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I welcome all comments from readers (wiseguy35@hotmail.com).

Mistletoe

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Elaine slept fitfully, too aware of the cold, empty space beside her where Neil's body should have been.

He was only supposed to be on call, but it was no big surprise when the call came within minutes of the beginning of the night shift. Those with enough seniority always took off on Christmas Eve; those with a bit less called in sick; those with none, like Neil, ended up working.

She grabbed his pillow and buried her face in it, inhaling deeply to pick up traces of his scent. That was when she heard the first noise.

It was a sharp thud, like someone's leg impacting an unexpected piece of furniture. And it was coming from the living room.

Elaine froze and trained her ears on the space beyond. She heard the soft ticking of her bedside clock; the monotonous hum of the heating system blowing warm air through the apartment; the occasional *swish* of a car driving by on the highway outside.

The slight creak of that loose floorboard near the kitchen.

It couldn't be Neil. If he'd been sent home early he'd have called first, and made a beeline to their bed on arrival instead of creeping around the living room. And he'd have turned on a light.

Elaine slipped quietly out from between the sheets. Her skin shone faintly in the blue light from her alarm clock, reflecting in her vanity mirror as the ghost of a naked woman. Her hand groped and found the mint green silk robe she'd hung from the closet knob. It slid smoothly over her skin.

She looked around for something else -- a golf club, an umbrella, anything -- but the best she could come up with was a can of hair spray from the bathroom. Armed with that and her cell phone, with one finger poised over the 911 hot key, she crept toward the living room. She could just make out a large figure bent over the coffee table, where she had left the ritual plate of cookies. Her hand felt along the wall and found the light switch.

The sudden glare from the chandelier stunned them both momentarily. Elaine blinked heavily, staring at the space where the intruder was. "Who the hell are you?"

"Ho ho ho," the intruder retorted with a hearty belly laugh. "That should be pretty obvious, even to a girl who's supposed to be asleep."

Her eyes adapted to the light, and Elaine was able to get her first good look at the intruder. He was about her height, broad-shouldered and heavy set. He wore a bright red suit and hat with black boots and a belt. She studied the face behind the long, white beard for any sign of a familiar feature other than the obvious, but it was hard to focus. "Cute," she said, tightening her grip on the hair spray. "But I stopped believing in Santa when I was ten. You've got fifteen seconds to get out of here before I call the police."

"Oh ho ho," he bellowed, "you don't want to do that. Not when Santa's brought a lovely present just for you." Without waiting for her permission, he reached into his sack and pulled out a velvet box. "Santa knows what a good girl you've been this year, Elaine. You've worked so hard every day, and kept up with your studies at night. And you've made Neil very happy, too. So Santa had his elves make something very, very special for you." Opening the box, he reached in with two fingers and pulled out a shiny object on a gold chain.

Elaine saw the sparkling object and forgot to be cautious of the strange man. She stepped forward to get a closer look. "What the ..."

Santa held it up a little higher and closer to her face. "This," he explained, his voice growing soft and compelling, "is your very own piece of magical mistletoe. You can see how the light shines from the golden branches,

and how the berries sparkle and gleam. And as it slowly sways back and forth, you can start to see the intricate detail of the carving as your eyelids become tired and heavy."

Elaine stared at the sparkling, gleaming item that swayed before her and noticed all of the things that Santa mentioned even as he pointed them out to her. She blinked heavily at the mention of how tired her eyes were becoming.

"Very tired and heavy," Santa continued. "And as you continue watching the mistletoe, you may begin to become aware of the temperature of the air around you, and the weight of that spray can in your right hand, and how it also seems to be getting heavier and heavier as your entire body begins to relax. You can see the mistletoe swaying back and forth, sparkling and shining, and feel how very much your eyes want to relax and sleep, Elaine. Your body knows how good it feels to relax and sleep, and you know that on Christmas Eve all good girls should be asleep while Santa does his work. And your eyes can close now, while your body relaxes and goes deeper for me with every breath, deeper with every beat of your heart, deeper with every word I say."

Elaine listened to the man's voice and felt herself relaxing, going with the flow of his words and discovering that all he said was true. The mistletoe sparkled into her sleepy eyes, making them feel so tired, and she saw no reason to keep them open any longer. His voice faded to a buzzing sound, and there was a distant thud of something landing on the floor, but Elaine didn't need to pay attention to those things. Instead, she paid attention to how warm she was beginning to feel, so warm, too warm. The silk robe became itchy and heavy, like a blanket of rough wool against her skin, baking her. It needed to come off.

Santa watched as Elaine unbelted the robe and slipped it off, taking great delight in the display of her body. He admired the curve of her waist, the exquisite teardrop shape of her breasts, that deliciously trim arrowhead at her center pointing the way down to the promised land. He'd seen a lot of naked bodies, but Elaine's was something special.

"Mistletoe," he said to her, "has a very old tradition behind it. Whenever you find yourself under a piece of mistletoe, it is traditional to kiss whomever you are with at the time. You've heard of that tradition, haven't you, Elaine?"

"Yes," she said softly, distantly.

"And there is a piece of mistletoe dangling over you right now. Any second now, Elaine, you will feel its power calling to you,

making you feel so very good, so very happy, and giving you a strong need to kiss the person you are with. The longer you stand there below the mistletoe, the more you need to kiss me, Elaine."

Elaine felt the power of the mistletoe, and her lips began to quiver with the need to kiss the owner of that voice. She stepped forward, reaching out with her hands, and pulled his furry lips over to meet hers. His arms encircled her, his gloved hand feeling its way along her bare back, while her tongue explored his mouth.

He whispered a few more words into her ear, and Elaine felt her body become energized. Her kisses grew more fervent, and her hands began exploring Santa's suit, feeling the muscles in his back as he lifted her by the bottom and carried her back to the bedroom.

He laid her out on the bed and spread her legs wide. His beard tickled her things as he kissed his way up them, alternating left and right, inching closer to heaven each time. By the time his tongue touched her outer lips they were moist and swollen and ready. He ran his tongue along the folds, listening to her moaning as it grew louder and faster. He drew circles around her button, teasing it until she cried out and squeezed his head hard enough to cut off the sound.

Grabbing the mistletoe pendant, he stood up quickly and held it aloft over her face. "Open your eyes, Elaine," he commanded. She did, still panting heavily from her orgasm. "Focus on the mistletoe, Elaine," he told her. "And as you watch the mistletoe sparkling and shining, swaying above you, and as you feel your breathing slowing down, you can also feel yourself growing even more aroused than you were before. On a scale of one to ten, Elaine, the orgasm you just had was a two. In a moment, you're going to feel me inside you. As soon as that happens, Elaine, you will have another orgasm and that one will be a six. Each time I say, 'Ho ho ho,' you will have another orgasm, and each one you have will be one level stronger than the one before. Close your eyes now and concentrate on those feelings."

Her eyes closed. Santa put the mistletoe aside and pushed his pants and underwear down to his knees. Lifting her bottom, he leaned forward and plunged himself into her canal.

As soon as she felt him enter her, Elaine's body exploded into another climax. He worked himself in and out, matching her body's rhythm. When he felt her beginning to relax again, he smiled and said, "Ho ho ho."

Elaine heard the words and felt another surge of delight rushing through her body. Most of her mind was focused on the pleasure that seemed to be enveloping her; a tiny bit remembered the time Neil had placed her into a deep trance and then quietly slipped a butterfly vibrator on her and turned it on, driving her into exquisite exhaustion.

Santa felt the tingling begin in his groin and knew he was almost through. He gripped her tighter and plunged himself in all the way. "Ho ho ho."

Her muscles clamped down on him again, providing that last little bit of stimulation. His knees buckled slightly, falling to the edge of the bed. Elaine's every nerve and sinew sang as she felt him filling her, struggling to hold on to the end.

He looked down at her still-panting body, matching his breathing to hers, letting them both recover. His cock dwindled and slipped free. He stood up on shaky legs and pulled his pants back up, adjusting the padding in the upper part of the Santa suit that had been shoved aside in their frenzy.

"Santa has to go now," he said when his breath had slowed enough to speak clearly. "But you'll always remember this special night, Elaine. Any time someone holds up your special mistletoe, you'll remember this night and you'll feel a powerful, compelling need to make love to that person as soon as possible. But now, Elaine, it's time for you to sleep. I'll be back again some day."

Santa admired her sleeping form for a few more minutes, then gently covered her up and crept out of the apartment, locking the door behind him.

Elaine awoke to the sensation of someone kissing her. She kissed back, then let him break away. She opened her eyes to see Neil standing over her. He was still in his hospital scrubs.

"Interesting sleeping position," he remarked.

Elaine looked around. She was curled up sideways on the bed, with her pillow at her back and his under her head. "I had an interesting night," she told him. "A strange man in a Santa suit broke in here and ravished me."

Neil's eyebrows rose. "Oh, really? Is that where this came from?" From behind his back he produced the gleaming mistletoe and held it aloft.

Elaine felt the fires ignite again inside her. She rolled off the bed, embraced Neil, and gave him a soft, passionate kiss. One hand reached into the front of his scrubs to fondle his already-growing cock; the other caressed his cheek, where a thin line of sticky residue remained.

She broke the kiss and smiled lustily at her lover. "As if you didn't know."

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