



A why choose Omegaverse
Christmas Novella



in
STOCKINGS



HANNAH HAZE

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Editor Credit: Christie Gressel

 Created with Vellum

I have my littlest daughter to thank for the unicorn theme in this story. She is currently OBSESSED! Love you, sweetiepie.

And to the members of my readers' group, thank you for helping me shape this story. Firemen, single daddies and long-term crushes coming your way ...

FOREWORD

This story was previously published in the *Knotty Or Nice* Christmas anthology.

This is a sweet why choose story with one female omega and three male alphas and includes some group scenes. For trigger warnings, please visit my website at www.hannahhaze.com

A *strid*

THE LINE for Santa's grotto trails from the little wooden cabin set up in the foyer of the hospital, through the cafeteria, into the gift store, around the Christmas display of decorations and holiday gifts, and all the way to the hospital entrance, curling around the building itself.

This means by the time the queue weaves its way to where I'm standing – about a half hour's wait from the main guy – there are a lot of pissed-off parents and whiny kids.

My job, which Margerie had failed to mention when I volunteered to do overtime as a Christmas Elf, is to keep everyone happy.

Last year, there was an actual fistfight between two mums in the queue, and one toddler became so distressed he went on a rampage, tearing apart the carefully constructed Christmas tree formed of soft toys. Bears had been torn apart, and children had cried. This year the hospital is taking no chances.

I'm armed with sweets and a box of different tools to keep these kids amused. I'm rotating through this box of tricks to try and keep things fresh, and at the moment, I'm on bubble-blowing. Things are starting to get angsty, though. Earlier children were eagerly chasing bubbles and clapping every time

I blew an especially big one. Now they are hunched on the floor, and one pre-teen heckles me from the sidelines.

Tucking the almost-empty bottle of bubble mixture back into the box, I tear open a bag of lollipops and start along the queue. The lollipops are meant for the children, but several adults dip their hands inside the bags, scowling at me as if to dare me to challenge them. No chance. I want to make it home from my shift in one piece, where I intend to run a long hot bath and soak until my next shift, ignoring the angry knocks of my roommate.

Our Santa Claus is the best in the city of Studworth by a clear country mile. No fake beard or pillow stuffed under his coat. He is the real deal, and he's the reason we draw such mega crowds – that and the fact that we're raising money for the children's department of the hospital. Parents want their children to experience authenticity, and this is the closest they will come to it.

I walk along the line handing out lollipops as I go until I feel a pair of small hands tug on my stripy stockings. I peer down and find a little girl staring up at me with a pair of emerald-green eyes. Her auburn hair has been drawn up into pigtails, and a sprinkling of freckles dust the bow of her cheeks.

“Please, can I have a lollipop?”

“Sure you can.” I smile and crouch down, the bells on the end of my ridiculous shoes chiming as I do. “Which flavour would you like?”

She screws up her mouth as if she's giving this thought.

I dip my hand in the bag and pull a few out. “We've got strawberry, cola, bubblegum ...”

“Go for strawberry, Lyra,” a deep, growly voice says from above us. “You won't like the others.”

I look up ... and up ... and up, and, holy shit, my eyes land on Craig Hart. My heart stops, and I'm sure my jaw must fall open.

“Daddy says strawberry,” the little girl says, examining the lollipops in my hand as I examine her daddy.

Craig Hart.

It really is him. Slightly taller and somehow even broader, the line of his jaw stronger, but those damn eyes – green like early spring – just the same. And his scent, like fresh pine, hasn’t altered a bit. Still making every nerve in my body tingle.

How long has it been?

Ten years.

“Which one is strawberry?” Lyra asks me, jolting me out of my staring escapades.

“This one. Are you going to eat it now?”

“Yes.”

“You’d better check with your daddy and mummy first.” Ok, I’m fishing for information here, but can you blame me? *Craig Hart*. The boy I crushed on hard at school. The boy *everyone* crushed on.

“Oh, I don’t have a mummy.” The little girl steps closer, reaching up to waggle the end of my hat, making the bell tinkle.

“You don’t?”

“No. I have three daddies instead.”

Huh?

Three?

I open my mouth to speak, and as if on cue, two large men come strolling along the line, nipping into the queue to stand next to Craig. They’re at least half a foot taller than everyone else, so no one says a word.

They are also Samson Peters and Archie Gibbs. Craig’s best friends from school. The trio practically ruled the school, breaking hearts every time they strolled down the corridors

together. Stars of the football team, alphas and better looking than most teen idols, they were gods among mortals.

“Look, Pops. Look, Dada. I got a lollipop.”

Samson, smelling of the rich coffee he always did, reaches down and ruffles her hair.

She screeches. “Watch the bunches.”

“Whoops, sorry, sunshine,” he says, scooping her up so she can show him her sweet.

Gingerly, I straighten too, hoping I can step to one side without them noticing me.

I take a tiny pace towards the family waiting behind them, sighing with relief as I do, but then Archie says, “Wait, don’t we know you from somewhere?”

My whole body cringes. I spent my entire time at school dreaming about these three alphas. If I’m honest, those little fantasies have continued long after I left school. But never, *never*, in all those fantasies that played out in my head did I imagine the next time I bumped into these three, it would be dressed as a flipping elf.

I pinch myself, willing this to be one of those awful anxiety dreams. One I’ll wake up from in my single bed.

I spin around to face the three men eyeing me with interest.

“You went to school with us, right?” Archie continues. I nod, my body taut with tension.

Please let this be over. Please let this be over, because now I have Archie’s scent in my nose too – leather – and the three scents combined have my insides spinning like a washing machine.

“Astrid, isn’t it? I didn’t recognise you with the ...” Samson waves in the general direction of my own pigtailed, painted on rosy cheeks and floppy hat. “You used to sit behind me in French.”

Yes, I used to sit behind him, chin in hand, gazing at the back of his beautiful neck, drowning in his scent.

I can't believe he remembers me. I was quiet in school, and back then, my designation hadn't presented. The likes of Craig, Samson and Archie barely knew I was alive, especially when there was Celia Simms in the school. A girl who presented early as an omega and had every alpha eating out of her hand and worshipping at her feet.

"She's not Astrid, silly," Lyra says, bopping Samson on the nose. "She's ..." She squints towards the badge pinned on my chest, which directs all three pairs of swirling alpha eyes towards my breasts.

I gulp.

"She's ... tw ... ink ... le ... t ... " She halts, screwing up her nose in confusion.

"TwinkleToes," Craig says, the corners of his mouth twitching. He gazes down at my red shoes with their oversized buckles, curved ends and bells.

"Yep," I say, deciding I'm going to take this on the chin. "I'm TwinkleToes, Father Christmas' right-hand elf. If you want, I can put in a good word for you," I whisper to Lyra.

"I want a unicorn," Lyra tells me. Then she sighs, her eyes going all gooey. "I love unicorns."

"Me too," I smile.

The alphas eye me with interest. Their noses twitch. Oh shit. I back away, my bag of lollipops clutched firmly to my stomach.

"Well, nice to see you again," I mutter, "but my elfish duties call, so ..."

Craig steps into my path, interest morphing into what I could easily mistake for excitement on his face.

"You're an -"

"Elf," I blurt out.

"Omega," he says.

I blush from my hairline all the way down to my toes, turning a tomato colour I'm sure clashes perfectly with the red and green top and skirt combo I'm wearing.

"Uh-huh," I manage to squeak.

"You weren't an omega at school," Craig says, tilting his head.

"What's an omega?" Lyra asks, brushing her fingers through the dark beard on Samson's chin in a way I would frankly die to.

My eyes flick to the three men, wondering how they're going to explain this to – what – their daughter?

"An omega is someone who binds a pack together," Samson says, his dark eyes locked on me, making me feel all hot and faint.

"Like me?" Lyra asks.

"Yes, sweetheart." Craig kisses the crown of her head.

"You're a pack?" I ask, my heart suddenly pounding and the butterflies in my stomach turning somersaults.

"Yes, we're a pack," Archie answers.

"Pack Hart," Lyra cheers, punching her little fist into the air. "Best pack ever."

"I'm sure," I laugh.

Oh, I'm totally sure. A pack with these three? Any omega would kill to have them. If the pack doesn't have an omega already, of course.

"Hey," the woman standing behind Samson calls out, "Are you handing out sweets or what? We've been waiting a flipping hour and –"

"Coming!" I chime before the disgruntled woman with three kids hanging off her arms can spout out any more blue language.

"It was nice to meet you, Lyra." I wave as I scuttle to the family behind.



BY THE TIME my bag of sweets is empty, it's time for us elves to rotate. Next stop for me is grotto crowd control. I'm positioned outside the little cabin where Father Christmas is tucked up inside. My job is to usher families in and out, making sure nobody overstays their welcome.

This is easier said than done, especially when everybody's been waiting so long. One family dives into a long conversation with Santa and resists all my subtle hints to move along. In the end, I have to resort to commanding them to leave. When they ignore me, I call in the two bigger elves that are roaming the hospital this year to prevent incidents like last time. They frog march the disgruntled parents out of the grotto, and the line starts moving again.

I'm at the front for ten minutes when Lyra greets me like a long-lost friend.

"TwinkleToes!" she gushes, bouncing up and down in front of me.

"Hi, Lyra, you're nearly there. Are you excited to meet Father Christmas?"

She squeezes her hands together, and, with her eyes shut, squeals. "Yes!"

"She has a lot of stamina," I say to her three dads. "Most kids are wilting by the time they reach the grotto."

"This one never wilts," Craig says with affection. "She's only excited or exceedingly excited."

"Awww," I say, taking her hand in mine. "That is the best way to be."

"Although bloody exhausting for us," Samson mutters.

I'm given the secret signal by the other elf working the grotto and lead Lyra inside the cabin. She skips along by my side, her eyes growing even wider with excitement as they land on Father Christmas. He sits on a rocking chair by a fake

fire, brightly wrapped presents piled around his feet, and a small Christmas tree tucked into the far corner.

The aroma of gingerbread pumps through the cabin. Still, it's not half as appetising as the scents of the three alphas that follow me inside the cabin. All three have to duck their heads, and the cabin feels positively titchy with these hulking great alphas inside.

"Santa, this is Lyra," I tell him, giving Lyra a little nudge forward. She clings to my hand and refuses to budge.

"Hello, Lyra. Would you like to come a bit closer? I'm sure your ..." Santa's gaze trails over the three men, and he looks utterly lost.

"Dads," I prompt.

He throws me a grateful look. "Dads would like a photo."

Lyra shakes her head, tightening her grip on my hand.

"Don't you want to tell me what you want for Christmas?"

The little girl's feet creep forward. She's clearly torn, wanting Santa to know her wish list but suddenly starstruck. It happens to a surprising amount of kids. I understand; I feel a similar way coming face-to-face with her dads again after all this time.

"Lyra," Craig says with a hint of frustration in his tone, "we've waited a long time. Go tell Santa what you want."

"Only if TwinkleToes comes with me."

"I'd love to come," I say, stepping forward and taking Lyra with me.

We halt in front of the man himself, and he pats his knee. "Want to come sit on my lap?"

Lyra peaks up at me and then nods.

We all wait, but she makes no move to climb up.

"Don't you want –"

"Twinkle Toes, too," she insists.

“TwinkleToes, what?” I ask with trepidation, not liking where I think this is headed.

“TwinkleToes has to sit on Santa’s lap too.”

“Lyra!” Samson mutters.

But she peers up at me with those big, pleading eyes – eyes similar to the pair I was in love with throughout school – and I can’t say no.

I glance at Santa, who shrugs. Some of the kids are twice my size.

With mortification, I help Lyra climb onto one of Santa’s knees, and then I balance daintily on the other.

This is possibly the most embarrassing moment of my life. If this is an anxiety dream, it’s turning into a nightmare.

Why couldn’t I have bumped into the Hart Pack at a nightclub or a bar? Even doing my regular job as a nurse in the children’s ward.

The three men smirk at me, clearly repressing the need to laugh. Samson’s shoulders shake, and Craig coughs violently into his hand.

“Smile!” Archie tells us both, lifting his phone to take a picture.

“Cheeesse!” Lyra shouts, revealing two missing front teeth. She’s obviously gotten over her shyness.

“So,” Santa says, “tell me, what would you like for Christmas?”

“A unicorn,” she snaps without drawing breath.

“A unicorn, eh? What colour?”

“White with a pink mane, a purple tail and rainbow wings.”

“Wings as well? Do we have one of those in the workshop, TwinkleToes?”

“We certainly do, Santa.”

“You’re sure?” Samson asks.

I nod.

“And have you been a good girl?” Santa asks.

Lyra peeks towards her dads.

“She’s been a very good girl, Santa,” Archie says.

“How about you, TwinkleToes?” Samson asks. “What do you want for Christmas?”

What do I want?

Several things come shooting into my mind. None of them I can express out loud.

My cheeks heat. I pray they can’t tell in the cabin’s dim light. I pray they can’t read my dirty mind.

“Some new socks,” I finally blurt out after an awkward pause. “Mine have holes in them,” I explain to Lyra.

“Oh,” Lyra peers at my feet with an empathetic look in her eyes. “My daddies will buy you some new socks, won’t you?”

“Depends,” Samson’s eyes seem to darken, “has she been a good girl?”

I leap off Santa’s lap like I’ve been stung on the bottom.

“Santa ...” I prompt at the man now examining me and the three alphas.

He coughs. “Now, remember to leave me out a snack. And one for the reindeer. It’s hard work on Christmas Eve, and we get very hungry.”

“I’ll leave you one of Pop’s chocolate cookies and some carrots for Rudolph.”

“Sounds delicious.” Santa lifts her from his lap and onto the floor. Immediately she grabs my hand again.

“We’re going for pizza next,” she tells me.

“After we’ve done a bit of shopping first. We’ve got to buy gifts for your grandmas, remember?”

“Wanna come?” Lyra asks me.

“Shopping?” I ask.

“No, silly. For pizza.”

“Oh,” I keep my eyes fixed on the little girl and not her three dads hovering around us. “I’ve got to help Santa and the other elves pack up, and then we’ll be flying home to the North Pole.”

“We’re not flying home for another three days, Twinkle,” Santa says.

“Of course,” I knock the heel of my palm against my forehead while throwing Santa a dirty look. “I forgot, but you’ll need my help –”

“I’d say you’ve worked very hard today, Twinkle,” Santa says, ignoring the message I’m telegraphing with my eyes, “You deserve the evening off. Merriweather and Grumps will cover for you.”

I glare at Santa, and he grins back.

“Pleeeeaase!” Lyra begs, tugging on my arm.

“It depends what your daddies say.”

“What time are you finished here?” Craig asks me.

I peek at my watch. “In about an hour.”

“Then sure. We’ll meet you out front.”

Samson takes Lyra’s hand and leads her out of the cabin.

“Bye, Santa.” She waves as they step out into the hospital.

I watch them go.

Holy Christmas Balls!

Am I going on a date with the Hart Alphas?

Craig

LYRA DRAGS us around the holiday gift section picking out totally inappropriate gifts for her grandmas. The basket I'm carrying is full of junk I don't even remember her stowing there – most of it unicorn themed. I, and the others, I'm pretty sure, have been too preoccupied with the little omega-elf we just met to have noticed.

Astrid smelled like sticky caramel, and she wore pointy ears that unlocked several forgotten teenage fantasies.

If we could seduce her into bed, could I convince her to keep those on?

I remember the woman vaguely from school. She'd been the quiet one in form who hid behind her books every time I looked her way.

Fuck, has she changed. I can't imagine that shy little thing volunteering to do crowd control at a Santa's grotto armed only with lollipops and dressed as an elf. And that quiet little thing at school certainly didn't possess all the curves she does now or a scent that signalled her omega designation. Although, I have a vague memory of that smile – all plush pink lips and sapphire blue eyes.

Shit!

Samson leans in to whisper in my ear as Archie and Lyra debate whether Granny G really wants a unicorn onesie for Christmas.

“You’re thinking about her, aren’t you?”

“And you’re not?”

“Fuck,” he mutters, “did you catch her scent?”

I nod, licking my lips like I can still taste it in the air. In fact, I’m certain I can. I’m certain I could follow it, and it would lead me straight to her.

“She wasn’t an omega at school, right?” Samson says.

“No, there’s no way she’d have escaped our notice smelling like that.”

“I remember her, though,” Samson continues with a glazed expression. “She used to have PE when I had science. I’d sit watching all the girls run around in their tiny little shorts, and I remember she caught my eye. She was this cute little thing.”

“Yeah.” I wipe my brow.

We watch as Archie wrestles the onesie from Lyra’s hands and places it back on the rack. She dives for a pair of fluffy slippers with sparkly horns on the toes instead.

“We’re not giving Granny G phallic slippers, Lyra,” Archie tells her.

“What does phallic mean?”

“You think Astrid remembered us?” I ask Samson.

“No idea. But it’s a good sign that she agreed to dinner.”

Most omegas run in the opposite direction when they find out we’re a pack, and those that don’t make a swift exit when they learn about Lyra.

Lyra, though, is a little charmer, cutting straight through the bullshit and inviting the omega out with us. We should’ve taken her along on dates before.

Lyra now has her hands wrapped around a porcelain unicorn, and Archie’s shoulders sag. “Fine, I will get Granny

that.”

“Yay,” Lyra coos, dropping it into my basket.

“Are we done here?” I ask.

The others nod, and we go to pay at the checkout.

Outside it’s already dark, and a cold wind bites at our noses. Lyra huddles in Archie’s arms, burying her face in his neck.

“Maybe she’s not going to show?” I mutter.

Lyra pops her head out, crinkling her face against the wind. “TwinkleToes? She’ll come. She liked you guys, and she liked me.”

I tug one of her pigtails. I wish I could be so sure.

“Look, here she comes,” Lyra points towards the hospital’s main doors as the omega comes scurrying out, lost in the layers of a huge pink coat.

Unfortunately, the ears have gone.

“Cool coat!” Lyra says as Astrid stops before us. “Can I get one?”

“Maybe Santa will buy you one.” Astrid smiles at our girl and then at us. “Hi.”

“Hey,” I say as she falls into step alongside me as we stroll down the high street to Lyra’s favourite Italian restaurant around the corner. It’s owned by a pack we got friendly with a few years back.

“So,” I whisper to her, “where can three men get their hands on a white unicorn with a pink mane and rainbow wings.”

“The word on the street,” Astrid whispers back, “is that the gift shop in the hospital sells them in their toy department. But you’d better get there quick. They’re flying off the shelves.”

“Useful intel. Thanks.”

She laughs, and I hold the restaurant door open for her, inhaling her scent as she slips underneath my arm.

Dylan, the owner, spots us and waves us over to our usual table near the back of the restaurant. Lyra slides along one of the benches, tugging Astrid along with her. When Samson tries to take the space next to Astrid, Lyra shoos him away.

“No, boys have to sit on that side.”

“Why?” I ask.

“It’s the rules,” she says with a knowing look. The three of us shuffle along the opposite bench, our elbows knocking against each other. It’s cramped but gives me a perfect view of the little omega.

The ears aren’t the only things missing. She’s scrubbed off the rosy cheeks, and she’s wearing jeans and a loose shirt, the buttons undone to reveal a flash of ample cleavage.

I force my eyes away, accepting a menu from Dylan as he returns a few moments later with colouring books and felt tip pens for Lyra.

“How are you doing today, Princess Lyra?”

“Good. I just saw Santa.”

“Wow, lucky girl.”

“And we met TwinkleToes,” she points to Astrid, who blushes adorably. “We brought her with us. She needs new socks, though. Hers have holes in them.”

Dylan shakes his head slowly as if trying to make sense of those words and hands out menus.

“I already know what I’m having,” Lyra says, pulling a lid from a pink pen.

“Hawaiian pizza?” Dylan asks her.

“Yep. It’s delish. You should have it too, TwinkleToes.”

“Maybe I will,” Astrid says, pulling a sheet of the colouring pages her way.

Dylan’s nose twitches slightly, and he gives me a pointed look before taking the rest of our orders.

“You need to colour the Princess’ hair red like mine,” Lyra instructs Astrid, peering over at her work.

“Of course, silly me,” Astrid says, smiling to herself.

“You’d think an elf would know that,” Samson says, folding his arms across his chest.

“I’ve only been an elf for a couple of weeks. I’m still learning.”

“So what do you do when you’re not an elf?”

“Studying to be a paediatric nurse.”

“What’s a peedy trick purse?” Lyra asks.

“It means I’m learning about how to look after poorly children,” Astrid explains.

“You’re too old for school,” Lyra says.

“You’re never too old for school, sweetheart,” I tell her.

“Have you learned that five and five makes ten yet? That’s a really tricky one,” she asks Astrid.

“It is, and yeah, I learned about that one.”

“My daddies are firemen.”

Astrid looks up from her colouring, her hand hanging in mid-air.

“F-firemen?” she squeaks.

Samson smirks back at her, and I swear that idiot flexes his pecs.

That pink swims across her cheeks again.

“All three of you?”

“All three of us.”

“They put out fires and rescue people and stuff. They’re very brave.”

Samson laughs, and Astrid simply smiles. “I bet they are. I remember when the caretaker’s cat got stuck on the school roof, and your Daddies climbed up the drain pipe to rescue it.”

“Huh,” I say. “I’d forgotten all about that.”

“Really? It was all people talked about for weeks and weeks at school.”

I shrug. People talked all sorts of shit in school. We spent most of our time ignoring it. Still do.

“Firefighting must be hard with a little one.” Astrid gazes back down at her picture. “What with being on call and stuff?”

“We’re not on shift at the same time most of the time, and when we are, my cousin Vee looks after Lyra.”

“I want Twinkle to look after me next time.”

“We’re always looking for willing babysitters,” Samson raises a hopeful eyebrow at her.

“I’m a broke nursing student. I’d look after your hound from hell if you paid me. Not that Lyra is a hellhound, obviously.”

“Oh, she can be,” I mutter. Lyra glares at me. “I’m only telling the truth, sweetheart. Astrid needs to know what she’s letting herself in for.”

“Who’s Astrid?”

I roll my eyes as a waitress, with her arms full of pizza, slides plates onto the table.

“Slow,” Archie tells Lyra. “You don’t want to burn your mouth like last time.”

“Ooo nasty,” Astrid says with sympathy.

Lyra picks up a slice from her plate and, after blowing several puffs of air across the surface, takes a large bite. Chewing, she turns to watch Astrid.

Astrid pulls the slices apart with her fingers, licking the grease off her digits and almost short-circuiting my dirty mind. Then she lifts one to her pretty pink mouth and snaps her teeth through the dough.

“Well?” Lyra asks her once she’s swallowed.

“Well, what?”

“Do you like it?”

“It’s delish!” Astrid says. “Best pizza ever.”

Lyra and Astrid continue to chat as they eat their pizza. They cover the best colours for unicorns before moving on to their favourite princess movies. Next they debate whether Santa shrinks before he climbs down chimneys, and finally discover they both have a love of football.

“I play every Saturday morning,” Lyra tells her proudly.

“I’m not surprised. Your dads were all very good at football at school. Do you still play?” she asks.

“Sunday morning league.”

“I help out.” Lyra twizzles a stringy piece of cheese around her fingers, popping it into her mouth. “I hand out the slices of orange at halftime. Do you play?” she asks Astrid.

“No, I only watch.”

“You should come watch me ... and my dads,” she adds after reflection.

Astrid’s cheeks pinken again, and I wonder, just wonder, if she would come to watch us. A domestic parody of perfection plays out in my head – my girls standing by the sidelines, cheering us on. Then all of us going out for hot chocolate before snuggling together on the sofa afterwards. Shit, I’d like to snuggle with Astrid, would like to bury my nose in her neck, suck in her scent and ...

“Daddy?”

“Huh?”

“What do elves do on Christmas day when Santa is sleeping?”

“Why is Santa sleeping on Christmas day?”

“Duh, because he’s been up working all night delivering presents.”

“Right. I don’t know. Ask TwinkleToes?”

Lyra looks up at Astrid, hopefully.

“This elf,” she says, sucking on her straw and making my cock stir in my pants, “will be soaking in a long, hot bath with a bottle of Chardonnay and a box of chocolates.”

And now I have another totally inappropriate image filling my mind. Shit!

“Won’t you be opening presents with your family? And eating Christmas dinner?”

Astrid leans against the table. She fiddles with a piece of pineapple that’s fallen off her pizza. “There’s only me and my dad. And my dad,” she sighs, “he’s not nice like your daddies so ...”

“You should make up,” Lyra says, “It’s not good to fight. That’s what Mrs Maddox said when me and Katie fell out about a unicorn ruler.”

“You’re right. It’s not good to fight. But actually, he’s gone off to Thailand for Christmas.”

“Without you?” Lyra’s mouth drops open in shock.

“Uh-huh.”

“I’m sorry, Astrid,” I mutter.

“Oh God, don’t be. I spent the last two Christmasses that way, and it was awesome. Also,” she leans forward, whispering so that Lyra, who’s turned back to colouring, won’t hear, “the whole elf thing will have me all Christmassed out, I think.”

“Yeah, I can see that,” Archie says.

“Although you do make a very cute elf,” Samson winks, and Astrid rolls her eyes.

“I need the loo,” Lyra announces, ducking under the table and coming up at Archie’s feet.

“Come on then,” he says, “I’ll take you.”

“Sorry about that,” I say when she’s out of earshot. “She’s insatiably curious.”

“As all children should be. She’s adorable,” she smiles warmly at us. “You must be proud.”

“Yeah, she’s a good kid.”

Astrid pushes her empty plate away and leans back in her chair, curling her dark hair behind her ear.

“Can I ask you –”

“You want to know who she belongs to?”

“No ... yes. I guess I’m curious. I’ve never met a pack before.” She repeats the motion with her hair. “Although I’m not surprised you formed one. You were always so tight at school.”

I nod and peer at Samson. It’s still hard to talk about this. Samson’s better at it.

“Craig met this girl when we were in our early twenties.” He swirls water around his glass. “Knocked her up. They decided to keep it, make a go of things.” Astrid’s still, not moving a muscle, only her shoulders rising and falling as she listens. “Dania couldn’t cope when Lyra was born. She walked out on them.”

Astrid’s hands fly to her mouth. “I’m so sorry.”

“Dania was struggling with depression,” I explain. “I don’t blame her.”

“Me and Archie could see how hard it was for Craig, coping on his own, so we helped out as much as we could,” Samson says. “Eventually ended up moving in and falling in love with our daughter. We’d always talked about forming a pack, and Lyra gave us the reason to do it.”

“She wasn’t kidding when she said she brought our pack together,” I say.

“She’s Craig’s daughter biologically, but she belongs to all of us,” Samson adds.

“I can see that,” Astrid whispers. “She clearly adores you all.”

A *strid*

I RELIVE that date with the Hart Pack for the next four days straight. Was it a date? Or did they simply invite me to placate their daughter? Did they actually want me there?

They were charming and funny and kind, plus interested in me and my life. But perhaps that was mere politeness. I certainly wasn't asked for my number or another date.

Damn it! I should have just asked for one myself.

Monday and Tuesday at Santa's grotto are less chaotic than the weekend. That is until school ends and the floodgates open. By seven pm on Tuesday night, I'm rushed off my oversized feet and looking forward to a much-needed glass of wine when I make it home.

But my fantasy of nursing my wine curled up on the sofa with a warm blanket and more cake than you can shake a stick out is interrupted by that scent of pine. I sniff.

Have I been obsessing about those alphas so much I'm now hallucinating their scents?

It's definitely there in the air, the butterflies in my stomach going crazy with excitement. I swing my gaze around, and there Craig is, strolling towards me.

"Hi," I chirp.

“Hey,” he stops in front of me with his hands in his pockets. “I’ve been sent to hunt down that unicorn.”

“An impossible mission.”

“What?”

“You know unicorns don’t exist, right, Craig?”

“I didn’t think elves did either but then ...” he gestures towards me. “And I’m hoping a magic elf like you will know where I can find this unicorn.”

“Magic, am I?” I say, fluttering my eyelashes at him dramatically. He laughs, and I beckon him to follow me to the gift shop, which has a section dedicated to unicorns.

“Holy shit,” he says, “This would be heaven to Lyra. She’d want us to buy everything on display.”

I reach up on my toes for the unicorn I remember Lyra had described. My fingers graze the bottom of the cardboard box, but I can’t quite grip it. I huff a little in frustration, and then I feel a warm body step close to mine, so close I can hear his breath, but not close enough that we’re actually touching. His knuckles graze the small of my back.

“Here, I’ll get it.” A hand appears above my head and takes down the toy. “You’re pretty small, even for an elf.”

My breath has stalled in my throat, and my heart has stopped beating. Craig Hart is touching me. Only accidentally, only so I don’t step backwards into him, but it feels divine.

He steps away, and I stifle a disappointed sigh.

When I turn around, he’s examining the contents of the box. “This is the one.”

“Can I help you with anything else?” I ask. *You know, like undressing.*

He shakes his head. “No, we’ve got everything else. This was the last thing on the list.”

“Lucky bastard, I still have all my shopping to do.”

He blinks. “Christmas is next week.”

“I know. I like leaving things to the last minute.”

We stand facing one another, those green eyes of his roaming my face. Then he jolts. “Shit, I forgot. Lyra wanted me to give you this.” He reaches into the back pocket of his jeans and tugs out a piece of paper folded in half and covered in bright colours. He hands it over, and for a fraction of a second, our fingers brush.

He touched me again. I’m surprised I’m still standing and haven’t swooned to the floor.

Lyra has drawn a picture of an elf with ridiculous shoes and a floppy hat.

“Is this me?” I ask.

“Yep.”

I nod with a huge smile on my face. “That’s so cute. Although I’d have to dispute the size of my nose. Is it really that big?”

“No, you have a cute nose.”

My eyes leap to his and then back to the card. I open it and read inside. The handwriting is big, with some of the letters back-to-front.

TO TWINKLETOES.

Pleas cum to our Christmas party. My daddies really lik you.

Love

Lyra

“OH,” I say, my gaze leaping from the words to Craig’s face. “I ... is this ...”

Puzzlement floods across the alpha’s face.

“Oh shit! What does it say?” He attempts to snatch it from my fingers. “I didn’t check. She thrust it at me as I was

rushing out the door.”

“It’s nothing. Just ...”

“Read it to me.”

I cough, my cheeks so hot you could fry an egg on them. I read the words.

There’s a long pause in which the only thing I can hear is my heart pounding in my ears.

“You’re very welcome to come, Astrid, if you’d like.”

Pity. What every woman dreams of from a hot guy. Urgh!

“Oh God, no, I wouldn’t want to intrude on your family time, and I have plans –”

“I haven’t said when it is.” He shifts the unicorn box from one arm to the other. “Lyra obviously has a girl crush on you. She’ll be devastated if you don’t come.”

I frown at him. “Do you always use your daughter to emotionally blackmail poor defenceless women?”

“Only the ones I like.”

My heart flips right over in my chest, and for a moment, I think I might actually faint straight to the floor.

“When is it? The party.”

“Friday night. Here, give me your number,” he says, pulling out his phone. “And I’ll text you the address.”

I rattle it off, and he inputs it into his phone. “Bring something to hang on the tree,” he says as he slides his phone back into his pocket. “We’re going to decorate it. And,” he winks at me, “adorable elf costumes are completely optional but encouraged.”

My jaw drops open as I watch him walk away.

Did I just get played? Was that a set-up?



THE REST of the week drags because I'm an overly excited and horny mess.

On Wednesday I buy a new outfit. A slinky black dress with heels.

On Thursday, I take it back.

On Friday, I go for a bikini wax because ... yeah ... I'm not actually expecting anything to happen. Those three alphas probably charm the pants off everyone they meet. They probably get a kick out of flirting. It didn't mean anything.

Saturday at the grotto is even more chaotic than it was the week before – it's only days until Christmas.

I leave the madness at closing time with a bruise on my hip and a bite mark from a toddler on my arm. My hair has also come unbraided, and I've lost my hat. I'm pretty sure I saw it on a teenage boy.

I have an hour to transform myself from what looks like an elf who's been in a tangle to an irresistible omega the Hart Pack might want to date.

Do I want to date this pack? Is the Pope a Catholic? Is the world round? Is salted caramel the best ice cream flavour ever invented?

Of course, I do. They save lives for a living. Rescue people from burning buildings. They are heart-warmingly adorable with their daughter. Plus, all three are mouth-wateringly hot.

And there are three of them! Three!

I'm not one of those omegas who is intimidated by the idea of a pack. Quite the opposite. The idea has always appealed. More love. More companionship. More ...

What's not to like?

I just never thought I'd meet a pack. Let alone a pack that might be interested in me.

Having ditched the black dress, my outfit options are limited.

Most of my money goes on rent, food and school supplies. And I'm earning a pittance doing the grotto job because it's for charity. There isn't any leftover for fancy clothes. I have to go on a pleading campaign to my roommate, Amanda. She has a job in fashion and ample outfits.

When I explain what the outfit is for, Amanda jumps around the room, tugging out clothes from the wardrobe and her chest of drawers.

She tries to talk me into a sparkly catsuit. "It's super sophisticated and sexy," she tells me while holding it up in front of my body.

"The first time I met them, I was dressed as an elf. I don't want to dress as a bauble this time."

"But an adorable bauble," she says, pinching my cheeks.

"Urgh, I don't want to be adorable! I want to look so hot they can't help slinging me over their huge fireman shoulders and carrying me into the nearest bedroom. But also not too slutty, because their little girl will be there. And who knows who else."

"Then the catsuit."

"Anything but the catsuit."

Amanda turns back to the toppling pile of clothes on her bed and starts tossing items over her shoulder. Eventually, she halts, "This."

It's a plaid shirt dress; red and black and very Christmassy.

"It isn't too conservative?" I query.

"Nope, because you'll wear it with your knee-high boots and, trust me, all those boys will be able to think about is unbuttoning this shirt." She yanks the dress from my grasp. "Please tell me you have nice underwear for this evening." She's seen my collection of cotton knickers drying on the radiator of our flat. "Because I'm not lending you a pair of knickers."

"I have a nice set." One. I have one nice set. If this works out, perhaps I'll have a reason to invest in more.

Amanda helps me with my makeup and insists on braiding my long black hair in a fancy plait over my shoulder. “They’ll also be thinking about gripping this plait in their hands and –”

“Stop!” I warn her. “Don’t get me all horny and flustered before I even get there.”

“Why not? You’ll smell even nicer for them.” She tugs on my plait and pushes me off my chair. “Go on, go get laid. It’s been forever, and I’m sick of you moping around the house.”

“I don’t mope. And I’ve been happy being single.”

“Too much work and not enough play makes Astrid a very dull person to hang out with. Go!”

I stick my tongue out at my friend, zip up my boots and head out into the cold night air.

The sky is clear, stars streaming across the black abyss, and my breath hanging in misty clouds in front of my face.

I stamp my feet against the bitter temperature and dig my hands into my coat pockets. It turns out the Hart pack lives only fifteen minutes away from my house. I can’t believe I never bumped into them before. But I guess they’re busy climbing ladders and attending school assemblies, while I’m up at the hospital most days.

I turn onto their street; a row of houses with neat front gardens are illuminated by the orange light of lampposts and several sets of twinkling Christmas lights. It’s quaint and cute. I read the numbers on the front doors and stop outside the house with a festive wreath. When I come close, I realise it’s made of pompoms. A Lyra creation, obviously.

Music thuds from inside, and shadows move against the drawn blinds. I ring the doorbell that plays out a merry Christmas tune and wait. I pat my plait, adjust my coat, wriggle my toes in my boots.

The door swings open, and Samson greets me with a huge smile and a Christmas jumper so garish, it makes my eyes water.

“Oh my God!” I cry, holding my hands up to my eyes.
“Are you trying to blind me?”

“You don’t like it? I’m hurt.”

He takes my hand and yanks me inside, shutting the door behind me.

“I was hoping you’d show up.”

“I said I would.”

“Did you remember your decoration?”

I reach into my pocket and pull out a silver unicorn decoration I picked up at the store yesterday.

“Woah, Astrid, you are going to be someone’s best friend.” He holds out his hand, and I shimmy off my coat, handing it to him.

His gaze lands straight on the top button of my shirt dress, and I think maybe Amanda was right.

“Now I’m hurt,” I say, pouting. “I thought I was her best friend already.”

“On your way to being.”

He gestures for me to walk along the hallway, his hand falling to the small of my back to guide me to the right room.

What is it with these men? Why does a touch there send my body into a frenzy? My scent is probably wild.

I step through into a cosy living room with one large L-shaped sofa, a giant telly and an oversized Christmas tree. Strings of paper chains trail from one corner of the room to the other, and a fire blazes in a fireplace.

I was expecting the room to be full of people. This is a party, after all, right? But I find only Craig, Archie and Lyra.

Lyra’s dressed in a sparkly silver dress that looks remarkably like that catsuit, and she’s balanced in Craig’s arms hanging baubles onto the branches of the fir tree.

Bing Crosby is purring out a Christmas song from the corner, and I’m not sure I’ve ever seen such a picture-perfect

Christmas scene in all my life. My ovaries actually ache.

“Look who’s here,” Samson announces.

The other three turn, and Lyra wriggles down Craig’s body with a shriek of delight.

“TwinkleToes!”

“Hey Lyra, it’s so good to see you. Thanks for inviting me.”

She jumps up and down in front of me, then grabs my hand and yanks me towards the tree.

“You can help me,” she says. “My daddies don’t know what they’re doing.”

Archie snorts but hands over another bauble when Lyra shakes her palm at him. She passes it to me.

“Am I early?” I ask them, peering towards the door. Maybe the other guests are in the kitchen.

“Nope, perfectly on time,” Samson says, my coat still hooked over his arm. “The gingerbread is nearly done.”

“It’s just us?” I ask.

“Yep,” Lyra says. “We always have a party when we decorate the tree. It’s a tra ... a tra ...”

“Tradition,” Craig says.

Lyra points to the tree. “Where are you going to hang that one?”

“Hmmm,” I say, “how about here?” I let the bauble hang at the end of a branch.

“Perfect!”

“Have you seen the decoration TwinkleToes brought us?” Samson says, and I scowl at him for calling me that name.

“What is it?”

I dangle it in front of her face, and her emerald eyes widen with delight. She stares at it with awe.

“It’s so pretty,” she gushes.

“I thought you might like it. Where are you going to hang it?”

She takes it from my hand like it’s a precious heirloom and walks around the tree, hunting for a spot.

Archie steps in closer. “Can I get you a drink, Astrid? What do elves like? Egnog?”

“Yuck,” I grimace.

“Mulled wine?”

“Ahh, yes, please.”

“I’ll go pour you one.”

“And I’ll check on the gingerbread,” Craig says.

I pick up a few more baubles from the box on the floor and help Lyra to hang them.

“It’s fun having another girl here,” she tells me. “My daddies are good at lots of stuff, but ...” she screws up her face.

“I’m not sure I’m any better,” I confess.

“But you look really pretty. I love your plait.”

“But see, my friend did that for me. And my make-up.” I flutter my eyelashes at her.

“You’re very pretty,” she says, tipping her head to one side. “I think that’s why my daddies love you.”

I choke on the air in my throat. “What? No ... we only just met ... they don’t love me, sweetie.”

“They do. I can tell because they can’t stop looking at you. And they’ve been talking about you coming all day.”

“Really?” *Is this kid playing me again, or is this true?*
“What exactly have they been saying?”

But Samson reenters, followed by Craig with a tray full of gingerbread men and Archie with a glass of steaming wine, and she doesn’t answer.

Damn it.

I stare at them. Their gazes flick between Lyra and me.

“What’s she been saying?” Samson asks, narrowing his eyes.

“Nothing,” I say, grabbing the wine and taking a big gulp.

“Lyra?” Samson says, squatting down, so their faces are level.

“I said she was pretty,”

She hooks her arms around his neck and kisses his cheek.

“Ahhh, she is,” Samson says.

I very nearly drop the wine.

Am I actually living out my teenage fantasy? How many times did I imagine Samson Peters, with his midnight eyes and his lush dark hair, leaning against my locker, gazing into my eyes, and telling me I was pretty?

Three pairs of alpha eyes are all focussing my way again, eyes that seem heated. It’s a little overwhelming and mind-blowing all at once.

We’re all silent, and then the track changes, and the ambient music of Bing flips to *Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree*, by Brenda Lee.

Lyra jumps up and down, nearly knocking Samson over. Then she lunges for me, grabbing my hands and swinging them from side to side as she bounces on the spot.

“Let’s dance,” she shouts.

I am not the worst dancer, but I’m not the best either, and my standard of dancing rapidly decreases when I have an audience watching. Especially when that audience is made up exclusively of insanely hot alphas.

Lyra, though, is the perfect partner. She doesn’t allow me to shuffle around mutely. She has me swinging her around and copying her crazy moves.

Soon, my cheeks are rosy with joy, and I’m laughing so hard my stomach aches. And the alphas, they’re not watching

anymore. I'm being spun around by Archie, swung into the air by Samson, and Craig has a hold of my waist in a conga chain.

We dance straight through one track, and the next and the next, finally collapsing onto the sofa breathless when the track switches to a Christmas carol.

"No! More!" Lyra demands, spinning again and making her skirt billow out around her skinny legs.

"I'm all out of breath, Lyra," I plead.

"Here, you dance for us, and we'll watch," Samson suggests, hooking his arm over the back of the sofa, so it rests just behind my neck.

As Lyra pirouettes across the room, I have the urge to snuggle up against Samson's side and rest my feet in Craig's lap.

I inch a little closer towards Samson, and his arm drops lower on the back of the sofa, and I'm so near to touching him...when three phones start blaring simultaneously.

Samson snatches his arm away and snaps up straight, digging out his phone. Archie's already strolling out of the room with the phone to his ear, and Craig is tapping away on his screen. In the next moment, all three have gone.

Lyra collapses down on the floor with a dissatisfied, "Awww." She sits cross-legged on the rug, her elbows resting on her knees and her chin in her hands.

"What's wrong?" I ask, shuffling towards the edge of the sofa.

"It'll be their work."

Craig strolls in a second later, cutting the music. "A block of flats is on fire. We've got to go. I'm going to call our cousin to watch Lyra. I'm sorry to cut our party short, Astrid."

"Nooooo!" Lyra sobs from the floor.

Craig scoops her up, but she won't look at him. Gently, he hooks his thumb under her chin and brings her gaze to meet his.

“I’m sorry, sugar lump. I promise we’ll make it up to you. But your daddies have to go and help people now.”

“But TwinkleToes doesn’t have to go?”

“Lyra –”

“I don’t mind staying and watching Lyra for you,” I say.

“Astrid, that’s very kind, but –”

“I’m DBS checked if you’re worried –”

“No. No! But we can’t ask you to do that.”

“Yes, you can,” Lyra interjects.

“Yes, you can,” I agree. “We’re friends, aren’t we?”

He meets my eyes, the green darkening. His look suggests he hopes we could be more.

I suppress a shiver.

Is that wishful thinking?

“If you’re sure,” Craig says.

“I am.”

He twists his head back to Lyra. “You need to be a good girl. Go to bed when Astrid says, and no monkey business.”

“I promise, Daddy.”

“Good, now give me a kiss.”

She purses her lips and kisses his lips, and my ovaries actually combust right there and then. Poof, they’re little piles of ash.

“Don’t worry,” I tell Craig, “I’m very strict.”

He lifts a sceptical eyebrow at me, and I place my hands on my hips and give him my not-taking-any-bullshit pose. “Hmmm.”

He steps towards me, and before I know what’s happening, he’s kissing my cheek, his hand resting on my hip too.

“Thank you, Astrid.”

And then he's dashing out the door behind the other two,
leaving me all flustered with a pair of destroyed ovaries.

A rchie

THE STREETLAMPS HAVE BEEN EXTINGUISHED by the time we slump in through the front door, exhausted, stinking of smoke and covered in soot.

The blaze took six hours to bring under control, and we had to evacuate people from their flats, rescuing a young family from an upper window and another shut down in the basement. I'm heartbroken for those families who lost their homes right before Christmas but relieved no one was seriously hurt.

A heaviness and weariness that always hangs over me once the adrenaline of the firefight drains away lifts when I see the little omega curled up under a blanket on our sofa. Her dark braid peeks out from under the blanket, and the material rises and falls softly with her breathing.

I place my finger on my lips and motion to the others with my head. They come and stand around me at the doorway of the living room.

"We can't send her home," Craig whispers.

"I'll carry her up to the guestroom." I step into the room, claiming the honour before the others can snatch it from me.

Crouching by the sofa, I carefully draw back the blanket and stare down at her sleeping face.

I remember her from school, even if the others don't. She'd been in my English class, and it was the one time the quiet girl actually spoke up, her enthusiasm for reading and stories overflowing.

She'd often answer the teacher's question with such energy her hands would windmill around her face, and I would sit watching her, kind of entranced. I hadn't known she was an omega back then, and with my new alpha designation, all those wild teenage hormones had me in a spin. I chased girls, especially omegas. Although truth be told, most of the time, they chased me.

Chasing girls has been at the bottom of our to-do list since Lyra arrived in our lives. Our focus has been on her. Raising her, keeping her safe, and making her happy. But now ...

Now I stare down at the pretty omega's face. She's painted her eyelashes, but I can see underneath they are as dark as her hair. The effect makes her skin even fairer. Almost like porcelain. Or cream with a hint of strawberries.

I slide my arms under her warm body and, like a creep, take in a lungful of her sweet, caramel scent. So sweet, I lick my lips as if I can actually taste her in the air.

I shift her against my chest, and she murmurs, rolling into me.

I lean in a little closer, breathing her some more, a wisp of her hair tickling against my nose.

Then I stand. She's a light little thing, and I wonder if the fantasies that have been forming in my mind of the three of us rutting her together would even be possible. Could she take us? I'm twice her size.

The others are hovering in the hallway, Craig chugging a glass of water.

They watch as I carry her up the stairs. I've years of practice moving a sleeping child, and it's not until I open the guest bedroom door and lay her on the mattress that she stirs.

"Hmmm," she murmurs, reaching for my arm and tucking it against her. Her eyes are closed, and I think she's still asleep

when she asks, “what time is it?”

I don’t answer. Instead, I attempt to slide my arm from her grip, even though I’m severely tempted to climb into the bed beside her and curl around her body, to hold her through the night.

As I wrestle my arm from her grip, she blinks open her eyes.

“Hi,” she whispers, her voice all breathy and making me hard with the ideas it conjures.

“Hi,” I say. “I’m sorry if I woke you.”

She yawns, stretching her hands above her head. “I should get going if you’re back.”

Then her gaze flits around the room in confusion.

“It’s the middle of the night. So I brought you up here to the guestroom. Thought you could sleep here.”

“The fire was a bad one?” she asks.

I scrub my hand over my shorn hair. “Yeah, it was a beast. Took us ages to wrestle it under control.”

“You look exhausted,” she says with sympathy.

I chuckle. “Yeah, I feel it too.”

Her nose wrinkles.

“Oh shit, I must stink of smoke. I’m sorry.” An omega’s sense of smell is sensitive. I must smell bloody awful.

“It’s fine.” She looks at me and smiles with a little shyness, a little coyness. And fuck, she’s even prettier when she smiles. And fuck, I’m right back in that classroom, this girl smiling at me as she finishes her answer and finds me staring right at her.

It made my blood heat then. It makes it heat now.

Fuck, I want to climb into that bed with her.

“I remember you from school,” I whisper.

She buries her face into the pillow. “Oh God, I was such an awkward geek.”

“Yeah, you were awkward, but you were also pretty cute.”

She peeks up at me. “I think you are misremembering the past.”

“No.”

She leans up on her elbow. “I remember when Mrs Stanfold made us write our own love poems.”

“Urgh,” I groan, falling backwards onto my backside.

She giggles. “That poem you wrote –”

“Was fucking awful.”

“It literally broke my little teenage heart. Ahhh.” She flops down on the bed. “If I wasn’t already crushing on you, you tipped me right into full-blown love.”

I stare at her. “You were in love with me?”

She hooks the pillow off the bed and throws it at my head. “The entire school was in love with you. Including most of the teachers.”

“You’re getting me confused with Samson and Craig.”

“I’m not saying I wasn’t in love with them too. Everyone was. We used to huddle around in the girl’s changing room debating whether you were already a pack, crowning you the hottest pack on earth.”

I ignore her words, wondering if that mulled wine from earlier went to her head. Or maybe she’s not really awake.

“We weren’t a pack back then.”

“I’m glad you became one. It makes sense. For you and Lyra.”

“And for our omega.”

Her body goes rigid. “You have an omega?”

“No,” I chuck the pillow back at her. “But one day ...”

“One day ...” she repeats, staring into my eyes with those pretty blues of hers.

And fuck it, I can’t help myself. I lean in and kiss her.

I agreed with the others we'd take it slow with Astrid. It's no secret that we all like her. No secret Lyra already adores her. So spooking this one, chasing her away by coming on too strong, was not the plan.

But when she looks at me like that. When her caramel scent is so tempting.

I'd have to be some kind of saint to resist this.

She sighs against my mouth as our lips meet. Hers are warm, her tongue wet. Her hands hook around my neck, dragging me closer. I raise up on my knees, and she rolls onto her back, so I'm hovering above her, my hands braced around her head.

She tastes of cinnamon and spices from the mulled wine, and her fingers twist in my short hair, pulling slightly at my scalp, causing electricity to charge through my veins.

I slip my tongue between her lips, brushing up against hers, exploring her mouth. Then I capture her bottom lip between mine and suck on it until she's sighing again.

I draw back.

Soot is smudged across her chin and her cheeks.

"Shit, I got you all mucky."

I rub the pad of my thumb over her skin.

"I'm hoping you might be willing to get me dirty in other ways, too," she says, her eyes shining with desire.

Shit, I wasn't expecting that!

I growl low in my throat, about to dive in for another kiss when the floorboards creak behind us.

"I thought I heard voices," Samson says as Astrid withdraws her arms and shuffles up the bed, sitting up and leaning against the headboard. Craig lingers next to him, and I stand up.

"Astrid was just telling me she was in love with the three of us at school."

Astrid snorts. “I was telling you everyone was in love with you.”

“Including you?” Samson asks.

“Well,” she twirls her braid between her fingers, “yes. I had a crush.” She shrugs in a way I’m sure she hopes is nonchalant. But her cheeks are all flushed.

“What about now?” Craig asks, crossing his arms over his chest and leaning on the doorframe. “Are you crushing on us now?”

She stares at him. “Look at the three of you.” She waves her hand in our direction. We’ve taken off our boots, and our helmets are stored back in the fire engine. But we’re still dressed in our firefighting gear, sooty like our faces. “You look like you stepped right out of a calendar.”

“You have a thing for firefighters?” Samson asks with a tease in his voice.

“Most women do.”

“I’m not asking about *most* people; I’m asking about you ... Omega.”

The word, that word, ignites electricity in the air. It crackles between the four of us, and I watch as her lips part and the dark pupils of her eyes consume all the colour.

She bites down on her lip.

“Come here, Omega,” I tell her, sensing that name does something to her, *loving* that it does something to her, wondering if she could be the one. The omega we’ve hoped for all these years. She smells so good to me. A flavour I would never tire of devouring.

She swings her legs off the bed, and her bare feet hit the carpeted floor. I hold my breath, hoping she’ll let me kiss her again, hoping she’ll let all of us kiss her.

She rises to her feet and steps towards me, towards us, her gaze flicking between the three of us. There’s nervousness darting about in her eyes but also desire.

Her steps are too damn slow, and when she's still several paces away from me, I step in, grabbing her wrist and yanking her towards me.

“Oh,” she gasps, melting against my chest, her little hands resting right above my thumping heart.

I kiss her again as she tips back to accept my hungry mouth. Two deep growls rumble in the room, and the scents of my packmates darken.

We indulged in a couple of orgies back in our youth, but there hasn't been the opportunity for that since we formed our pack and prioritised our time caring for Lyra. It's been a dream, though, one we've talked about endlessly, owning our own little omega, an omega for our pack, an omega to share and pleasure together, to rut through a heat.

With Astrid so near, stroking her fingers over my chest, I'm rock hard just thinking about it.

Has our perfect omega walked willingly into my arms? Is this it?

The floorboards creak again, and I hear Samson murmur behind the omega, “Astrid?”

I break our kiss, and she meets my eyes for a second before spinning in my arms and facing Samson, my hands still gripping her waist.

“I want to kiss you, too,” he whispers. My heart is pounding now with anticipation. Will she let him? Does she want this?

“Yes,” she says twisting towards him. He leans in to devour her mouth hungrily.

Those orgies back in our youth, when we were high or drunk or both, are hazy dreams now. I barely remember them. This is vivid and clear. The movement of their mouths, her soft mewling sounds, and the strong grip of Samson's hand around the back of her neck turn me on more than I could have imagined.

Gripping her waist more tightly, I lean down and kiss the dip where her shoulder and neck meet. She shivers, and I nibble, grinding my hard cock against her arse.

Fuck, this feels good. Fuck, she feels and sounds and tastes good.

My eyes open as I hear Craig step closer too. There are no words from him. Astrid simply pulls away from Samson's kiss and offers herself to our packmate.

"Shit, this is hot!" Samson mutters, pulling down the braces of his trousers and tugging his t-shirt over his head as he watches Craig kiss the omega.

Getting naked seems like an excellent idea. I've been dreaming all night about unbuttoning that dress of hers and discovering what lies beneath. But then there's the pitter-patter of tiny feet in the hallway.

Instantly we all freeze.

"Daddy!" Lyra calls. "Dada! Pops!"

"Shit," Craig mumbles as he and Samson trudge towards the door.

I pause, kissing Astrid's neck.

"I'm sorry, but duty calls again."

"Don't be sorry," she says.

"I'll see you in the morning."

There's no use kidding ourselves. This isn't happening tonight, not with Lyra in the house. I just hope that means we haven't blown our chance.

A *strid*

I STRIP off my tights and snuggle into the bed, still wearing my dress, frustrated and horny as hell. I'm not blaming the pack. Lyra comes first, and perhaps getting it on with her a few rooms away wouldn't have worked. But I can't help the way my body feels. Those three men have stoked me up, and now I'm burning with desire, with the need to be touched.

I peer towards the door in the darkness. I can hear them talking softly, guiding her back to bed. Then I hear the shower running, and as much as I want to strip out of my clothes and join those three alphas under the scalding hot water, I know I can't.

I'm stuck here alone. As always.

Was it just a moment of madness? Three alphas unable to resist an omega under their roof? Will it all be awkward in the morning as they hurry me out the door without an invitation to repeat what just occurred?

I hope not. Their kisses certainly felt real. My skin tingles all over with the memory of their lips. They all tasted different. All kissed me differently. But oh my, those kisses were knicker destroying. In fact, my knickers are so wet, I'm probably going to leave a puddle in their bed.

Finally, light switches flip, footsteps die away, and the house is quiet. I'm still awake. Lying here with everything between my legs throbbing.

I peer towards the door a second time, then slide my hand into my underwear, gasping at how swollen I am and how sensitive my clit is. My touch feels divine there, filling me with immediate relief, even if it's not the touch I want. My fingers are too small, too slender. Their fingers are long and powerful. Capable of putting out fires and stoking them too.

I bite my lip against a moan as I sink further beneath the covers, my fingers working through my folds. In my head, it's not me touching myself. It's their fingers ringing my clit, flicking it, stroking it, whispering words of encouragement in my ear. Calling me Omega.

Omega.

I hear it in my ears as clear as a bell. How it sounded in all three of their mouths. I come, arching and folding against the mattress, biting on my forearm to stop myself from screaming out loud.

God, if they make me feel this good simply from a few PG-rated kisses, how the fuck will they make me feel if we actually do more?

I fall asleep with those delicious ideas spinning in my mind.



I'M PRETTY sure I come again in my sleep. I was dreaming of three alphas devouring me, pleasuring me in every way imaginable, rutting me hard and hard and hard and...I'd woken up panting, my body buzzing and my clit tingling in that post-orgasmic way.

It's morning now, the room hazy with December sunshine.

Did I cry out? Did anyone hear?

A set of towels is piled neatly on top of a dresser, and I peel off my ruined knickers and my sweaty dress and creep out into the hallway.

I'm pretty sure I must smell like catnip to any alpha present, and while I like that idea a lot, firing up three alphas doesn't seem like a good idea when we can't do anything about it.

Downstairs I can hear the chirpy sounds of kids' cartoons as well as low growly voices murmuring.

I duck into the bathroom and take a hot shower, soaping away all the slick between my thighs.

Being in their bathroom feels intimate. Of course I'd done a little snooping last night, opening all the kitchen cabinets and the fridge, and examining all the pictures on the walls. However, I restrained myself from entering their bedrooms or bathroom, even though it had been severely tempting. Especially when their scents had crept under closed doors into my nostrils, tempting me to enter.

Bright pink bottles of kids' shampoo and bubble bath are stacked up along the edge of the bath as well as several darker bottles of men's body wash, all scentless. They smell good enough as it is, after all.

On the shelf by the mirror is a can of shaving foam, a razor, a comb and beard care products.

When I've washed, I climb out and wrap myself in a huge unicorn towel and creep back to the bedroom.

I'm at a loss as to what to wear. Certainly not my damn underwear from last night. I open a couple of the drawers in the dresser and am relieved to find several neatly folded t-shirts and a couple of pairs of shorts.

They belong to the alphas, so, of course, they swamp me when I try some on but, hey, they've already seen me in the elf outfit, so it can't get much worse than that.

I climb down the stairs and head for the kitchen, hoping I'll find the pack in there.

I jolt with surprise when I actually find an older woman, an apron tied around her waist, frying eggs at the stove.

Her gaze springs to me in the doorway.

“Oh!” she says with clear surprise. “I didn’t know the boys had a guest over.”

I open and close my mouth, unable to form a sensible response. I peer down at my oversized outfit, knowing exactly what conclusions this woman is going to draw. The elf costume may have been better.

“I’m Craig’s mum. Lyra’s granny. I’m cooking her some breakfast.”

“Nice to meet you,” I say, hesitating before entering the kitchen. “Can I help?”

“You can pass me the eggs from the fridge. I guess I need to cook one more.”

“Thank you,” I say. I’m not exactly hungry, but I’m too scared to turn down her offer.

I wonder if this is a regular thing. The alphas seem a bit old to have their mum still turning up to cook for them.

As if she can read my thoughts, she says, “I heard about the big blaze overnight and knew the boys would have spent their night fighting it. I’ve sent them back to bed to sleep, and I’m taking Lyra off their hands for the day. Poor loves are always whacked out after such a big job.” I remember how tired they looked last night. “And you are?”

“TwinkleToes!” comes an excited voice from behind me as Lyra skips into the kitchen. “She’s one of Santa’s helpers, Granny. We met her at Santa’s grotto.”

“I used to go to school with the boys,” I offer up. “I looked after Lyra last night when they got called out.”

The older woman inspects my face. “I don’t recognise you.”

“Oh, we didn’t hang out back then.”

“Right ... but you hang out now?” She slides a plastic spatula beneath a rubbery egg and slides it on top of a waiting piece of toast. “Here you are, Lyra. Take it to the table.”

“Yes, TwinkleToes hung out with us last night. She helped me decorate the tree.”

Lyra’s granny hands me a plate. “Thank you,” I say. “I’m Astrid, by the way.”

She smiles. “Well, that’s a relief.”

She sits at the table next to Lyra, and I sit opposite her. I’m very aware I’m not wearing a bra but thanking every god I took that shower.

I slice my knife through the rubbery egg and let the yellow yoke bleed into the toast.

Lyra swings her legs under the table. “Where are we going today, Granny?”

“I thought we might go swimming.”

“Can TwinkleToes come too?”

“Oh, I’ve got some schoolwork to finish today.”

“You’re studying?” Granny Hart asks.

“To be a nurse.”

She nods with approval. Then nudges her granddaughter, reminding her to eat up.

“Are you going to stay here and do your schoolwork?” Lyra asks, taking a bite of egg and toast.

“No, I’m going back to my house.”

“But my daddies would want you to stay.”

“I think your daddies will be sleeping all day.”

Lyra turns to her Granny. “Daddy thinks she’s pretty, and so does Pops. I heard them talking about it last night. They said they wanted to climb into bed with her.”

I choke on my egg. The damn thing lodges in my throat, causing tears to stream down my cheeks, and Granny Hart has

to run around the table and thump me three times on the back.

“Thank you,” I croak, taking several gulps from a glass of water she passes me.

“Lyra,” her grandmother says, “you shouldn’t be listening to your daddies’ private conversations, and you certainly shouldn’t be repeating what you heard.”

“Why not? I like TwinkleToes too. I think they need a girlfriend.”

I put down my knife and fork. “Lyra,” I ask, “have you been trying to set me up with your daddies?” She shrugs. I turn to her granny. “Does she do this a lot?”

“Not to my knowledge. In fact,” she says, clearing away Lyra’s empty plate and dropping it into the sink, “you’re the first young lady I’ve bumped into under such circumstances.”

“My daddies need a girlfriend.”

“Hmmm,” Granny Hart agrees, nodding her head.

“I’m sure they’d have a lot of options,” I mutter under my breath, “if they really wanted one.”

“Well, I don’t know about that,” the older woman’s shoulder tighten a little, “It’s hard enough when there are only two people in a relationship. But when there are three of you ... when you have a young child ...”

I look over at Lyra and smile. Three alphas and this little girl. I’d be so lucky to have them. It almost seems too greedy. “Yes,” I say, “I’m sure it must be.”

Granny Hart claps her hands. “Right, Lyra. Let’s make a move. I’ve already packed your swimming things. Say goodbye to Astrid.”

“Goodbye,” She jumps down from her chair and runs around to fling her arms around my neck and kiss my cheek. “You smell lovely,” she tells me.

“Goodbye, Lyra.” I squeeze her tiny frame back.

“Nice to meet you,” Grandma Hart says, taking Lyra’s hand. “I hope to see you again.” She gives me a knowing look.

Did I win her approval? I have no idea how.

The front door slams shut, and I finish my egg. Then wash up the dishes and the pan in the sink. There's no movement or sound from upstairs. I don't want to disturb them, not when they've been working all night to save people's lives.

I tiptoe up the stairs, retrieve my clothes, and then retreat back to the kitchen. I find an old envelope, scribble a note on the back, and then hunt for my boots and coat by the door.

My hand rests on the front door handle when a voice from the stairway calls out, "Omega."

I freeze.

Anticipation spirals along my spine.

Feet thunder down the staircase.

I turn around slowly to find Samson standing in the hallway in just a pair of boxers, his hair a ruffled mess around his head.

And holy smoke.

I let out a squeak. An actual squeak.

Because the man ... the man is built like a Greek god. I've never seen someone in the living flesh with so many muscles. And there's a lot of flesh. A lot of bare flesh. Plus, something obviously sizable tucked inside those boxers.

My damn stupid body responds immediately to the spectacle before my eyes. My legs turn to jelly. My mouth waters. My core spins. And everything, *everything*, throbs.

"Where are you scurrying off to?" he says.

"I was..." I point towards the door but lose my train of thought as he comes closer and closer. My heart is skittish and erratic in my chest.

"You were what?"

I swallow, searching for my voice. When I find it, it's all high and squeaky, and I have to swallow twice more before

I'm coherent. "Lyra's granny has taken her out for the day so you could sleep. I'm leaving so you can get some shut-eye."

"We were rather hoping you'd join us in bed," Samson says, eyes roaming over my baggy outfit. "Are those my clothes?"

I peek down at the t-shirt swamping my frame and the shorts that reach down to my calves. "I'm not sure."

"They look good on you." He reaches forward, takes a fistful of the shirt, and drags me towards him. My feet move willingly.

How can this be happening? How can this be happening to me? Did the Christmas gods choose to bless me this year?

"We were hoping we could pick up where we left off last night." His mouth comes down to hover against my lips, and I close my eyes, waiting for the kiss. He pulls away. "Then again, if you want to go ..."

"I want to stay," I growl, wrapping my arms around his neck and dragging him down for that kiss.

His hands are up inside my t-shirt in a flash, brushing against my bare stomach and then wrapping around my ribcage. The pad of his thumb caresses the underside of my tit, and he groans into my mouth.

"Going to take you upstairs, Omega," he murmurs into my mouth.

He slides his hand out of my t-shirt, and I pout at him in disapproval. He grins wickedly, and I'm wondering why when he barrels forward, his shoulder meeting my middle, his hands gripping the backs of my thighs, and I'm thrown over his shoulder.

I yelp, and he slaps my arsecheek, making me bite my lip.

"Fireman's lift," he explains. "It's the only way to transport our women."

"You have lots of women?"

“Correction, woman! Shit, this arse!” He buries his face against it and nips at one cheek, making me screech again. “Sorry,” he says, “couldn’t help myself. I really, really want to dive between these thighs and ... fuck it!”

He drops me halfway up the stairs. I’m on my back, and he’s a couple of steps lower. He kneels down and, keeping his eyes locked with mine, places his hands on my knees and parts my legs.

“I thought we were going upstairs.”

“We are upstairs,” he smiles at me sheepishly, “sort of. But shit, Omega, your pussy so close to my face smelled so fucking ripe, and I...” he buries his face between my thighs, his breath warming me there, and inhales fiercely. He groans. “Can I?”

“Yes,” I pant, helping him to wriggle down the shorts. I’m bare underneath, and for far too many seconds, he simply looks at me, swiping his fingers backwards and forwards over my swollen outer folds.

“Fuck,” he whispers, “fuck. Your pussy is beautiful, so beautiful.”

No one has ever said that before, and it makes me somehow happy. I want to please him—to please all of them—and a sense of pride swells my chest.

My mate finds my pussy pretty.

Mate?

Where the hell did that come from? But I’ve no time to dissect that thought because his lips are on me, kissing my most intimate parts tenderly, with a gentleness I wouldn’t have thought possible from such a giant of a man.

“So pretty, so perfect, so ripe.”

The tease is intense. Pressure building in my core and a tingle building in my clit. I want his attention everywhere.

“Samson,” I whine.

And he must know what I'm asking because his tongue sweeps through my folds and my back arches, my hips bucking against his mouth.

My head knocks back against the step behind me, and I slide my hands under my t-shirt, squeezing at my tits.

"Let me see," he growls, and when I peer down between my legs, his eyes are glaring up at me, intense and dark.

"Wh-what?"

"Let me see you squeeze your tits, Omega."

I wriggle free of the t-shirt, and now I'm naked and laid out bare on the stairs for him.

He drags his tongue through me, and I moan as he hits my most sensitive part.

"Shit, love those noises. Louder, Omega. Let's wake those other arseholes up and show them what they're missing."

He repeats the action, flicking the tip of his tongue right against my nub.

I moan again.

"Louder, Omega. There's a good girl." He flicks me again. I squeal. "Better. But you're not playing with those tits. And they're such pretty tits, too." he flicks me twice in quick succession, and my thighs shake around his head. "Omega!"

I paw at my tits, pinching my nipples between my fingers. Every part of my body is a live wire now.

"So good," he murmurs, rewarding me with a purr against my cunt. It's better than a flipping vibrator.

"Alpha!" I call out.

"Yes, I am. Yes, I fucking am."

He kisses me hard, licking and sucking me, and I hear a door above us slam and heavy footsteps on the landing.

I'm moaning with abandon now, my core tight, my legs jelly.

I'm so close to coming, so close.

I squeeze at my tits and hear a loud growl above me.

I open my eyes, and Craig is watching us from the top step. His eyes so black they're midnight.

"Make her come, Samson," he growls again. "I want to see her fall apart."

I whine, the noise spinning around the hallway.

Craig marches down the stairs, lowering himself until he's sitting on the step above my head. Then he lifts me up and slides his body underneath me until I'm cradled in his arms, cradled against something big, hard, and scorching hot.

He swipes my hands away from my tits and squeezes them himself. All the while, Samson occupies himself with my clit, swirling his tongue around and around it until I'm dizzy with the motion.

When I come, I scream both their names, like I've done a million times in my bed alone at night, imagining this, wanting this.

But, oh fuck, it's better, so much better.

Samson laps through my folds, bringing me down slowly from my high before driving his tongue deep inside me and moaning against my core.

I buck in Craig's arms and lean up to claim his mouth.

Oh God, oh God.

They're not letting me down after all. They plan to keep me at this dizzying height. Two thick fingers replace Samson's tongue, and he pumps them in and out of me, massaging that crazy-sensitive spot on my wall. His tongue is back on my clit, and I fly up into the sky a second time, the orgasm wracking through my whole body.

Then I'm being lifted, cradled against a warm chest and carried up the stairs, along the hallway, into one large bedroom, and onto a giant bed that dominates the room. Archie lies sprawled across the mattress, and I think my ultimate fantasy is about to come true.

A *rchie*

I DRAG open my tired eyes, and for a moment, I think I'm still dreaming.

Because ... what?

Craig, dressed only in his briefs, is striding into the room with our omega in his arms, naked, skin flushed and smelling of sweet, sweet slick.

I scrabble up on my knees and watch as he lowers her onto the bed. She hums with satisfaction, pawing at his biceps, and I have a fair idea what's gone down here. An assumption that's only confirmed by the mess all over Samson's beard.

"You ate her out," I say, my voice half whine, half disappointment.

Samson stalks up onto the bed. "Too fucking right. And mate, *mate* ..." He doesn't need to say any more. The expression of bliss on his face says it all.

He offers me his right fore and middle fingers, glistening with slick.

I pounce on them, forcing his fingers straight into my mouth and sucking them clean.

When I'm done, the omega's eyes are wide, watching us.

My gaze roams around her body, soaking up every curve, every sweep.

Then my eyes halt on her arm. On the deep purple bruise. My eyes flick to her leg. She has another on her ankle.

I grab her arm, bringing the bruise close to my face.

“What’s this, Omega?”

“Wh-what?” she says with confusion.

The others spot the marks, too, and their faces fall to thunder.

“Someone hurt you,” I spit out, uncontrollable rage suddenly spiralling through my body. I’m going to kill them; whoever they are, they are dead.

“Who ...” Craig says, his voice wavering with a bid to contain his anger. “Who did this to you?”

He points to the mark on her arm and her leg.

“Oh,” she says, peering at her calf and rubbing at the deep bruise. “A toddler.” She glances at her arm. “A small boy.”

I blink. Then blink again. “What?”

“Some toddler had a massive meltdown yesterday at the grotto and bit me.” She points to her ankle. “And some other kid got cross when I wouldn’t give him a second lollipop and pinched me.”

“Little shit,” I mumble.

“Yeah, he was a bit. But ...” she shrugs.

I lift her bruise to my mouth and kiss it. “Better?” I ask.

She grins at me. “Much.”

“Good.” I kiss the bruise a second time, then trail my lips up the full length of her arm, not stopping when I reach her shoulder, continuing my trail along her collarbone, up her throat and to her warm, waiting mouth.

When she’s dragging me closer, I shift my mouth to her ear and whisper, “Lyra’s out for the entire day.”

“I heard. I think you’re meant to be catching up on sleep.”

“Sleep can wait,” I tell her. “Who wants to fuck her while I eat her out?” She whimpers. “You like that idea, little one?”

She bites her bottom lip in a way that has more blood pumping straight to my cock, and murmurs an orgasm-drunk “yes.”

“Come on, gentlemen, you heard the lady.” I lie out flat on my back and tug on her arm. “Come sit on my face, and then Samson or Craig can fuck you from behind.”

She bites down even harder on that lip, and I have a feeling I’m calling her out on a fantasy.

She crawls up my body achingly slowly, lighting her own trail of kisses over my torso as she does, nipping at my nipples and sucking on my neck.

I could get used to that. It’s been an age since something little and curvy and smelling like sin touched me like this. I *want* to get used to this.

She continues to suck on my jaw, and I grip the cheeks of her arse.

“Come on, Omega, on my face.” I lift her straight up into the air, ignoring her squeals, and lower her onto my face.

And oh fucking Jesus shitting hell and all the angels and demons too.

She smells like home.

Slick drips from her pussy straight into my waiting mouth.

My eyes roll around in their sockets, and my whole body buzzes. Because my mate tastes like home too.

I blink open my eyes. I lick my lips. The flavour courses through my veins.

Mate.

Yes, fuck. Mate. She’s my mate. Our mate. Our pack omega.

I whisper the word against her core, saying it again louder and again louder still. And again and again, until I'm roaring it into her pussy.

"What?" she gasps, all breathy and panting.

"Mate," I say.

"Yes," Craig agrees, as he knocks her forward onto her hands and grips her hips. "Mate," he confirms as he thrusts inside her, and I watch from beneath. Watch as her pussy swallows up his long, thick cock, inch by inch by inch by inch. All ten fucking inches of him disappear inside my mate.

I find her sensitive nub with my mouth, and it quivers against my tongue, telling me how good it feels to take my packmate.

She jolts against me, her clit sliding along my tongue, as Craig drives into her from behind.

"You're so wet," he mumbles, "so wet."

"We knew you would be," Samson says from beside us on the bed. "We could smell you all fucking night. Smell how wet and needy you were. For us, weren't you, Omega?"

"Y – y – yes!" she whimpers. "I wanted you so badly. All of you so badly. I wanted you to do this to me. To take me and have me and share me together. I want you to fuck me until I'm a wreck, until I have no voice left to scream. Please. Pleeeaaase!"

"Shit!" Craig grunts. "Shit. Anything you want. Omega, anything you want. We'll please you any way you want. Just ask."

"Like this," she says, flinging her head backwards, her spine arching and her intimate parts thrust more firmly against my lips.

I suck on her clit.

I suck her right into my mouth as Craig fucks her, and she falls apart completely. Her words tumbling to nonsense, her hands collapsing from beneath her and that little nub going wild in my mouth.

I love every damn second of it. Every second.

Craig follows her a moment later, groaning, his rhythm faltering. I watch from beneath as his knot inflates, and he stretches her open, locking into her pussy.

It means Samson and I won't be able to fuck her again until he deflates. I can't begrudge him for it because knotting my mate is the only want crashing obsessively around my soul.

"How does that feel, little one?" I ask her, lapping at her clit, feeling it vibrate against my tongue.

"So good," she pants, "So good."

"You like Craig's knot?"

She moans, and I take that as an enthusiastic yes.

Me, though. I'm not done here. Her skin is pale, and I love the way it ripples with colour when she comes, love the way her eyes drift shut, and her lips fall open. But I especially love the way she tastes.

I lick at her, and lick and lick.

Craig groans. "Shit, your pussy. It's ..." He grunts. "You're fucking milking me."

"I can't ... I can't ..." she wails. And then she comes, right on the tip of my tongue.

Samson kneels beside her, dragging her up, so she's kneeling up straight. He swipes damp strands of hair that have fallen loose from her braid from her flushed face.

"How was that, little one?"

"Good," she says with a wide smile of satisfaction.

"Have you had enough? Do you want to stop?"

She frowns and shakes her head.

"If you want us to stop at any moment, all you have to do is say."

Craig cradles her from behind, nuzzling into her neck. "You smell so good, little mate," he murmurs.

Her eyes meet Samson's. "Mate?" she whispers.

"You feel it?" he asks softly.

She hesitates, then nods. "Yes," she whispers.

I glide my palm up her body from the soft line of curls and up her belly, bulging with Craig inside her.

"Mate," I say again. "Our little mate."

"But that's crazy, isn't it?" she asks. "We only just met and ..."

"We didn't just meet," Craig mumbles into her neck.

"Yes, but ... we hardly know each other."

"Then let's get to know each other," Samson says with mischief in his eyes.

He strips off his boxers, then takes her hand in his and lays it flat above his heart.

"This," he says, "is my left pec." She squeezes her fingers against the firm muscle and bites her lip again.

"Hello, left pec," she says. "I'm very pleased to meet you."

He guides her hand lower, pausing over the tightly packed muscles of his abdomen. "This," he tells her, "is my six-pack."

"Holy shit," she mutters, "I've never actually touched one in real life."

He chuckles and guides her fingers along the deep V that traces from his hips to his groin.

Her gaze follows the motion.

"You know where we're headed next, little one?"

"I'm assuming it isn't the supermarket."

He snorts, and together they wrap their fists around his hard cock.

"Are you all this big?" she asks, eyes darting to me as I watch them from beneath.

I wink at her. "I'm not ruining the surprise."

She rubs her hand up and down Samson's length.

"That feels so good. Feels so good to have my little mate's hand wrapped around my cock. You want to get to know my cock better, sweetheart?"

She licks her lips, catching his meaning, and drops back down onto her hands. He shuffles forward on his knees, and his cockhead bumps against her pretty pink lips.

She parts them, and then her tongue darts out, swirling around him and licking away the pre-come from his tip.

The motion of her tongue is dizzying, and I feel it against my own cock as if she's pleasuring me. I take myself in hand, running my fist up and down my shaft as our little mate takes Samson into her mouth. Her cheeks hollow, and she sucks on him, her head bobbing back and forth.

I'm not sure what was better, watching my packmate fuck her, making her come with my tongue or this view now.

I wonder how we've lived this long without this, without someone to share like this, without someone to pleasure like this.

"Oh baby, you're so good at that," I say. "Who knew a little elf like you would know how to suck a dick in just the way it should be sucked?"

"You have no fucking idea," Samson grunts, his fingers tangling in her now messed-up hair. He lets the dark strands run through his fingers like silk.

She smiles up at him, then lets him go with a pop, gliding her tongue from his base right along the line of his thick pulsing vein and back to his head, then she sucks at him again.

It starts to drive him crazy, the way she's teasing him like that, and soon he's bucking his hips, unable to control himself.

"Fuck, I want to knot you, little mate. Fuck, I need to knot you."

Craig slips out from behind her, and soon she's on her back, Samson driving into her from above. He's too far gone

to make this last, and in four brutal thrusts, he's coming, knotting her hard.

She screams with ecstasy, and they collapse together on the bed.

“I think you know me a hell of a lot better now,” he pants into her ear.

A *strid*

I'VE HAD MORE sex in the last hour than I have done for the last two years. And as soon as Samson's knot deflates, Archie drags me onto his lap for more. I'm exhausted, but these three alphas have endless amounts of stamina despite being up all night fighting fires. Archie grips me around the waist and does most of the work, bouncing me up and down his cock.

It's just as well because it turns out, no surprise, he is a whole ten inches long, exactly like his packmates. He reaches deep, deep inside me and, while pounding my cervix has never been enjoyable, with these three men, it is. It feels like everything I've been missing in my life.

Maybe my body recognised it all those years ago. Perhaps that is why I'd been so hopelessly in love with the three of them. I recognised them as my mates, even if I hadn't known I was an omega back then, even if I didn't understand.

What would my life have been like if I'd presented much earlier than I had, when we'd all been at school? Would they have wanted me back then? Would they have recognised me as theirs?

But if they had, there would be no Lyra.

Fate is a fickle friend, and I can't help thinking this all needed to happen the way it did. Lyra had to be here to bring

us together. It was she who took my hand.

“You smell so good, little mate,” Archie moans as he works me up and down his length. “I can smell the others inside you, mixing with your slick. You smell like ours. Like you belong to us.”

I’m also not stupid. Well, most of the time, anyway. I’ve been on the receiving end of some pretty convincing declarations of love that vanished into thin air as soon as the dude got inside my knickers. These three could be playing me. Thinking they need to say this stuff so I’ll let them play with me this way. Well, if that is the case, they have me all wrong. I’d do this even if it were a one-time-only kind of deal.

That being said, I hope it’s not.

I hope this is real. It feels it. Deep in my chest, it feels real in a way those other declarations never had.

Maybe I am actually pretty stupid, or at least a hopeless romantic. Because I do believe in Santa Claus and tooth fairies, elves and fated mates. And I believe these three alphas right here are mine.

Pressure builds in my core. My cheeks heat. My legs shake.

I come. Noisy and loud and messy. I come in Archie’s lap as he continues to pound up into me, slamming me down to meet his every thrust.

It’s so intense I come again straight afterwards and in unison with him. We moan and groan together, clinging to one another, as his sizable knot inflates and he locks into me.

“Oh my gosh,” I gasp, my forehead resting against his broad shoulder.

The other two alphas are lying out on the bed, watching us both. It’s a turn-on I never expected. But having their gazes locked on me as their packmate fucks me makes the experience ten million times more erotic. Especially when I see their cocks hardening, and they both can’t resist gripping themselves.

This giant room stinks of sex, and if a detective ever came digging around with a UV light, the bed would light up like the Christmas tree downstairs.

“This was fun,” I say.

Archie grips the cheeks of my arse and squeezes. “It was a hell of a lot more than fun.”

“Hmm,” I tease.

He slaps my arse cheek. “Tell me what it was.”

I lean back a little and grin at him. “Let me see. Pleasing.”

“That’s better.”

“Pleasurable.”

“Now we’re getting somewhere.”

“Mind-blowingly incredible.”

“Yep, that’ll do it.”

“So ...” I nip Archie’s shoulder, making eye contact with the other two alphas in the bed. “Can we do this again?”

Craig’s eyebrows leap up his forehead. “Now?”

“No, oh my God, I need to sleep for like a year. But I meant –”

“Yes, we will be doing this again, Omega.” Samson rolls up and kisses me over Archie’s shoulder. “I was messing around earlier. We do want to get to know you better. We want to discover whether what we’re all feeling here is genuine.”

“It is,” Archie growls.

“I agree,” Craig says. “But we need to take things slow, for Lyra’s sake. You moving in will be a big change for her.”

“We need our omega right here,” Samson says in such a sure-fire way, I can’t help agreeing with him.

“Oh-kay,” I say, totally giddy about the idea.”

“With our mate around,” Craig continues, “Lyra will be competing for our attention–”

“She’ll never compete for your attention,” I say firmly, “She’ll always come first –”

“I was going to say,” Craig continues, “when our mate has children.”

“Children?” My omega heart skips. “You want more children?”

“Lots and lots,” Archie growls into my neck. “I’m hoping we made one today.”

“I’m on birth control. But ... I want kids so ...”

“Oh fuck,” Archie chuckles, “we are going to have so much fun making babies with you, Omega.”

I can’t help it; an image floats into my mind of the future. It’s something I used to do all the time at school, carried away by daydreams of a future with these three men. In this fantasy, we’re all curled up in this bed together, the bed full of children, my belly round and ripe for popping.

A sigh slips from my mouth.

“You like that idea, little mate?”

“Yes,” I confess. “But you’re right about taking this slowly.” Although what we’ve been doing for the last few hours seems anything but. “We have to get this right for Lyra’s sake.” I hesitate. “And mine.”

Samson leans in to kiss me again, and Archie holds me tight against his chest.

My heart tells me these men will treat me right. Is my heart correct?

Soon we’re all snuggling up together in the bed, and I’m warm and secure between the huge bodies of my mates.

I drift to sleep with a content smile on my lips.



WHEN WE WAKE LATE in the afternoon, we make love again, and then I soak in a deep, hot bath. I may be an omega, but I'm sore, and it's probably for the best that Lyra will be home soon. I'm fastening the last button on my freshly laundered plaid dress when the front door slams open, and a little voice cries, "I'm home."

Footsteps race up the staircase, and the door to the guestroom flings open.

"TwinkleToes!" Lyra screeches. "You're still here." She flings herself at me, hugging me tight around my tummy.

"Hey Lyra, did you have fun swimming?"

She ignores my question. "Are you staying for a sleepover?"

"No, I've got to go back to my house."

"Oh, Granny Hart told Grandpa you were probably sleeping with my daddies, so ..."

"Right," I manage a smile; it's not like she was wrong, "maybe we can have a sleepover next time."

"You're coming to play with us again?"

"I hope so."

We walk together onto the landing and downstairs to where her dads are gathered in the hallway.

"Goodbye, TwinkleToes," Lyra says as I hug her tight.

Samson helps me into my coat and I step out into the dark afternoon, rain spitting from the thickening clouds overhead. I walk down the garden path. At the pavement, I turn around and peer back at the front door. They're all there, lit up in the doorway, Lyra balancing in Craig's arms.

I don't want to leave. It feels as if I'm tearing myself away from some magical dream.

I wave to them, and Lyra waves back, Samson winking and Archie giving me a little salute.

My heart spasms. I hope this is real. I hope I'll be back. Because a niggle worries at the back of my mind. I know they have their sensible reasons, but if I really am their mate, how can they let me go?

Craig

I'M AT THE FIREHOUSE, cleaning the truck when the bell goes off. I pull on my uniform and equipment as the others come dashing towards me. It's one of those rare days I'm on duty with my other packmates, and Lyra is with our cousin Vee.

“What is it?” I ask, not liking the concerned look on Samson's face as he swings a helmet onto the crown of his head.

“Fire at the hospital.” He meets my eye. “At the grotto.”

“Shit!” I say, leaping behind the wheel of the truck. I have the lights spinning, the alarm blaring and the truck backing out of the station before Archie's finished opening the station doors. He leaps up into the cab, and I press my foot to the floor. Samson reaches for the handle as he's thrown back in his seat. But I don't give a shit.

Our omega!

Our omega is working at the grotto today!

I swerve through traffic and hurtle down the streets. The journey passes in barely ten minutes, yet feels like an age, and I swear at cars that fail to move out of my way, growling at the stupid way the roads twist and turn. Finally, I skid to a stop outside the hospital. A small crowd stands on the pavement outside the building, and the alarm is screeching loudly. But I

can't see any smoke hanging in the air or billowing from the building, and I don't catch any whiff of it either.

A man in a white coat with a name badge pinned to his chest comes scuttling towards us.

"I'm so sorry," he huffs, wringing his hands "False alarm."

"False alarm?" I say. I eye up the hospital entrance. "Are you sure?"

"Some kid pressed the alarm, and we couldn't shut it down. It's malfunctioning or something."

I stride straight to the entrance, through the sliding doors, behind the empty reception desk and pull back the door on the panel hidden on the wall. I hit several buttons, and the alarm cuts dead.

The man in the white coat has followed me. "Thank God for that."

"You're sure no one is hurt? Sure there's no fire?"

"Yes, Santa saw the child press the button."

"We're going to do a sweep anyway," Archie tells him.

"Whatever you like," the man says, already hurrying away.

"You think it was really a kid that pressed that button or a naughty little elf?" I say.

"I think we'd better go and have a word with her." Archie grins.

Samson slides back the sleeve of his jacket and peers at his watch. "It's the end of our shift and hers."

I jerk my head, and we set off towards the hospital's foyer.

Somehow the crowds have already regathered after the evacuation. It's even more chaotic than the last two times I was here. People are squabbling over their places in the queue, and there's a hell of a lot of shoving and pushing going on.

All that stops as we come strolling through, though, dressed in our boots, protective clothing and helmets. People actually turn and watch, the room falling silent.

“Look, Mummy,” one small child says in the quiet, “it’s real-life firemen.”

The crowd parts to let us through, and there she is, our little omega, staring back at us from Santa’s cabin. Her mouth hangs open, and fires are burning in both pupils of her eyes.

“Did you call us, Ma’am?” I ask her.

“Me?” she squeaks.

I bend a little, so we’re at eye level.

“Yes, you.”

“No, it was –” she cuts off when I give her my best smouldering look. She gulps.

“Well, called us or not, we’ve come to rescue you.”

She laughs. “I don’t need rescuing.”

I peer around at the crowd. “You most certainly do.”

“Let them rescue you!” one mum screams from the back.

“Hell, yeah,” another agrees, and soon all the women in the crowd are cheering.

I lift my eyebrow. “May I, Ma’am?”

She covers her face with her hands, but nods and then I’m flinging her over my shoulder.

The crowd goes wild as I march her out of the foyer and onto the street, my packmates following.

Samson opens the truck door, and I place her neatly inside the cab.

“We’re riding in this truck?”

“You bet,” I say, swinging up into the cab. “Want the flashing lights, sweetheart?”

She bites her lip and sighs. “Fuck, yes.”

I take the drive back to the fire station at a more steady pace than the one we arrived at, but Astrid still loves every minute of it.

“Where are we headed?” she shouts above the roar of the siren.

“Home.”

“In this?”

“No, unfortunately, we have to return this bad boy. But if you have any firetruck-related fantasies you’d like to fulfil, you have ten minutes before we return to the fire station.”

“Ten minutes is long enough,” Samson yells, flinging Astrid across the seats and dropping his face under her skirt.

I have to watch the road, but every now and again, I let my eyes flick to the rearview mirror. I catch glimpses of Archie freeing his cock from his trousers and feeding it into Astrid’s waiting mouth.

Despite the blaring siren, I can hear their combined moans and groans.

I can’t wait to join them. My cock is painfully hard, and I’m having difficulty keeping this truck on the road.

“Two minutes, arseholes,” I call out to them.

“Oooooohhhh!” Astrid screams, and I feel sorry for every other alpha who has to use this truck tonight because it smells of our mate coming all over her alpha’s face.

A moment later, she’s wrapping her arms around my neck and kissing me there. She smells of Archie.

“Are you sure we have to return the truck?”

“Yes, Ma’am.”

“Shame,” she mutters. “Can you at least keep the uniforms for the night?”

“You’d like that?” I ask, enjoying the way she drags her teeth down my throat.

“Oh, yes!”

“And when do we get to see you in your nurse’s uniform?”

“It’s really not that sexy.”

“With you in it, sweetheart, I bet it is.”

I park up at the station, and Astrid sits on the sofa in the common room, swinging her legs as we debrief and fill out the necessary paperwork.

Then I’m marching her the short walk home.

“It’s my turn now,” I whisper to her as we hurry through the front door. “I haven’t had my piece of you yet.”

She whimpers a little, and I’m chasing her up the stairs, items of elvin clothing and my uniform flying to the floor.

By the time we make it to the bedroom, we’re both naked; my packmates close on our heels.

I stalk her over to the bed.

“You smell all ready for me, Omega.”

She sighs as her hands stroke down my chest. “I’ve been ready for you every moment of the day. I can’t stop thinking about the three of you. I can’t stop thinking about the other day.”

“So you’re not angry that we just kidnapped you?”

“I thought you were rescuing me.”

“Rescuing. Kidnapping. Same same but different.”

She reaches up onto her tiptoes and whispers in my ear, “You can kidnap me anytime you want.”

And with that invitation, I push her down onto the bed.

She is a sight to behold, all spread out, waiting for me and my packmates come to join us. Slick drips from her cunt, and her nipples are stiff little points.

I wonder how soon we can persuade her to move in. I wonder how long until she falls into heat. I wonder how long we’ll have to wait until we can mate and bond her.

Because I want all of that. I want it all now.

“Did you touch yourself the other night when you stayed over, Omega?” I whisper.

She hesitates, then nods. “I couldn’t help it.”

“I want to see that.” Archie and Samson growl in agreement.

“I thought you were going to fuck me, Alpha,” she says with an adorable pout.

“I am going to fuck you. But first I want to see. Because I imagined you do it, and fuck Astrid, it was hot. Let me see the real thing.”

She trails a finger down her body, tantalisingly slowly, pausing at the apex of her legs.

“Keep going,” Samson commands.

Her eyes blaze, and she dips her finger between her swollen lips, playing with that sensitive nub of hers.

“Open your thighs a little wider, baby, so we can see.”

She bends her knees and spreads her legs so we can see every glistening pink part of her.

I grip my cock in hand and step right up to the bed, gripping her thighs and sliding her right onto my cock.

She moans, the work of her fingers pausing.

“I didn’t say you could stop. Keep playing with yourself while I fuck you, Omega.”

She bites down on that pink lip of hers and does as I say.

“Good girl,” I whisper as I grind into her, slow circles of my hips that soon have her losing her sweet little mind.

I’m already obsessed with her body, and I love the way it arches and bends, sways and jolts for me. Love the way she lifts her hips to sink me deeper into her core. Love how her free hand comes to grip my arse and pull me further still. Her fingernails sink into my flesh, and I growl.

“Fuck me hard,” she pleads.

“I will,” I say with a smirk, “once you’ve come around my cock.”

Her finger moves faster, and soon I feel her walls flutter and then suck and convulse around me. The orgasm rolls through her body, and I grip her hips and pound into her, the bed slamming into the wall with each powerful thrust.

I pound her through her orgasm and into her next, and then I come, knotting her hard and falling into the bed with her.

The others join us, wrapping her in their arms and smothering her in kisses, telling her what a good little mate she is.

My heart pounds in my chest louder than the headboard hitting the wall. I feel like a kid again. A kid with the best present ever on Christmas day, one I will treasure and, yeah, play with for the rest of my days.

I lie on the bed, blissed-out, my knot buried in my mate's cunt, listening to her describe the chaos at the grotto today, and I'm happy. Complete. I love my family, my pack, my daughter, and now I have the chance to expand it, to grow that love exponentially. To add Astrid and, one day, more children.

I just hope Lyra will feel the same way.

There is one way to find out.

"You should come for Christmas," I say.

Her eyes dart with hesitation over our faces. "Oh no, I couldn't come –"

"Yes, you should."

"You're coming."

"We want you here."

She stares at us, a huge smile spreading across her face.

"I'm hardly going to say no." Her smile falters. "But I thought you wanted to take this slow. How will Lyra –"

"Lyra's been asking us non-stop when you're coming over again. She already suggested you come for Christmas."

Our mate's eyes sparkle with wetness and her bottom lip trembles.

What the fuck were we thinking? We've found her now and we need her here with us. The little thing's probably been feeling rejected ever since we let her walk away.

She nods her head.

Samson holds her close, whispering in her ear, "You could come for Christmas Eve. I'd really love to wake up with you in our bed on Christmas day."

"And then you could stay forever," I add.

A *strid*

IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

Amanda watches me from the corner of her eye with amusement as we finish wrapping Christmas presents together.

“Why don't you just call them? You're clearly dying to?”

“I have called them,” I smile to myself, remembering the phone call late last night with Craig that turned dirty very quickly. “And they've called and messaged me.” My smile grows wider as I think of the string of selfies the three alphas have sent me over the last few days, enough to fill an album. The three alphas have been going out of their way to make me feel very wanted.

“Then you're not playing it cool?”

I snort. “I haven't rocked up in my birthday suit on their doorstep. That's about the limit of my restraint.”

Amanda rolls her eyes and jumps off the couch.

“Well, I'm going to change for the pub. Are you sure you're not going to join us, bestie?”

My plans for Christmas Eve usually involve heading to the pub with Amanda and her boyfriend, drinking far too much fizzy wine before passing out in my bed and waking up with a hangover.

“Not this year.” My smile must look frankly manic on my lips because Amanda rests her hands on her hips.

“Why do I have the feeling you are going to earn yourself a spot on Santa’s naughty list?”

“I think I already have,” I sigh.

“Maybe I might join you there.” Amanda winks and hurries off, returning later to spin in front of me in a very short skirt.

“Ought to do the trick,” I tell her.

“Especially when I tell him I’m not wearing any underwear.”

I leave a half hour after her, dressed in an outfit I hope will prove just as alluring.

Lyra answers the door, dressed in a fluffy pink unicorn onesie.

“Sorry,” I say, “I think I got the wrong house. I’m looking for a little girl, not a unicorn.”

“It’s me, silly.”

“Who?”

“Lyra.” I bend down and inspect her face. “So it is. I’d never have guessed.”

“Silly,” she says, grabbing my hand and pulling me through to the kitchen.

“Daddy’s making hot chocolate, and I’m writing Santa a note.” She inspects my outfit as I slip out of my coat and hang it on the back of a chair. “Were you working with Santa today?”

“You bet! There are tonnes of last-minute things to do before he sets off on his sleigh. We have to check his map, check if all the presents have labels,” I tick off each job on my fingers, “make sure we didn’t forget anyone. Can you imagine the trouble that would cause?”

Craig strolls over to the table with a tray of steamy mugs. His gaze flicks up and down my body, landing on my ears. “Nice outfit.”

“Thanks,” I say.

“Christmas wishes do come true,” Craig growls in my ear and squeezes my arse.

When I peer towards the table, I find Lyra eyeing us with interest.

“You don’t have to go back to the North Pole, you know?”

“Right,” I say, a little confused, taking the seat next to her and blowing across my hot chocolate.

“It must be very cold there. You should come live with us instead.”

Craig rests his hand on his shoulder. “Would you like that, pumpkin?”

“Yep,” she says simply.

“Maybe one day soon.”

“You can share my room. We could get bunk beds.”

“Or,” Craig says, sitting on the other side of the table. “She might want to sleep in my bed with Pops and Dada.”

I hold my breath, wondering how that idea will go down.

“Oh yeah, that could work too. You could take turns.” I meet Craig’s eyes, trying to suppress a giggle. Lyra taps my arms with her pencil. “Sharing’s caring.”

“It is.”

“It’s very good to share.”

“I agree.”

“Come on, Lyra,” Craig says, “have you finished your note? We need to put it with your stocking.”

She nods and folds it in half, jumping down from her seat. We follow her into the living room, where Archie and Samson

are hanging stockings in front of the fire. I count them. Five. Which means one is for me.

Lyra places her note on the mantelpiece, where a glass of milk and a carrot are already waiting.

“You forgot Santa’s snack,” I say and then take Lyra back to the kitchen to search for a suitable mince pie.

I have a warm fuzzy feeling in my heart as I watch her arrange the mince pie next to the carrot, then decide it should be next to the milk.

“Will Santa really come down the chimney?” she asks me.

“Of course.”

“He won’t get stuck?”

“If he does, then your daddies will be here to pull him out.”

She giggles, then yawns. “And you’ll be here in the morning?”

“I will.”

“I’ll wake you up really early.”

“Thanks,” I say, peering over at Samson, who shrugs.

“That’s what you signed up for with Lyra. Early morning wake-up snuggles.”

“Sounds great,” I say, meaning every word.

The pub on Christmas Eve has been fun, but I won’t miss it this year. And as for Christmas dinner with my miserable dad or on my own – definitely not missing that.

Archie scoops Lyra into his arms, and she hangs onto his neck, resting her tired head on his shoulder. I stroke her soft hair.

“Goodnight, darling,” I say, kissing the crown of her head before she’s carried upstairs by her dad.

I make myself comfortable on the sofa, happy to sit and gaze at the twinkling lights of the Christmas tree.

“You want to talk me through this outfit choice, Omega?” Samson asks, strolling into the living room with the others a half hour later.

“Craig made a special request.” I straighten my red and green skirt.

“It’s the ears,” Craig rests his hand on his packmate’s shoulder. “It does something for me, mate.”

“Man,” Samson says with some disgust on his face. “That is some weird kinky shit.”

Craig shrugs, flopping down on the sofa beside me, hooking his arm around my neck and pulling me close. He drags his tongue around the shell of my pointy ear.

“I like watching you pleasure our omega,” Archie says, taking a long gulp from Santa’s glass of milk, “But that is a hard pass.”

I shimmy out of Craig’s hold and stand in the centre of the room. “Are you sure about that, Alphas?”

They stare at me with confusion.

“I thought you might like your Christmas present early,” I purr.

“Is that allowed?” Archie asks with a smirk.

“Elves are known for their naughtiness,” Craig says.

“Does that mean we get to spank you?” Samson asks with eagerness.

I hold my hands up for them to be quiet. They’re like a pack of eager puppy dogs, me their new squeaky plaything.

I take the hem of my skirt in my hands and slowly creep it up my stripy-covered thigh.

The alphas’ eyes are locked on the movement of my hands. When I slip over the top of my stocking, revealing creamy bare flesh and garter straps, the room fills with a mixture of groans, grunts and growls.

“Stockings,” Samson edges forward. “Real stockings.”

“Uh-huh,” I lift the skirt even higher to the edge of my arse. I pause and look at them all.

“Don’t stop, Omega,” Craig orders. “Keep going.”

I turn my back on then, leaning forward a little and lifting my skirt right over my arse, this time revealing a very small pair of silky scarlet knickers.

“You are a naughty little thing. You think those knickers are respectable for a little elf like you.”

“There’s more,” I say, snatching the floppy hat off my head and tossing it towards Craig.

“I want the skirt,” Archie says, and I slither it down my hips, stepping out of the skirt and swinging it around my head before throwing it at Archie.

Samson chuckles. “Astrid, you are possibly the world’s worst stripper, but fuck am I hard.”

“Should I stop?”

“No!” they all say together.

I spin around to face them, hands on the hem of my top. Slowly I drift the hem up my body, giving them a flash of my silky red bra with its tufts of fur around the tops of the cups.

“Fuck, yes,” Craig says, “what I always knew every little elf was hiding under her outfit.”

I slip the top over my head, where it gets stuck, and I have to tug it off with a huff. Not very sexy, but my alphas don’t seem to care. I’m in silky underwear and stockings, after all.

“I like this present,” Archie smiles wickedly, “I’d like to unwrap it even more.”

“How about ...?” My gaze drifts to the ceiling as my alphas stalk towards me.

“She went out like a light, and we’ve told her not to go creeping about tonight because if she bumps into Santa, he’ll be mad.”

“That’s very cruel.”

“What’s crueller is how blue my balls have been thinking about you these last few days, Omega,” Samson says, his hands landing on me first. In the next minute, I’m surrounded by all three, their hands stroking my skin, squeezing my backside, groping my tits, and wriggling me out of my underwear.

My eyes float to the top of the tree, and I have a feeling this is going to be the best Christmas ever. Better than when I opened that pink bike on Christmas day. Better than when I saw a shooting star I was convinced was Santa’s sleigh. Better than all of the Christmases that have come before.

L *yra*

I WAKE UP.

Is it Christmas yet?

I creek open an eye.

Daddy said if I spotted Santa, all his magic would go wrong. I have to stay in my bed with my eyes closed until Christmas.

Unless there's an emergency like I lose my bunny or I have a nightmare about spiders again.

My bedroom is all grey, and I peek at my clock.

5.47.

I think that is morning.

I fling back the cover and jump out of bed.

I run down the corridor and into my daddies' giant bedroom.

There are four people sleeping in the bed.

Daddy, Dada, Pop and TwinkleToes. Her pretty black hair is spread across the pillow like a princess.

She looks like a princess and smells like one too.

But she's not; she's an elf. And an om ... om ... something my daddies seem really pleased about.

I dive onto the bed, flinging myself on top of my daddies.

"Wake up!" I shout, "Wake up. It's Christmas Day!"

Pops groans and pulls me under the covers with him, tucking me up in his big arms.

"It's still nighttime, Lyra. Go back to sleep."

I wriggle free, racing to the end of the bed, where I jump up and down on the mattress. "It's Christmas! It's Christmas!" I yell.

Dada pulls a pillow over his head, and Daddy places his finger on his lips and tells me to shush.

TwinkleToes, though, she sits up in bed and smiles at me.

Her hair is all messy around her head, and she has two pink spots on her cheeks like the ones painted there the day we met. She's also wearing Pop's t-shirt.

"Happy Christmas," she says.

"I want my stocking," I cry, bouncing higher and higher.

TwinkleToes crawls down to the end of the bed. "Let's go down to find it then."

"No, come back to bed. Go back to sleep," Daddy mutters,

But we sneak out of the room and down the stairs, giggling as we go.

I squeal when TwinkleToes pushes open the door.

The stockings are stuffed full. Mine has the most presents, some tumbling onto the floor.

I run to the fireplace and stand up on my toes. The milk is all gone. There are only crumbs left in the mince pie case, and Rudolph has eaten half the carrot.

I clap my hands and bounce on my toes.

"He came!"

“Of course,” TwinkleToes says, unhooking the stockings and tucking them under her arms.

“Do you think he read my note?”

“I’m sure he did.”

I chew on my lip and stare down at my feet. I’m wearing my Barbie socks.

“What’s wrong?” TwinkleToes asks, crouching down and peering into my face. She smells extra nice today like all my daddies rolled into one with something yummy added too.

“I asked him for another present, and maybe he got mad.”

“No, he wouldn’t. Why would you think that?”

“Because it wasn’t a present you could make in your elf workshop.”

“Right,” she says, nodding. “Do you want to tell me what it was?”

I nod. “I said I wanted an extra special present for me and my daddies.”

“Like what?”

“You.”

“Me?” she says, laughing.

“But maybe he wants to take you back to Lapland.”

She leans closer, pulling me in for a hug. I stroke her hair as she talks.

“I’ll let you in on a secret, Lyra. I’m a part-time elf. I only help Santa out at Christmas time. The rest of the time, I live here in Studworth.”

“You do?” I say, my tummy spinning.

“Yes. And I’ll tell you another secret.” She rests her forehead against mine. “I like you and your daddies an awful lot.”

“So will you come live with us, and get married and make me a baby sister ... perhaps a baby brother too?”

“Do you think you’d like that?”

“Duh!” I say, pulling a face.

She smiles, kissing my cheek. “Me too,” she says. “I’d like that too. Happy Christmas, Lyra.”

EPILOGUE

A *strid*

FIVE CHRISTMASES later

“KEEP STILL and close your eyes, and they might leave us alone,” Samson whispers into my ear.

I jab him in the ribs. “Wishful thinking, Pops. Nothing will deter them this morning.”

“Morning? Is it?” Archie groans. He rolls away from me and reaches for his phone. “Jesus Christ. It’s barely five am.”

“It’s Christmas. They’re excited,” I whisper.

“And if we pretend to be asleep,” Samson says, dragging me closer, flush against his warm body, “they might go back to sleep.”

“I can’t sleep,” I say, shuffling up the bed and arranging the pillows against the headboard. “This one’s excited about Christmas, too, and he’s been keeping me awake with his kicking.” I stroke my hand over my bulging stomach, and Craig leans in to kiss my tummy button. It popped a few weeks ago, and I look fit to burst.

“He’s going to be a football player,” Craig says. “Aren’t you, son?”

“Soon, we’ll have an entire squad,” Samson mutters.

“No, we won’t,” I say. “I think we’re going to have our hands full with four.”

“But I love knocking you up, sweetheart.” Samson runs his hands between my thighs. A hand I bat away as three pairs of footsteps clamber across the hallway and pause outside our bedroom door. Eager whispers follow next, and I suppress a giggle in the darkness of our room.

The door creaks open.

“Mummy? Kisscuss?” It’s Betty, our youngest daughter. She toddles through the crack in the door and stops by our bed, lifting her chubby little arms into the air. “Up?”

“It’s nighttime,” Samson tells her, sweeping her up into the bed anyway. She has a mop of dark curls just like his. “Are you going to go to sleep?”

Betty shakes her head, and soon her brother Ted is standing by the bed.

“You too?” Craig says.

“I told them it was too early,” Lyra says from the doorway, “but they wouldn’t listen.”

“It doesn’t matter, sweetheart,” I say, switching on the bedside lamp and ignoring Samson and Archie’s groans. “Even beanie’s too excited to sleep.” I beckon Lyra over, and she climbs up onto the bed along with her little brother. “Look!” I point to the rippling surface of my belly. “He’s wriggling.”

“Baby,” Betty declares, sucking on her thumb.

“Yes, mummy has a baby in her tummy, doesn’t she?” Samson says, kissing her temple.

“Wanna feel?” I ask Lyra.

She dazzles me with one of her wide grins, and I take her hand, laying her palm over the peak of my stomach.

She giggles as the baby kicks against her hand. “He’s kicking me.”

“I think he’s going to be another handful,” I mutter.

“That’s the way we like them,” Archie says with Ted balanced in his lap.

“Can we open presents?” my little boy asks, sinking back against his Daddy’s chest with a yawn.

“It’s too early,” Samson moans.

“You’re being a grinch, Pops,” Lyra tells him sternly.

“He is. And as punishment, he is the one who has to go downstairs and collect the stockings.”

“I want to come,” Ted says.

“OK, little man, you go help Pops.”

Pops throws me a dirty look that tells me he’d quite like to spank my arse for kicking him out of bed this early. If he’s lucky, maybe that’ll be his Christmas treat.

Lyra yawns as we wait for them to return and Betty starts to sing a song she learned at nursery.

Her little eyes pop wide when Samson and Ted walk in, their arms full of heavy stockings.

“Pwesents?” she asks.

“Yes, darling,” I tell her. “Father Christmas left them for you last night.”

She holds out her hands and Samson drops her stocking in her lap, before handing out the others.

Craig gives me a knowing look as I dip my hand inside mine. “Maybe Mummy might want to open her presents later.”

I lift my eyebrow at him wondering what naughty gifts I’m going to find inside this year.

“Santa can get a little pervy at Christmas time,” he whispers in my ear as he pulls out a present from his own stocking.

He unwraps the sparkly paper as Samson and Archie do the same from their similarly-shaped gifts.

“Ears?” Archie says, holding a pair of pointed ears up to show the rest of the family.

“Elf ears,” I correct. “From TwinkleToes.”

I wink at my older daughter. I can’t believe how big she’s gotten these last few years. She giggles and scrabbles towards her Daddy, pinning the ears to the sides of his head.

I lie back against the pillows, stroking my hand across my belly and watching as my family destroys all the carefully wrapped gifts TwinkleToes spent hours wrapping last night.

I am one happy little elf.

The End

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ABOUT HANNAH HAZE

A recovering cynic, Hannah grew up swearing she would never marry. Then in 2001, she met her husband and has been a card-carrying romantic ever since. Despite being an avid writer and reader, Hannah decided to do the sensible thing and study science at university, putting authoring ideas to one side. This all changed when she discovered the joys of a good romance book and came to the realisation that love stories are always the best ones.

She now uses her knowledge of chemical bonds and reactions to ensure her books are full of sparks. In fact the electricity between her characters is sure to set your pulse racing and your heart fluttering.

Hannah loves reading to her three children, including doing all the silly voices, and going for long walks in the countryside (the muddier the better). Her head is always full of new story ideas and you are most likely to find her avoiding the demands of her very naughty cat as she attempts to write them all down.

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