate what had just happened. They held each other in an embrace as they came to terms with the loss of their respective virginities.

The companionable silence was broken with a knock on the door.

"Come in," Mike cried and pulled the blankets up to their chins.

"Good morning!" Santa himself walked in, holding brightly coloured clothes in either arm. "The good Elves have made these in your sizes. When you're dressed, please walk down the corridor to your right and open the big, candy-cane-coloured door at the bottom then join us for Christmas dinner."

Jodi started to ask a question, but he had already left the room.

"Well, I guess we better get up then," she said as she sat up and let the blankets fall away from her rounded breasts.

Mike stared openly at them. "Do we have to?"

"Yes, but you can play with those later."

He grinned. "Oh, I'll keep you to that."

"I hope so," she replied. "Now let's get dressed and find out what on earth is going on here."

Jodi and Mike walked down the long corridor, hand in hand. Their brightly coloured clothes blended with the reds, greens, yellows and blues on the wooden walls and floors around them. They found the candy-cane door and flung it open, grasping tightly to each other for support.

The party they found was something out of the pages of a child's fairytale book. The room was mind-numbingly massive and filled with little elves in pointy hats and shoes, their bells jingling, their cheeks flushed red as they danced and sang and ate. Jodi found herself less amazed by the elves than she'd imagined she would be. She'd met Santa and gone for ride on his sleigh with the magic reindeer pulling them through the sky. Everything else was just expected now. Mike, however, gawped. She squeezed his hand hard, and his jaws snapped together. He stroked her hand with his finger as a thank you.

She noticed a trestle table, stretched along one side of the room, with Santa and his wife sitting at the far end. She waved, and they waved back. There was every Christmas delight from the world over on that table—turkey, mince pies, Stollen cake and other exotic things Jodi and Mike had never clapped eyes on before.

In their bright red and green suits, they walked the length of the haphazardly decorated room towards Father Christmas. Tinsel, paper chains, Christmas trees, holly and mistletoe covered every surface. Eventually, they stood before him, and he waved for them to sit down.

"Did you sleep well?" Santa asked. Jodi and Mike both nodded, their cheeks equally as flushed.

"I hope you didn't mind waking up here, dears." Mrs. Claus smiled sweetly, her bright eyes shining. "You fell asleep on his sleigh, and he couldn't wake you."

"It was a little strange when I woke up," said Jodi. "But it was a nice experience anyway."

She looked at Mike who grabbed her thigh under the table and squeezed it.

Mrs. Claus piled up two plates with food and passed one each to Jodi and Mike, who eagerly dug into myriad Christmas delicacies set before them. They were ravenously hungry. They soon relaxed and chatted merrily with Santa, his wife and the elves around them. It wasn't until Jodi noticed that the sun was setting outside the window that she remembered real life at all.

"I need to be back at work!" she cried

"Don't worry," Santa chuckled. "A new tollbooth operator started today. And you both have new jobs here with me, if you want them."

Jodi and Mike glanced at each other, confusion etched on their brows.

"I need someone to help spread the Christmas cheer. In this cynical world, my elves are mocked and beaten if they try to help those in need. But you are human. You can go into the world and be accepted, acknowledged as one of their own. You will be able to do good deeds and keep the Christmas spirit alive. I have been looking for you for so long. And finally, I've found you. You're perfect for the job. What do you think? You'll live here—that room you woke in is yours. You can stay here forever with us if you take on the task."

"Don't rush your decision, dears," Mrs. Claus added as Jodi and Mike sat in stunned silence. "We know it's a big deal, but we've been looking for the best candidates for the job for so long. You two completely fit the bill. You would be able to do so much good, and I would love to have you here as part of the team."

Santa nodded, and there was a rumble of agreement that echoed down the length of the table.

"I think you must be mistaken, " said Jodi. "I am not the one. I can't be."

"No, I've got the right person. You are a person who has suffered so much in her short years, but who still cherishes Christmas and its true meaning. Someone who does something to help the poor even though she isn't rich herself. I've picked well." Father Christmas nodded his head solemnly.

"But it can't be me, Santa." Mike shook his head. "I'm not special."

"Mike, my boy, you are." Santa's sparkling eyes filled with unshed tears. "You spend your time looking after children who are deathly sick, and you reach out for them. You care for them and cherish each one. You give them hope, joy and friendship in their darkest hours, and you mourn for each tragic loss. You are a man with a deep heart, and you are the man I need for this job."

"And together, " said Mrs. Claus, "you are even stronger."

For a long moment, Jodi and Mike looked at each other. Words were inadequate so they communicated through silence. Eventually, they smiled and nodded. In unison, they said, "Thank you."

"We'd love to take the job," Mike stated, and the elves around them let out a whoop of loud, unadulterated joy and the party resumed as before.

* * * *

"I can't quite believe what's just happened," Jodi said as they walked along the corridor back to their room.

"No, it seems like a very strange but wonderful dream at the moment," Mike replied.

"I could pinch you if you'd like."

"How's that supposed to help," he snapped and pulled his arm away from her descending fingers.

"Well, it's what they do in films and things, and I'd quite like to hear you yelp."

"Sadist," Mike muttered with a glint of a smile on his lips.

"Well, I always suspected I'd turn out kinky. All things considered, it's pretty inevitable really."

"Oh, so I'm getting myself involved with a kinky one, eh? Well, this is going to be interesting. I hope!"

Jodi and Mike laughed and clasped hands. Both were in a fantasyland and hoped they'd never wake up. It was as if they'd been watching TV and had been whisked away into one of the cartoon Christmas specials. Nothing seemed quite real. This image was helped considerably by the fact that all the colours seemed brighter, lighter and more real at Santa's grotto. It really was as if they were living in Technicolor.

"Do you think we've done the right thing?" Jodi asked Mike as they shut their door behind them. She headed towards the roaring fire now somehow magically alight opposite the bed, and Mike joined her. Both held up their hands to the heat and stared into the flames as they contemplated.

Finally, he spoke. "Honestly, Jodi, I don't know. Should we just opt out of real life like this? Should we immerse ourselves in a fairy story? I know I wasn't fond of my life much until you came into it." He blushed. "As much as I loved the children, and I loved working with them, the rest of my life really did suck. I want to try this out. It's not like we're

escaping life, just taking a new job with awesome benefits. Are you having second thoughts?"

"No, oh dear God, no." Jodi shook her head emphatically. "No, I want to do this. I need to do this, you know? My life wasn't really going anywhere. I was stuck in the same old pattern, held back by the same old fears. Now, I have a purpose and a hope and someone to share it with. I do, don't I?" Her brows crinkled with worry.

"Of course, you do, Jodi." Mike took her hand and pulled her to him.

"The most exciting part of all this wasn't riding in the sleigh or partying with Santa and his elves on Christmas day. No, it was being with you, really being with you." He blushed and his gaze dropped to the floor. "Making love to you was the most thrilling, most exciting and most right thing I've done in my entire life, and if I can be with you, I'm happy."

Jodi didn't speak. She was completely overwhelmed with emotion. Mike had really opened himself to her with those words. She was very aware how vulnerable he was, and she was afraid, if she tried to speak, she wouldn't get the words right. She just leant forward and waited for him to look up once more. As his lips moved up, she placed hers against them and kissed. All of her answer was there, pent up inside that kiss, and as their lips met, it exploded through her and into him. She felt his passion in response, and she knew in that moment that they had made the right decision. To do anything other than stay together forever would be completely wrong and would end in utter disaster.

His arms surrounded her, and she leant into him, her fingers creeping up his back to hold him close. At first, the embrace was one of companionship but, as the kiss deepened and their bodies pressed harder against each other, lust and passion bubbled through. Jodi's fingers ran to the bottom edge of his shirt and hesitantly slipped under it to stroke his warm flesh. He moaned, and as it vibrated through her lips down into her core, she found the little extra push of bravery it took to undo each button and pull the rich green material from his shoulders.

With a hesitant smile, he pulled on the hem of her top, and she eagerly raised her arms to allow him access. He didn't stop at her top. Taking a shuddering breath, he pushed down her bright red trousers until they lost grip of her hips and dropped to her ankles.

As she nibbled on his neck—her lips had to touch him, because it was almost painful not to have contact with each other at all times—she slid her hands down his back to his hips. With little difficulty, she pushed the simple trousers down.

They giggled together as they kicked their way out of their pants and shoes and moved without hesitation back into each other's embrace. Now Jodi could feel the prickling heat from the fireplace behind her, warming the skin Mike wasn't heating with his touch.

"You're so beautiful," he gasped, running his finger from her check to the curve of her breast. "I can't believe I'm touching such beauty."

Jodi had never felt beautiful. She had never been told that she was anything special, and so she'd assumed she wasn't. She saw the celebrities and models and assumed that her curves were the opposite of attractive. She couldn't find words to reply, but it seemed Mike didn't need them.

Confidently, he reached around her and plucked at the fastening of her bra. She kissed the top of his head as he pressed his cheek against her chest and fought with the clips holding the plain, white material together. Finally, one gave then the other, and Mike pulled away, taking the material with him.

As her breasts settled and swayed, Jodi felt self-conscious. She started to cross her arms to cover them, but before she could, Mike's hands were there, kneading the flesh. His hands soon fell to her hips and pushed on the material there until her knickers fell away to her feet. Then his lips found hers, and all doubt drained away.

He found her attractive. She couldn't deny that, and so she accepted she was beautiful. It was a revelation. She felt different in his hands. She felt good, and she tried to convey this through her touch and her kiss.

Mike was shocked to feel Jodi's hands skim down his body in the most pleasant way. When she plucked at the waistband of his underwear, he groaned into her mouth.

He'd been teased for being weedy as a kid, every part of him was ridiculed for being small, and it had completely undermined his self confidence. To feel Jodi eagerly running her fingers over him excited him. To hear her enthusiastic moans took away some of his fear.

She admired his lithe body beneath hooded lids, but she wanted to see more, to appreciate him close up. Jodi kissed him once and pulled her lips from his as she hesitantly

dropped down to her knees. One side of her body was hot from the fire, the other side cold in the shade.

"What?" Mike stuttered nervously. "What are you doing?"

"Looking," she replied, "and touching." Her fingers traced up the inside of his thigh, making him gasp and his erection jump. "You are gorgeous."

"Erm..." Mike squirmed, his hands moving to cover himself unconsciously.

"Don't," Jodi cooed and pulled his hand away with a gentle squeeze. Before he could speak or move, she gently caressed his cock with the tips of her fingers.

As she stroked him, Mike forgot his hang-ups and concentrated on the arousal coursing through his body. She liked what she saw so much that she wanted to touch him. This was a revelation. Whenever he had been touched in earlier life, it had been as punishment, and his tormentor had told him that he got no pleasure from touching Mike's weak, pathetic body.

But as Jodi stroked and tentatively rested her lips on the side of his hardness, Mike realised that the past was behind him, that what he'd been told were lies and that here was someone who was attracted to him, all of him.

"I've never done this before." Jodi gulped as she continued to kiss along Mike's fleshy rod.

"You don't have to," Mike said. He wasn't exactly sure what she was referring to, but didn't want to upset her in any way.

"I want to try. You taste so good."

Her lips discovered the wet, yielding tip of his cock and split around it. She pressed forward and enveloped the first inch of him with her warm mouth.

Mike gasped then moaned at the erotic thrill that spilled through his body. Her lips felt as hot on his cock as the fire felt on the side of his face. He became very aware of the crackling wood and the spitting flames as she delicately bobbed her head up and down his shaft. She was worshipping him, enjoying his hardness as she moaned and lapped her tongue around him.

Jodi really enjoyed sucking Mike. He felt heavy and warm in her mouth, and he made such wonderful noises as she took more of his cock into her mouth. She enjoyed sweeping her tongue, up and down, as she sucked. It made him throb for her. At first, his hands had been fisted at his side as she'd explored him, but as she built up her tempo, his hands had

found their way to the back of her head. Their gentle pressure urged her to suck harder and to take him deeper.

She looked up and admired his gorgeous body arched back, his face to the ceiling, his chest taut. A shot of passion rolled down to her pussy as he lowered his gaze to hers.

"Jodi, fuck, Jodi," he moaned as she sucked him off. He couldn't quite believe it was real, that this beauty was down on her knees, pleasing him. He admired her lips locked around his cock, her delicate fingers clasped around its base. As he watched, he felt his arousal reach its peak.

"I'm going to come," he gasped. He couldn't hold it back at all, and his eyes closed as he roared out his orgasm.

Jodi felt his cock tighten then the warm, salty liquid hit the arch of her throat. She swallowed and took the first of it, but as he kept coming, she pulled away, and the rest of his cum splashed over her cheeks and chin and dripped down onto her breasts.

"Mmm..." She licked her lips. "That was tasty."

He groaned, and his knees collapsed below him. Gently, he came to rest beside her on the thick, fur rug.

"Thank you," he said and pressed his smiling lips to hers.

"Oh, it was my pleasure." She giggled, her cheeks flushed. "I enjoyed that."

"So did I," he replied and wrapped her in his arms.

He was panting still, his heart beating rapidly, and he enjoyed the warmth of her body against his. He could feel the hard tips of her nipples, pressing into his chest, and heard her moaning softly as his body moved against her. He gently kissed her neck.

Jodi was completely aroused. Her whole body tingled with an electricity that would occasionally coalesce and zap out towards her pussy. She rubbed herself against Mike, enjoying the hardness of his body against her soft curves. She had thoroughly enjoyed giving him the pleasure of her lips, but she needed more pleasure, and her body buzzed with need.

Mike realised Jodi was still very much aroused as he took a breather. The oral sex had taken his breath away, and he had been incapable of thought. Now, he felt her undulating against him and knew it was time to pleasure her. His mind sparked with arousal, and his cock juddered, too.

He continued the caress of his kiss down her neck, peppered her collarbone and slipped down the curve of her chest to her tempting breast. Jodi moaned as he took her nipple between his lips and sucked. He moved from breast to breast, spending equal amounts of time on each, licking and kissing and gently biting. He pressed her back so she lay directly on the fur rug.

He continued to kiss down her body. Jodi felt uncomfortable as his lips met her soft stomach, but he showed as much relish for kissing there as anywhere else, and her worries melted away. As his lips swept lower, she found herself writhing and opening her thighs further. She needed release, and although she didn't know how to voice that need, her body unconsciously cried out for orgasm.

When Mike reached her hip, he teased her for a while, kissing low on the outer curve and following down her thigh to just below her knee. She whimpered and wriggled, and her thighs parted so he could see the beauty of her cunt.

It was all new to Mike. He'd never seen porn, and he'd never been close enough to any girl to see her naked before. Earlier, he had felt Jodi but had not seen much of her beneath the blanket. His teasing kisses stopped as he manoeuvred himself between her thighs.

Jodi ached for his touch or his kiss, but her cheeks were flame-red, not just from the heat of the fire but from embarrassment. She hoped he didn't find her stomach repulsive or her thighs too big. She wanted to pull them together, but he was between them, his shoulders holding them apart.

She started to move her hand down over her stomach to cover herself, but his soft kisses to her thigh halted her hand movement. He kissed tenderly and, slowly, inched nearer and nearer. She felt his breath on her pussy lips.

"Yes," she gasped in eager anticipation of what was to come.

Mike was mesmerised by the beauty of her open lips. So pink and plump and inviting. Inside, the skin looked smooth and damp, and just above her opening, he could see the little bud that had excited her when he'd touched it.

Tentatively, he pressed out his tongue and nudged against one of the heavy lips. Jodi moaned, and Mike licked up then retracted his tongue. She tasted so good. Sweet and salty and so very sexy. He wanted to taste more of her. His tongue returned. This time, the stroke landed directly between the spread lips, and he tickled at her sensitive clit on the upstroke.

Jodi's moans and wriggles showed him what she liked, and he set up a rhythm with his tongue that rewarded him with lots of fresh, sweet juice and made Jodi moan and gasp her delight.

Jodi's eyes were closed, her hands clasped beside her body. She didn't want to move in case he stopped. She didn't want to breathe in case she missed the orgasm that crept through her body. Each lick excited her, but when he found the rhythm and the pattern she liked best, her pleasure rose even more. She felt deliciously sexy with this man's face between her thighs, licking at her most intimate place.

The tension within her built quicker than she could have imagined, and soon she was on the very brink. She was torn between wanting to feel his tongue for even longer and coming hard all over his sweet face. In the end, she had no choice, and as the orgasm ripped from her, she screamed out his name.

Mike felt her shudder and shake. Her thighs tightened as she yelled out his name. The juices gushed around his lips and down his chin, and he chased the sweet liquid with the tip of his tongue over her sensitised flesh.

"No more," she begged in the end. "I can't take any more."

"Sorry." He grinned and wiped his mouth on the back of his hand. "I got a bit carried away."

They both giggled, and Mike moved round to lie next to Jodi. He wrapped an arm around her, and they kissed.

"Mmm...that was good," she cooed as she snuggled into his body.

"Yes," he replied. "I kinda enjoyed it, too."

Jodi felt him pushing against her, his hardened cock pressed against her thigh.

"Oh, I can tell," she purred."I didn't realise you'd be ready for more so soon."

"No, neither did I," Mike chuckled. "But it seems I just can't get enough of you."

Jodi blushed and kissed him again, tickled pink by his confession. She felt the hot stir of longing between her thighs. She needed to feel his hot hardness inside of her, and she roughly pushed Mike onto his back. He was just going to protest when she rose from the floor and swung a leg over his middle.

Mike looked up into her beautiful face, and as she cheekily winked, he laughed out loud with joy. Her giggle mixed in with his bellow then her fingers gently encircled his cock and serious passion etched itself on their brows.

Slowly, she slid down onto his cock, holding him tightly in her fingers until she was sure he would stay in. She kept her gaze fixed on his face, and as she slipped down to be filled by him, she saw the lust and longing explode in his eyes.

She sat still for a moment, her fingers resting lightly on his chest, as she got used to the heaviness of him inside of her. It felt good, but she knew, as soon as she began to move, it would feel better. It took a moment for her to establish a rhythm. She moved very little, but as the urgency built, she raised higher up his cock until she was feeling the majority of it as she slammed up and down its length.

He panted hard as she fucked him, and she smiled every time he let out a moan or a gasp of pleasure. She was constantly humming with positive noises as she moved. Words melded with noises into a blanket of aroused sounds that covered the lovers and brought them ever closer to the brink.

Mike's hands couldn't keep still. They moved from her hips to her breasts and back again. When she leant further forward to rest her hands by the sides of his head and thrust harder down onto him, he lifted his mouth to lick and kiss at the fleshy globes that hung just in front of him and was rewarded by her pussy squeezing harder around him.

"Fuck, Jodi," he exclaimed, his fingers gripping into her back, his cock buried deep inside of her. He wasn't far away from orgasm, and he was screaming and moaning with little concern for who might be able to hear. His eyes flickered open for a moment, and their gazes met. Her face glazed with lust as an echo of his pushed him to the very brink, and as his eyes closed once more, he came as he called out her name.

She fell to his chest, her arms giving way beneath her. Mike wrapped his around her and held her tight as their passion eased into peace. They lay still, their hearts fluttering and chests heaving from the exertion and lust of the previous moments.

"I love you," Mike whispered as he nuzzled his chin against her hair. "That scares me a little, but it's true. I hope you don't mind me saying it."

"I love you, too," she mumbled, eyes closed, cheek resting against the gentle thump of his heart. "I'm not sure how I know it, but like you I know it's true. I feel like I should be worried, but I'm not. I'm the happiest I've ever been."

"Same here," he replied. "Well, I think I'd be happier in the bed." He winced. "Or at least, my back would be."

Jodi laughed and winced as she lifted herself away from him, her knees throbbing. "My legs agree." She winked, and they hurried to their bed.

"Best Christmas ever," Mike mumbled as he closed his eyes.

"Best Christmas yet," Jodi corrected him, and they smiled as they drifted off to sleep.

* * * *

The next morning, after a hearty breakfast, Jodi and Mike were escorted to Santa's office by Fred, one of the senior elves.

"Ah, come in," Father Christmas boomed, his voice echoing around the large room full of filing cabinets and other typical office equipment. "So this is day one. I'm afraid you don't get much time off from this job. Well, none at all, actually."

Jodi and Mike nodded. They understood the nature of the task they had taken on.

"Every day, you will report here at nine a.m., and I will tell you where you are going and who you are to help. Then you will go to the stable, and the boys there will sort you out with your own set of hooves then you'll be off to spread a bit of Christmas cheer. Of course, your work load will be heaviest in December, but as good old Scrooge said, you have to keep Christmas the whole year through."

"So, what kind of things will we be doing?" Jodi asked, a little nervous on the first day of her new job.

"Oh, the usual. You'll encourage children to be good, adults to believe, and you'll offer help and aid to all those who need it. It's a big job, but I know you can do it."

Santa handed a list to Mike then slapped him on the back. "Right, I'll leave you to it. My work is never done, you know. I need to check feedback on the toys and gifts from this year and supervise the beginning of production for the next."

"You love it, though, right?" Mike asked, and the jolly old man laughed with a hearty boom.

"Oh yes, yes, yes. I have the best job in the world, and each day is a sheer joy, my boy, a sheer joy. You two will soon understand, oh you will. Goodbye for now, friends. I'll see you at dinner tonight, and we will discuss how things have gone for you on your first day."

It wasn't until the breaking light of a new dawn as they were floating in a sleigh pulled by six eager reindeer that the truth of what was happening really sank in for Jodi and Mike. They huddled together, and as Jodi exerted a light pressure on the reins, Mike read through the list.

"Can we really do all that in a day?" Jodi asked, her brow wrinkled.

"Well, Santa seems to think so, and that lovely elf in the stable told us time is a little more flexible when you fly by reindeer."

"I guess," Jodi sighed. "We made the right decision, didn't we?"

"Yes, I think we did. I'm looking forward to this. We have magic now, Jodi. We have a purpose. We will bring tidings of comfort and joy to all we meet. That can't be a bad thing, can it?"

"No," Jodi agreed and settled a kiss on his cheek. "And we've got each other. Forever. That's the very best bit."

"Yes, yes, it is," Mike replied and leant over to kiss her gently on the lips. As with every touch between the two lovers, the kiss soon changed from sweet to lustful. Mike pressed the precious list into the compartment opposite to him as he continued to kiss Jodi.

"You know where we're going, don't you, lads?"

The reindeer nodded their heads in reply.

"Good."

He kissed Jodi again and pulled her into his arms. She wrapped herself around him, holding him tight and feeling his warmth penetrating through her heavy coat. His fingers fumbled with the buttons, but as soon as her coat was undone, his hands cupped her abundant breasts. She gasped against his lips and pulled open his coat in return. She slipped her hand down his chest and straight to his hardening cock. The touch of his hands on her body, the need of his kiss and the lust flooding her being washed away her inhibitions.

The wind whipped through her hair, and the jingling of the reindeer bells was a rhythmic reminder of where they were. Neither of them was worried. They knew they couldn't fall out, and that they were safe. They were both simply consumed with each other.

Jodi was very aware of the reins she held in her hand. Steve the Elf had been very clear that the reins were to be held at all times. The reindeer might know what they were doing, but they were also notorious for being distracted and going off in the wrong direction.

Mike noticed her hesitation and looked at the reins. "I have an idea," he said. "Sit in my lap."

She raised an eyebrow, kissed him but then complied. As she lifted her bottom off the bench, Mike raised her skirt so that, when she settled on his lap, she felt his trousered legs on her naked thighs and was very aware of his hard dick knocking at her buttocks.

She held tightly to the reins.

"What now?" she asked then felt his fingers on her hips under her skirt.

"I'm working on it," he whispered in her ear.

She giggled.

"Behave you," he chided, a hint of a chuckle in his words. "This is a very serious operation."

"Yes, boss," she replied then pressed a kiss to his cheek. "I'll be good."

"Oh, I know you will be," he growled, pushing up on the small of her back and making her rise off his knee. "That's why I'm so eager to get inside of you."

As she held on to the edge of the sleigh for dear life, Mike pulled down her knickers. She gasped as he then tugged her down again onto his cock. His hands were busy between their bodies as he guided her lower and eased himself inside her slick opening, but finally, she sat again, Mike firmly lodged inside of her.

"Yes, that's better," he moaned and kissed the side of her neck. She began to move, from side to side then forward and back. Each movement caused sighs and moans from both lovers. She found that, if she rocked and bent her knees, she could work up some friction that felt satisfying to her, and from the way Mike dug his nails into her hips, she decided it must feel good for him, too.

She was very aware of the wind around her face and the sky all around them. It seemed to add an extra dimension to this unusual love-making.

"That feels so good," Mike gasped as she moved with more purpose, confident now in her rhythm. His hands slid up and down on her hips under her skirt, and his cock throbbed and pulsed inside of her.

Jodi was desperate to rub at her clit. She ached with need, and so she gripped the leather reins in one hand and moved the other down, pulled up her skirt out of the way and slipped the hand between her legs.

It took a moment to re-synchronise herself to Mike, who was now so close to orgasm he was dragging himself up to meet her every thrust, but with each movement up and down, she became more confident.

Her fingers stroked through her wetness, arousing her clit and sending signals of ecstasy throughout her body. She panted and moaned with each movement, the orgasm balanced on the tip of her finger, and as Mike held still, with his hips thrust to the air and his cock buried deep inside of her, she came. He roared loudly as he filled her, and Jodi's scream of ecstasy shook around the sky. Their combined noise was like thunder in the clouds.

"Wow," Mike puffed as Jodi lifted herself away to sit back on the bench. "That was just incredible."

"Yes," Jodi agreed and snuggled into his body. "It was but, erm, where are my knickers?"

Mike and Jodi both searched the floor of the sleigh, but the knickers couldn't be found.

"I hope we were over the sea when we lost them," she cringed, "or goodness knows where they've landed."

They laughed then checked the coordinates to find the reindeer still had them right on track.

"Good boys," Mike praised, and the reindeer jingled their bells in reply.

"This is complete madness," Jodi laughed, shaking her head. "But I never, ever want it to stop."

"Neither do I," Mike said, "we're going to have the best Christmas ever, forever."

So if a stranger comes to you this Christmas and offers you a gift or a word of comfort, or a glass of strong smelling eggnog, you can be fairly sure that it is Jodi or Mike doing their job of bringing Christmas joy to a cynical and tired world.

Don't let them do the task on their own. It's a big world, and although they will live forever, they are still only human. If you receive Christmas spirit this year, pass it on. Spread it to all you meet. After all a drop of Christmas spirit warms the heart for the whole year to come.

About the Author

Victoria Blisse is a mother, wife, Christian, Manchester United fan and erotica writer. She is equally at home behind a laptop or a cooker and she loves to create stories, poems, cakes and biscuits that make people happy. She was born near Manchester, England and her northern English quirkiness shows through in all of her stories. Passion, love and laughter fill her works, just as they fill her busy life. If you want to know more about Victoria and her brand of rosy, raunchy romance please check out her website: http://www.victoriablisse.co.uk/

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