

Christmas Fantasy

by Angie

Land of Heart's Desire,
Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,
But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song.

- William Butler Yeats

It was midwinter and the snow lay deep and soft. The roof and porch overhang of the old, remote stone house were hidden under mounds of it. The pathway to the front door was unmarked and the wind chased snow flurries down a buried lane between two wooden fences. A full moon lit the landscape with adamant.

The windows of the house were dark and the moonlight shone through two windows on the second floor.

A rumble began deep inside the bowels of the house as an ancient furnace began to heat the water in the old ornate radiators. They popped and hissed for awhile, and then were silent. The moonlight's magic began.

He awakened in the dark, seeing nothing. He had good night vision, once he was fully awake. He concentrated. Yes, that was better. There was light coming from above him, just a crack, but he could see just well enough.

His nose seemed to be plugged, so he gave a snort and the smell of dust and cardboard greeted him. Well, that was only to be expected too. He was in a box - again - resting on something which gave strangely. He felt beside him. It seemed to be a plastic sheet of air-filled pockets.

He moved his arms slowly, getting the stiffness out of them. Then he raised them and sat up, pushing the cardboard lid aside. The box was low, so he could look around. He could see a beam of silver moonlight. It was very quiet. He lifted himself slowly to stand up, quickly stepping out of the box to escape the quaking bubbles, felt his leg muscles bunch. He was on a table, high above the floor of a vast room cloaked in shadows. He moved to stand in the light of the full moon in front of the window. He stretched out his arms in delight, feeling strength build in his body.

He looked outside. It was night and silent. There were big dark trees, their naked branches stark against the night sky, but beneath them lay a rolling whiteness gleaming in the moonlight, feathery lines blowing from soft peaks. Snow! He reached out to touch the window pane, felt the chill pushing from the other side.

He moved closer, wanting to see himself more clearly in the window's reflection. He was, of course, pale-skinned and hairless, but well-proportioned. His hands had pseudo-nails and so did his feet. Drawing strength now from the moonlight, he darkened his skin and added long amber body hair to his limbs and hands and short fur to his torso.

He bent to look closely at his face. The features were correct, but of course there was no facial hair either. He fixed that, flexed his face, and opened his mouth. That required some modifications as well. He felt his hair and realized it was wrong, stiff and straight, unnatural. He concentrated and it became golden and thick, wavy and long. He stroked it and felt it soften under his hands, thicken underneath. Yes, that was how it should be. Then he looked down at his hands and coloured his nails

a pinkish ivory. He clenched his fingers and felt the muscles tense in his forearms.

Now he felt much better, as if he were dressed, although he was not. That reminded him of another concern. He let himself look at the reflection of the area below his waist, the part that defined him as much as the rest. What indignities had they imposed on him this time? He stared, but couldn't see anything. He groaned inwardly, looked down and felt around. There was nothing under the short fur he had created there, just the suggestion of a bump, like that on store manikins. Well, he could fix that – and in a moment he did so. He was tempted to exaggerate, but something stopped him. With a thought, he made his manhood the size it should be.

He felt a shiver inside, in that part of him that waited, and his body hair lifted. He stood very still, concentrating, and a sudden excitement ran down him like an electric charge. Then a whisper without words clenched his heart and he suddenly remembered the wish and promise he had made long ago. Perhaps this was the time.

He decided to wait naked. He jumped down off the table and made the last change, drawing strength from the moonlight until he could feel the wood floor beneath his feet and the table cold under his hand. He turned to look in the window again and saw the image of himself as he remembered. He opened his mouth to whisper her name, saw his canines flash. Those differences, which had once separated him from humanity, no longer mattered.

The room was chilly, but not uncomfortably so. He turned then to face the door of the room, sensing something, a warmth, beyond it. He found himself suddenly eager, impatient almost. The anticipation was a delight in itself. He relaxed, stood very still, half afraid that he would be disappointed, denied what he wished for most of all.

Had he been here before? He began to remember as he waited and marveled that he could do so. The other times he had awakened had been different. He had known, after a while, that she was not there and he had returned to his long sleep. He knew, suddenly, that he had not stood in the fullness of himself, before. He allowed himself to hope.

They had entered the limbo of legend, he and she, like the other mythic star-crossed couples - Lancelot and Guinevere, Tristan and Isolde, Hero and Leander, Romeo and Juliet. Some of these had been, like themselves, mythic from the start, the product of a rich imagination. But he and she had gained a life nevertheless, albeit too briefly. Then they had been left to languish as memory, legend almost. He knew this, just as he knew that many, many years had passed.

Suddenly, his sharp ears detected soft footsteps beyond the door. He immediately stood straight in the moonlight. His excitement became tangible, physical. It raced like fire through his veins. His blood roared in anticipation and his muscles twitched.

The door opened and he saw her there, limned in the moonlight streaming across the floor. He drew in a sharp breath, sighed softly. He couldn't move.

She was naked too, he realized, but that was unimportant in the light which seemed to radiate from her face and green eyes. She was as beautiful as he remembered. He waited, wordless, gazing at her, hardly believing what he was seeing.

aThere was a gasp as she caught sight of him. She ran across the floor to him, into his arms, almost bowling him over, as she had done before, so long ago. He whuffed explosively, felt her lean into him. All her love was whispered in his name as she gripped him in a hug that made him quiver with delight.

He bent his head to nuzzle her hair and her scent inflamed him. Their bond came to life and flared with a passion that made them both shudder. He held her close, felt her melt into his arms, as he mumbled her name. His manhood was straining against her belly.

She rubbed her cheek along his chest and he felt a dampness, realized she was crying. He felt tears running down his own face as well. She looked up at him and their tears mingled. He dropped his head and their lips met at last, in a kiss which was deep and passionate – a promise fulfilled.

They looked at each other, wondering how they had come to be, why it was this night, of all nights.

They held hands and looked out the window, and both suddenly realized it was a special time of the year. They looked at each other again and felt another purpose, the urge to give thanks, reciprocate. They closed their eyes and concentrated.

Into every story and image of themselves, they sent a gift, a little magic, a nugget of joy, an encouragement for peace. Thus they expressed their gratitude to the people and the patience which had kept their memory alive through the long dark years.

With a sigh, they gazed at each other again, their hearts beating as one. Their timeless love shone from their eyes, filling them with a joy unbounded. The Fates had relented and all indignities were forgiven. Nothing else mattered.

Then on a soft rug in the midwinter moonlight, they consummated their love. They would never be separated again. Their endless song would be sung together, in their own Land of Heart's Desire.

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