

GIFT OF THE KRAMPUS



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fiction

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It was already the worst Christmas Eve of my life. Harold and I had planned to spend it together alone, dinner and a show. You know -that kind of show- just the two of us. It was a tradition, if you can establish a tradition in the three years we'd been together. It was always romantic. It was always fun. It was always unbelievably filthy. Now we knew his business trip would keep him away until the afternoon of the 24th, but Harold was an experienced tarmac hopper, always cutting it close, always making his connections with minutes to spare and a story about bribing a skycap or hijacking some old guy in a wheelchair and pushing him to the front of the security line. But we hadn't counted on the snowstorm delaying his flight. It meant a white Christmas for some, but for us it meant separation. It looked like he wouldn't be home until Christmas day, which meant I wouldn't be able to see him until Christmas night at the earliest-family obligations. I love my family, but holiday get togethers

can be worse than a trip to the dentist. There's too much stress, which is why I adored my time with Harold- if anyone ever knew how to eliminate stress he was the man. But since I don't control the weather, at least not yet, I went to bed alone, dreading the Christmas morning to come.

It was late when the phone rang. I was already warm and snuggled in, nearly asleep. "Hi, Kathleen," the warm voice cooed. It was Harold. "I'm back. I'm at the airport."

"How did you manage that?" I asked, rubbing the sleep from my eyes.

"A congressman on the FAA oversight committee always gets the first flight out," he said. "And they bumped me to first class to boot."

"Not bad for a guy who sells plumbing supplies," I told him, then added, "I missed you."

"Did you eat?" he asked.

"Hours ago, and you?"

"First class... I was thinking," he said, "Are you ready for your Christmas Eve spanking? I can be there in an hour."

The truth is I'm always ready for a spanking, and Harold, and not necessarily in that order, but Christmas was going to be a long day, and if he came over... I sighed. "You know I have to get some sleep if I'm going to deal with my family tomorrow. Why don't we get together tomorrow night?"

"What are you wearing?" Harold asked; his voice was dripping. He'd definitely been thinking about me.

"My little baby doll nightie, the white one, with the frilly little panties with the little pink bow at the front," I told him in my most innocent voice. It was a lie. I had flannel pajamas and heavy socks on. It's cold in bed without Harold. But I wanted him to want me. And I wanted him to go to bed horny thinking about me. I wanted him to imagine lowering my panties, taking me over his lap as I 'struggled' to escape his strong grip and reddening my round little bottom- all the time knowing he couldn't have me. I know I'm not always a good girl. Sometimes I earn my spankings.

“I can be there in 45 minutes if I don’t stop at my place for the handcuffs,” he said. “I’ll bind you with the silk tie my Mother gave me for my birthday. It’ll ruin it, but I don’t care.”

“You’ve never offered to do that before. You shackle me like a common criminal, spank me like an insolent little girl, then have your way with me like a prostitute bought and paid for. Do you think I like that?” I teased.

“I know you do,” he told me. “But if you want silk it’s tonight.”

“Like you said, I do like steel. It’s so cold. It’s so unforgiving. Call me tomorrow.”

“If you’re not careful you’ll end up on Santa’s naughty list,” Harold warned. I knew he was disappointed, but he understood. I could hear it in his voice. That’s why I loved him. And if he didn’t understand I would have swallowed my pride, invited him over, let him spank me red and fuck any hole he wanted as often as he wanted then begged for more and meant it.

I kissed the phone and hung up without a word, drifting off to sleep happy, thinking about poor Harold masturbating feverishly as he thought about me, both of us knowing it was no substitute for the real thing.

I awoke to a terrible crashing noise. At least I thought there was a noise. Or was it a dream? I listened for the longest time but heard nothing. Just as I closed my eyes again I heard it- the sound of boots, or something- heavier, much heavier, coming slowly down the hallway.

“Harold!” I yelled, hoping for a Christmas surprise. But Harold didn’t have my key. I’d meant to give it to him earlier. I’d given so much of myself to him so fast I held onto my apartment a little longer than I should have. The truth is the key was in a small box wrapped in gold paper under the Christmas tree. If it wasn’t for the snowstorm he’d already have unwrapped it. If it wasn’t for the snowstorm he’d be jumping out of my bed ready to kick some ass.

“Harold is that you?” I yelled, trying to keep my voice

steady. I turned on the little reading light, the only one within reach, knocking the phone off the nightstand as I did. Just within reach I picked it up- no dial tone. I opened the nightstand and grabbed the small revolver my father gave me when I moved out of the family home so many years ago. I gripped it with both hands and pointed it at the door. "I have a gun!" I screamed.

I wasn't sure if I'd be able to pull the trigger, but it was loaded and if I had to maybe... But the hall fell silent. Half a minute passed, then a whole. Just when I thought I'd scared off whoever was on the other side there was a sound, a sound no human could make. It was an icy howl that rattled the windows and ended with a low growl that would have sent a lion shrinking away, and left me shaking like a leaf. I couldn't hold the gun still. I could barely keep it pointed towards the door. "Go away," I tried to yell, but barely whispered.

A moment later the door shattered. I screamed. Wood splinters bounced off the walls as the shattered door panels collapsed onto the carpet. Something moved in the dark hall. Then a leg covered with matted black fur, a twisted hoof at its end, crossed the threshold and moved into the dim light. I closed my eyes and pulled the trigger, but there was only a soft metallic click. I opened them. I tried to scream again but couldn't. I could barely breathe. The thing in my bedroom was more hideous than anything in my nightmares- a goat's hind legs, but much larger, a grotesquely muscled and hairy torso and arms, vaguely human in shape, and long fingered hands ending with short hooked claws in place of nails. It had a goat-like head with a short wide snout, and a carnivore's yellowing teeth, so long they couldn't be covered by its peeling black lips. The thing was crowned by a pair of hideous twisting horns that would have easily ripped through the ceiling had it not been stooping.

I recognized the creature instantly. My Grandfather had warned me about it. He warned me about it every time we were alone from as far back as I could remember until I was a young adult, until he died. He was German, and for the longest time I

thought he was just passing on Germanic folklore designed to scare children, something he thought would be lost in my generation.

It was the Krampus.

In most of the world they don't mention that Saint Nicholas has a dark counterpart, a yang to his yin. While the saint is out rewarding the good the Krampus is punishing the wicked, and not with anything so banal as lumps of coal left in stockings. It's a horrific beast that can whip children red with birch branches for mischief, or cast the truly evil to hell for an eternity's punishment, or do anything in between to save the souls of those who've sinned.

My Grandfather swore that when he was ten years old it stepped out of the shadows one night and chased him up a steep snow covered hill. When he thought he'd escaped, when he was out of breath and lost and scared and didn't know where home was anymore it appeared from nowhere, grabbed him, and crushed an orange in his face, rubbing the juice in his eyes and the pith up his nose, and he knew instantly it was punishing him for stealing one month's earlier. Then it pointed him towards home and he never stole again. As the years passed I began to believe him- not that there actually was such a creature with fruit readily to hand, but I believed he believed it because his story never varied, because there was real fear in his watery gray eyes the last few times he told it, because an 82 year old man slowly dying of congestive heart failure told it to an adult woman and made her promise to be careful or it would come for her.

And in parts of Germany and Austria there are still places where the Krampus makes yearly visits before Christmas. And just like the Santa Claus' you see at the mall they're nothing but men in costumes- the Krampus' 'helpers.' A look at the internet will instantly confirm that some of these costumes are quite elaborate, but are none the less, when you look carefully, nothing but Christmas fakery. That's what I thought my Grandfather experienced when he was a child- a good costume seen by torchlight reflecting off snow, coalescing with collective guilt

over something far worse than a stolen orange, something he couldn't understand that wasn't his fault.

But the thing standing before me was no man in a holiday costume. It took a step towards me, shaking the bed, then another, its dead eyes glowing a dull red, never blinking. As it got close it extended its mucus dripping tongue slowly. It was thin, tubular, like an insect's proboscis, mottled red, and more than three feet long. It tentatively probed around the gun's barrel, then thrust it deep inside. I opened my hands and tried to look away as it easily supported the weapon at the end of its tongue, withdrawing it into its black hands with the dexterity of an elephant's trunk. Then it caressed the gun with that horrible appendage, poking every little crevice, giving contented little sighs before tongue fucking it in earnest with greedy little growls. When it was done the barrel was bent, the bore horribly stretched and covered with a viscous yellow liquid that reeked of rancid custard.

That's when its eyes caught mine. They flashed a brilliant red, as if the creature had been sleepwalking and awakened with a start for some dread purpose. In a flash it grabbed both my wrists with one of its huge hands. Its slimy tongue darted out and wrapped around my neck. It felt like an algae covered rope pulled from a hot spring, both rough and slimy at the same time. Then it began to constrict.

"No... no," I begged as the living noose tightened. It pulled a large darkly stained burlap sack from its back, the filthiest thing I'd ever seen, and threw it on the bed, then yanked me from beneath my warm comforter, all the while steadily increasing the pressure on my neck. With amazing precision for something so large it peeled my nightclothes from me in seconds, slitting them with razor sharp claws without so much as nicking my skin even though I squirmed in its grip.

"Please," I begged, my nipples hardening in the cool night air, but the muscular ligature around my neck continued to tighten. I felt a horrible pressure behind my eyes like they were about to

pop out. I felt like I was about to vomit. “No,” I managed to choke out one last time before I couldn't draw another breath and found myself silenced, suffocating. I knew what came next from my grandfather's stories. I was already blacking out as it began to stuff me naked in its sack, and was fully unconscious before it released its tongue and sealed me in.

I came around slowly in the bouncing sack. I'd been stuffed in curled into the fetal position, the top tied off so I could barely move. I could tell I'd been slung over the creature's shoulder, and it was walking with grim purpose. We were outside. From the sound of its hooves on soil, and the occasional branch brushing the sack, I knew it was walking through the woods, and we were already deep in them because no light shone through the burlap. All there was, was the odor of the bag's previous occupants. It was heavy, musty, sickening, but somehow still enticing, old sweat mixed with the stale sex odor of thousands of terror struck sinners- women who despite themselves found their sexes wet and parted as the Krampus carried them to their doom, and equally horrified men, erect and dripping clear seminal fluid as they, too, were taken to their fate like so many sacks of potatoes.

I wanted to be disgusted by it, by them, but in a matter of minutes I was as excited as any of them had ever been, as wet as I'd ever been. And I tried to resist doing what I knew they did, but I was just as weak, just as hopeless. At first I just put my hand on my sex, feeling its warmth, but soon a finger found the wetness, the familiar slippery flesh, and I held it there, letting the motion of the creature cause the movement, pretending I wasn't really masturbating, but soon that wasn't enough. I was rubbing my burning slit as best I could with my legs pressed together, far too scared to part them, crying too hard to care, and too ashamed to be adding to the sack's odor to believe myself worthy of the one thing that could relieve my tension and let me think clearly. I pinched my right nipple as hard as I could with my left hand. Harold could sometimes bring me to orgasm that way when I got stubborn, but it didn't help.

Then everything changed. The creature's hooves began sounding against rock, echoing. We were in a cave; we were in its lair. Dim flickering firelight shone through the burlap's weave. There were distant screams, close groans, the sound of chains- other prisoners, male and female, who'd arrived in exactly the same way, some that night, from places all over the world, the Krampus bending time and space like another Christmas visitor, some from Christmases long past who hadn't yet been adequately punished.

I came.

I came long, hard, and loud, panting, moaning, and shaking. It was as intense as it was pitiful, and as painful as it was pleasurable. My stomach muscles cramped. I felt like I was going throw up because of the sickening smell of the air I could get, and pass out from the lack of air I couldn't. But the creature paused for just a moment to listen and feel me writhe against its back. I could swear it gave a little grunt of satisfaction before beginning again. The hoped for clarity returned, but all that was left was the fear, the choking stench, and two fingers buried deep in my sex that I was too frightened to take out. I would have gladly followed them, crawled into my own womb if I were able- and though my whole perception of reality had been challenged that night I knew it wasn't possible, or if it was, that the Krampus would just crawl in after me.

It dropped the bag roughly and without a warning. Then a huge hand reached in and yanked me out like a piece of meat. I could see we were in one of the cave's alcoves. It was enormous, the size of a ballroom, illuminated by several torches, and small pools of burning pitch that seemed to ooze from the craggy walls and drip from the ceiling. The flames danced dimly across their surfaces. It was barely enough light to see by, the high ceiling disappearing into flickering shadows above.

At first I thought we were alone in that huge space, all the other prisoners shackled somewhere else in that endless cave. Then I saw them, two girls as naked as me. They were identical twins, gorgeous, rail thin, with porcelain white skin and the

longest, straightest, most luscious jet black hair I'd ever seen. They hung next to each other by their ankles, each from a single rope at the opposite side of the alcove, their heads a dozen feet from the cave floor, their arms limp and stretched. An immense hat pin skewered each of their nipples, the blood around them dry and scabbed. Their eyes were open, but glazed, and they took no notice of me or the Krampus; they just moaned softly to themselves.

The Krampus grabbed my wrists and lifted me off my feet. It sniffed the fingers I masturbated with. Then its tongue darted out and licked them greedily like an excited puppy, leaving them far slimier than when it started. It pushed me against one of the rough walls and focused its eyes directly on mine. I've had more than my share of lovers, but I've never seen lust like that in any man's eyes. It wanted to fuck me. It really wanted to fuck me. And though I tried not to look down I had to. Its throbbing penis was bigger than my forearm and just as hard, something straight out of a Freudian nightmare, black as night and covered with gnarled ridges and tufts of mangy hair. Half a dozen dull yellow barbs jutted from just behind its dripping glans forming a vicious collar still adorned with pieces of rotting flesh from its previous victims. It pressed the thing to within millimeters of my sex, so close I could feel its heat. And its testicles, the size of grapefruits, pulled high in their crinkling gray scrotum, quivered and buzzed like a pair of nests filled with increasingly angry wasps.

I closed my eyes and waited for the inevitable, to be impaled, to have my womanhood torn apart as it satiated its lust. And just when I thought it couldn't wait one second longer it did, and another, and another. I opened my eyes. The beast's face was contorted with anguish. It tilted its head back slowly and let out a pitiful howl that echoed for the longest time as dust floated down from the dark stalactites above. In an instant I realized- it couldn't fuck me; it knew I was Harold's. And it also meant it was going to punish me the way desire was punishing it. It lowered its head and looked at me with a mixture of lust and

hatred, and then its expression changed just a little, the hatred ebbing, replaced by a hint of anticipation, and I knew it had formed a plan. A chill ran down my spine, and I swear I saw the edges of its mouth pull up just a little.

The thing carried me to a rock outcropping it used as a shelf and laid me there among piles of wicked looking devices and materials I didn't want anywhere near me. It took a length of thin sisal rope; it was rough and dirty; it had been used before. My wrists were tied to my elbows behind me. Next the thing began wrapping more lengths around me, binding me tightly around my torso, fashioning a makeshift harness. The ropes around my waist were tied impossibly tight, tighter than any 19th century corset. Two lengths ran from its front between my legs, one on either side of my sex, and up the crack of my ass to the waist rope, then up and under my armpits and back around my neck so that it formed a snug collar so long and thick I could barely move my head. Next it wrapped each of my breasts with its own rope, starting right at the base of my chest and proceeding towards their tips, multiple turns reshaping them into two horrible narrow stalks projecting from a flat chest where their broad bases had once been. As it continued to wrap them they stretched, elongated, and swelled as small balloon-like breasts bloomed from their ends, and flopped down my chest under gravity's pull like obscene nipple topped mushrooms. The ends of these ropes were pulled behind my back and down, then woven into some part of the harness I couldn't see, making the horrible appendages the Krampus created spread and sag further than dozens of years braless jogging ever could.

"Please," I begged, but the creature ignored me. It was preparing a crudely formed iron hook. It was huge, the size of a cane's handle, with a ball an inch and a half wide molded into its business end. The Krampus had already secured a length of rope to the other end and was greasing the ball with something dark, awful, and viscous. It bent me over the outcropping and spread my cheeks. Then the hook's cold ball touch my anus and the pressure began to increase.

“No,” I whispered, but the pressure increased steadily. I didn't think it would ever fit but I knew better than to fight it. I tried to relax my straining sphincter muscles. I took deep breaths, and to my surprise it began to move slowly, painfully in. Then, just when I thought I couldn't possibly be opened anymore, the widest part passed the circle of stretched muscle, and its involuntary contraction pulled the rest of the ball into me surprisingly quickly. After that the Krampus had little trouble forcing the hook deeper into my rectum, seating it all the way so that its crook followed the curve of my body, and its outside end rested against the small of my back.

As I squirmed trying to get accustomed to the odd feeling of the thing inside me the Krampus tied the rope off into the rest of the body harness, and lifted me by it. The weight was taken equally by the two ropes between my legs and the hook in my ass. The former spread my thighs and opened my sex to the cold dark air; the later made me feel like a freshly caught tuna struggling on a line, making me vow then and there never to eat fish again.

I was carried to the center of the alcove and the rough rope harness was tied to a line already dangling from the shadows above, leaving me open, exposed and humiliated, my feet at least two feet off the cave floor. Even so I still wasn't eye to eye with the Krampus, which had retrieved a small bunch of white birch branches from its stores. They were so fresh I could smell their distinctive leathery odor. The creature bent them before my eyes to show how flexible they were, then with a sudden burst of energy whipped them through the air. The sudden shrill whistle made me start, made my nipples tighten, made me shiver. I shook my head, but there was never a question of mercy.

The beast took a stop back. The birch came down on my ass like half a dozen stripes of fire, then my belly. It began circling me slowly, hitting every inch of exposed skin below my neck. Somehow I knew it wouldn't strip my flesh. It wouldn't bruise or welt it. It wouldn't make me less attractive for Harold, not in the long term, and I thought it my trump card, that there would be a

limit to the pain. But as the creature worked it turned my ass, belly, thighs, the exposed ends of my breasts, even my lower lips a bright festive pink. Within minutes each stroke became more unbearable than the last, and when I thought nothing could hurt more than the previous one the creature proved me wrong yet again- and then did it again, and again.

I begged. I cried. I screamed as the blows landed- then listened to my own terrified echoes linger for seconds after each one, knowing that others who'd experienced the same thing were reliving their own nightmare encounters with the Krampus. As it circled it worked itself into a state of lust fueled frenzy. Its erection, which had never softened, seemed to grow stiffer and higher by the stroke. The ring of barbs behind its glans took on such an intense color that they seemed to glow, and the oddly shaped hole at its glistening black tip began to drip a disgusting mucus-like slime.

My skin was on fire everywhere the birch touched. I couldn't take anymore, but was powerless to stop it. There was no safe word, and mercy is an utterly foreign concept to a thing like the Krampus. I thrashed in the harness but could barely move. I begged myself hoarse. Hair stuck to my tear stained face, to my eyelashes, but I didn't have the energy to shake it off anymore. The Krampus seemed to be absorbing the energy I lost, and the black dread of what would happen to me if it gave in to its lust was nearly as bad as the pain. I began trembling uncontrollably and gagging on my own sobs as the creature whipped me with increasing fervor.

"I'm sorry," I choked out. I don't know why I said it. I don't know why I didn't say it before, but it stopped the beast dead in its tracks, its arm poised to deliver another blow to my throbbing crotch. For the first time since it began it looked me in the eye, its expression contempt or disgust, I couldn't tell which.

Then, after what seemed like an eternity, it slowly pulled back its lips, revealing every one of its curved and stained teeth. It raised the birch bunch even higher and swung again, harder than anything I could have imagined. The shriek of the branches

through the air was deafening. The sound of the impact was like shattering rock. But I wasn't the target- the flail came down on the Krampus' own pulsing erection, ripping half a dozen thick strips of hide from its rugged penis, and triggering an orgasm so terrifying it defies description. Hot jets of gelatinous semen shot through the air like liquid bullets. Several of them hit a burning pitch pool and ignited like napalm, illuminating the alcove with blinding white flashes.

I shook. I screamed so hard I thought I'd rip my vocal cords. Then the Krampus, either enraged or satisfied, let loose with a roar so loud that I couldn't hear myself, so loud I thought my ears were being ripped from my head. The rope I was suspended from vibrated in sympathy with the sound, forcing me to hear it with my very skin. My head got light. My vision faded, and mercifully- I passed out.

I awakened with a jolt. I was still bound in the rope harness, still suspended, my feet swinging free, but the air was warm. The smell was neutral. I wasn't in the cave anymore. But I couldn't open my eyes, and my mouth was forced open, my chin and chest wet. My head was wrapped in a web of thin sisal rope. Two knots pressed against my eyelids, forcing them shut. A large knot, wet with my own saliva, filled my mouth. It was scratchy against my tongue and kept me salivating heavily, yet it also prevented me from swallowing, so drool ran down my chin and onto my chest more or less continuously.

“What, pray tell, is a Krampus?” It was Harold's voice.

I started, then moaned into the gag in relief. I was in his house. I don't know how I knew, but I knew.

“Whaff?” I managed to say through the gag, almost cheerfully.

“The gift tag,” he said. From the tug I knew it was tied to my right nipple, “it says, 'Merry Christmas from The Krampus.’”

“Nouoof,” I cried. The shock was genuine. I twisted futilely in the ropes. Though I was thankful to be out of that cave I didn't want to be a gift; I wanted to give myself to Harold, not to be

given like a pair of socks. He yanked the tag from me. I moaned; it felt like he'd ripped my nipple off, but I knew from experience with the clover clamps he often used on me that it was just the blood rushing back in.

“How did you get in here? How did you do all this?” Harold asked, genuinely perplexed. Two fingertips touched my dripping chin, then ran down my neck and through the saliva running down my chest. Everything changed. My relief was instantly swept away- to be there, to be with him like that, to be literally soaked in my own drool was suddenly the most embarrassing thing I could imagine. My face got hot and my cheeks joined the other parts of my body in their blush. Harold paused with a wet finger in my bellybutton. He ran it around. He pushed it in and out slowly several times before withdrawing it, leaving me empty and desperate for any touch.

I threw back my head and moaned, “Pleassph,” through the gag.

“Have it your way,” he said, and before I could utter another sound his fingers were on my sex, then inside me. I hadn't even noticed how excited I was, but this was by far the most insulting thing he'd ever done- he was looking the gift horse in the mouth. He thrust them in without fanfare, first one, then another, as deeply as he could reach. And it was obvious; he was checking for semen. He knew someone else had spanked me and left me there for him and he was feeling to see if they'd fucked me as well. When he found nothing but my own sex fluid he began finger fucking me slowly. Then he touched me with his thumb just above, rubbing around my clitoral hood gently. I couldn't help but respond, melting there in the harness, hoping for a safe orgasm at last no matter how humiliating it was. But when I was so close I could taste it he withdrew his hand and wiped his fingers in my hair. I moaned in desperation, but Harold had other things on his mind. He spun me slowly.

“What's this?” Harold's voice asked, tugging the rope at the end of the hook in my ass.

“A hookph,” I said through the knot gag.

“That’s what I thought,” he said, suppressing a chuckle.

He touched my burning cheeks and stroked my breasts so gently I shivered. “I don’t know who this Krampus is, but he knows exactly what I wanted for Christmas. I think I’m going to start writing to him instead of Santa,” he joked, still believing it all a Christmas hoax, that I was offering myself instead of being offered.

I shook my head and tried to say, “No,” again.

Harold put his hands on my sore ass and squeezed. Then I felt the head of his cock pressing at my sex. I moaned for him to wait. My body was ready, but I wasn’t. I didn’t want him having me like that. I wanted to explain everything first, but I never got the chance. The penetration was sudden, almost violent. I screamed more from shock than pain as I found myself impaled on his shaft balls deep in one thrust. And before I could come to grips with the sensation he was fucking me, genuinely fucking me- hard.

“Nooooo,” I finally managed to whine through the gag on his third or fourth stroke. I genuinely wanted him, needed him, but I didn’t want to be a Christmas present, not from a thing like the Krampus. By the sixth stroke I’d come, a horrible little burp of an orgasm, the kind I used to get when I tried to force one when masturbating. “No,” I whined again like a broken record, this time crying. Even at his most dominant Harold had always been considerate lover, but he’d accepted the gift; it was Christmas morning and he was playing with his toy and I couldn’t blame him.

But soon I didn’t care, because something was growing inside me, an orgasm so big was building that it frightened me, the kind that even Harold could only give me a few times a year, the kind that made me scream, the kind that left me breathless and reeling, the kind I hated to have in bondage. And the Krampus was watching; I could feel it- maybe it was standing unseen directly behind Harold, too big to be noticed, or maybe it was at the window, or deep in its lair staring with its mind’s eye, but it could see us. We all have a hidden fear, a desire inside the

darkest part of our souls, that yearning for the degradation we hope we'll never get, but secretly believe we deserve, and believe should be witnessed so we can never deny it. And at that moment I knew all I wanted on this earth was Harold in me, deeper and harder with every thrust. I needed him. And I needed to wrap my arms around him. And I needed to kiss him. And I needed that damn hook out of my ass. And I needed my aching breasts freed.

But I had to settle for the fucking, and when I did I began to lose myself in the sensation, in that marvelous feeling of just being the fuck-ee that I rarely find because I can't turn off my brain, but the approaching orgasm was far bigger and more powerful than any Krampus. It threatened to take my soul and I wanted it to, and it was close, so close.

Harold thrust into me one last time and froze. Then he started rocking me with vicious little thrusts as he came, as he grunted and ground his teeth, as his hot semen splashed against my cervix. I was so close to the edge, to dropping off in an orgasm that would have rocked the whole world- but it was over. Harold was gasping, leaning against me so he wouldn't collapse. And inside he was shrinking. He'd had his gift. He withdrew and some of our juices fell to the hardwood floor with a splat and some ran hot down the fatty curves of my inner thighs, leaving cold trails as they advanced.

And he was gone.

I hung there alone in my blackened world for the longest time as he recovered, standing a few feet away panting, and I knew he was staring at me the way men do after they've come, wondering why they've just done such a disgusting thing to such a strange creature, trying to politely find a way to leave or turn on the TV so they don't have to think about it. Every woman has to deal with that, and with men pretending it doesn't happen- but I didn't care about any of it. Harold loved me.

A minute later something cold pushed between my cheek and the rope holding the gag. The distinctive sound of a scissor and the sudden freedom to speak came like an epiphany. A few snips

later my head was free. I could see. I had to blink my eyes a few times to focus. I was in Harold's living room suspended from a crude wooden frame next to his Christmas tree. He kissed me gently on the lips.

"How did you arrange all this?" he asked softly. He was wrapped in the luxurious red patterned robe I'd given him for his birthday. It was more of a smoking jacket than a robe, trimmed in black satin. He looked like a young sexy version of Hugh Hefner in it.

"You wouldn't believe me," I said.

Harold took my full weight from the ropes, reached up and cut them, then gently set me on my feet. He unwrapped my aching breasts. He freed my hands and untied or cut away all vestiges of the harness, except the one rope holding the hook in my ass. He grasped this firmly, and smiling, pulled me to my toes.

"Hey," I complained.

"You're a filthy, filthy girl," he told me. "You need a bath." He wrapped the hook's rope around his hand multiple times to shorten my leash until his fist was in the small of my back. Then he marched me to the bathroom with me dancing at the end of the hook like his puppet.

"Hey," I repeated.

"You're the girl who let someone hook her," Harold said. "Now get it ready," he ordered. He held the rope, keeping the hook uncomfortably seated, giving me just enough leeway to draw the bath. I knew just how he wanted it, three inches of water in the tub, quite hot, with just a pinch of bubble bath, enough to make foam and wash away my sex smell, but not enough to offer even a hint of modesty. I'd done it often enough, never at the end of a rope like that, but sometimes on a leash.

"Good girl," Harold said when it was ready. He had me lean over the edge of the tub and spread my legs.

The hook, its lubrication long since dry, didn't come out easily. It didn't hurt as much as it did going in, but it certainly opened my eyes as the ball at the tip stretched my anus before it

popped out.

“I'm not even going to ask where you got this,” Harold said, examining it, “but I'll save it for later.”

As I stepped into the tub I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror. I was covered with rope marks- ghostly red impressions in my skin that made it almost look like I was still tied. They were deepest in my breasts, which had again taken on their natural shape, but I'm convinced were hanging half an inch lower than when I went to bed Christmas Eve. Their ends where they had been exposed, and my ass and sex, were still swollen and glowing pink from the birching.

I looked Harold briefly in the eye then down quickly. I'm not normally self-conscious around him. I instinctively covered my breasts and turned away. It seemed to amuse him.

“Hands down,” he ordered. He never allowed me to cover myself in his presence. “Now sit.”

I lowered myself slowly into the water. It burned my sore ass for a few seconds; then it began to feel good. Harold put his hands on me, soaping, rubbing. I felt like a little girl being bathed by Daddy for the last time; neither wants things to change, but both are getting uncomfortable with her naked body as she slowly outgrows Eden. But Harold wasn't my father, and as he gently washed me and massaged my rope marks away I began to feel like a woman again. He leaned in. He kissed me. He gently fondled my breasts until my nipples tightened unbearably.

“Masturbate for me,” he commanded easily. It was part of a ritual to be done for ritual's sake- at least that's what I thought when he trained me to do it. Looking back I see he was just making it easier for me. Before Harold I almost never masturbated even though I rarely came with previous lovers. I gave myself to them while maintaining my freedom, and didn't get much pleasure from either act. When I gave my all to Harold he made it clear that my orgasms brought him pleasure, and that I wouldn't be allowed to say, 'I don't need to come every time,' as

I'd taught myself. I'd come when it pleased him- and it pleased him often.

I spread my legs as far as I could, pressing them against the smooth porcelain walls of the tub, opened my sex with the first two fingers of my left hand, and rubbed slowly next to my clitoris with the tips of two finger of my right. Sometimes Harold allowed me to close my eyes if I asked, and it had been a hard night. "May I ..." I started, but he knew what coming.

"Keep your eyes open. Look into mine," he ordered.

I hated that as much as I loved it, but the most humiliating part of the ritual was having to say his name when I came. I wanted to say it. I longed to say, but I hated having to say it. Soon, very, very soon, that was a moot point. Not even a minute had passed when the waves threatened to break over my consciousness.

"May I come?" I asked.

Harold waited only a few seconds before nodding and saying, "Now," softly.

My shoulders hunched involuntarily. "Harold... Harold... Harold..." I repeated, my voice cracking as time slowed, as I melted, as the waves of passion washed me clean. I had to fight to keep my eyes open, to maintain eye contact, and when the tide finally began to ebb I added, "I love you."

"Merry Christmas," Harold said, pulling my right hand to his mouth, gently licking my fingers, then leaning in and kissing me on the lips tenderly.

That was last Christmas. I've questioned my sanity more than once since then, more than once even sitting in that warm bath water knowing Harold loved me. And sometimes it seems like it all happened a lifetime ago. Yet when I close my eyes and think about it for even a moment every detail comes flooding back like I'm watching a movie and I'm the star- and strangely, though the terror is there, and the ecstasy- even the glory, it all seems strangely tinged with ambivalence. I guess that's because I don't know where the story ends. It's all a continuum, and that makes

life hard to fathom.

One thing I do know is that Harold still thinks I set the whole thing up, that the frame I was hung from, the hook I was impaled on, even the filthy sisal rope he washed and still binds me with sometimes before making love, were all Christmas gifts from me, given to him in a tableau created with the help of some unknown confederate who knows all our secrets- and he's half right. I never tried to tell him the truth, and I doubt I ever will. Even as a child I didn't believe my Grandfather. Monsters don't walk the earth at night, not even in service of the saints. Our world has moved beyond monsters, which means it's moved beyond heroes, and that's the real pity, because both are real. We just have to open our eyes to see them.

The end

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About the author

J. Manque is a writer based near San Francisco, California. He's currently working on a million word magnum opus about life and politics in the 1990s. It will likely be released as three or four novels. The first, tentatively entitled *Love on Concrete*, is scheduled for release in print and eBook form in late 2010. Here's a brief synopsis-

In the late summer of 1994 an act of civil disobedience triggers a chance meeting between an amateur dominatrix and an IT specialist, resulting in an intense psychological wrestling match that mirrors the politics of change of the mid 1990s. It ends with a torrid confrontation in a rundown motel in Reno's dirty heat hours before the 'Republican Revolution' changes America in ways that are still echoing through the world today. In between the two explore the dark shadows of the human psyche reflected in aspects of sexuality never discussed among friends, but always lurking just out of sight in a dark world of sodium vapor lights and diesel choked streets- in short, our world.

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