

A Beginner's Guide to
Christmas Miracles



S h a n n o n M a e
An M/M Paranormal Romance

A Beginner's Guide to Christmas Miracles

SHANNON MAE

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This book contains sexually explicit material which is suitable only for mature readers.

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to my daughter, who was the inspiration for this book. She brought the Christmas spirit (she was listening to Christmas carols before Halloween!) and she helped me when I was stuck (multiple times). I couldn't ask for a better daughter!

Thank you to Scott for your support and encouragement and for all you do. I appreciate you so much. I am blessed to have you in my life.

Thank you to Jennifer Cody, who said, no, it isn't at all crazy to decide to write a Christmas book in November. And, as always, thank you for the many suggestions, ideas, and the endless encouragement.

Thank you to Tammy—I don't know how you put up with me! I appreciate everything you do and wouldn't be doing this without you. You are amazing!

Thank you to Nicole, my amazing beta reader. You catch all my silly mistakes, and your advice is always invaluable.

As always, thank you to my readers. I wouldn't be continuing to write without you! A special thanks to everyone in my facebook group as well. You guys encouraged this story and couldn't wait to read more. You keep me going!

I love you all!

Content Warning

This book is intended for mature audiences. That means there are some very steamy times between men. This is also a holiday book, so expect lots of Christmas references (and the occasional holiday pun).

Blurb

Nachielus (not Nicholas) may have gotten into a bit of trouble over unsanctioned miracles, ending up on the upstairs' naughty list. Sure, maybe he'd gotten a little carried away with the whole Christmas thing, but he hadn't meant to become a part of folklore, and surely that wasn't a reason to bury him in centuries of paperwork. Banned from topside and missing his favorite holiday, he gets a push from a certain demon to pop up and have a look around. When he meets Beckett, a Christmas-loving elf enthusiast who mistakes him for the Santa hired for a fundraiser, how can he say no? Next thing he knows, Nach is in over his head again, because this is one human he can't resist.

Beck's Christmas is merry and bright, especially after he encounters Nach, the hottie in questionable Santa attire. Nach's kindness, generosity, and charm have Beck falling faster than a snowflake. With no place to stay, obviously Beck needs to bring Nach home with him. Beck never believed in love at first sight before, but there's just something about Nach that calls to him, and it isn't long before he's trying to figure out to keep this sexy Santa all to himself.

Tags: Beck is living his own Christmas rom-com, complete with a meet cute and lots of Christmas kisses; Nach never means to cause trouble—it just seems to find him (and the reindeer thing was definitely not his fault); Nach has a very loose definition of what constitutes a miracle; corporate Scrooges try to suck the fun out of Christmas (but don't worry, they don't succeed); Nach is an angel of joy of fulfillment, so expect plenty of joy... and fulfillment (wink, wink).

A Beginner's Guide to Christmas Miracles is a 30k novella bursting with laughs, holiday spirit, and a Happily Ever After that even the Grinch would approve of. Get ready for festive chaos, Christmas kisses, and a love story weirder than Grandma's fruitcake.

CHAPTER 1

Nachielus



NACHIELUS SAT AT A SCARRED, dark wooden bar in Limbo, a glass of whiskey sitting in front of him. It wasn't really his drink of choice, and he probably shouldn't even be visiting Limbo, which was more of a stop on the way to heaven or reincarnation, not a place of punishment. Limbo tended to be filled with mortal souls and the occasional demonic visitors (it was quite the party place, and Nach usually loved secretly visiting and soaking up the joy), but most angels tended to stick to their roles upstairs.

But Nach needed a break from the other angels and his angelic duties.

He knew it probably wasn't a good idea, because taking breaks from his "angelic duties" never seemed to end well for him. Really, though, the whole incident wasn't totally his fault, and it sort of did fall under his duties since he was an angel of joy and fulfillment. What was more joyful than gifts, after all? But it seemed like the upstairs crew was never going to forget the incident, and he just couldn't deal with the disdainful looks or the whispered comments, which always seemed to pick up this time of year.

Angels did not go rogue. And if they did, they apparently *never* lived it down.

He was so tired of the gossip and the menial tasks he was constantly given. He hadn't been able to fulfill his job of really giving joy for *ages*. It was amazing how much paperwork you could get buried in when management was mad at you.

He took the glass in hand and thought about downing the shot, but he felt a presence sit down next to him. He looked over to see a tall, burgundy demon sitting there.

Just great.

“This is partly your fault, you know,” Nach grumped, twirling the glass and then pushing it back. He couldn't stomach the thought of whiskey. He had no idea why he'd even asked for it.

Minos, Judge of the Damned and grumpy demon, just grunted. So typical.

“If you and Arioch hadn't been here when I stopped by Limbo to spread some joy to the mortal souls here...” Nach turned and faced the demon. “Well, I wouldn't be on the outs with the leadership team.”

“Don't blame me,” Minos scowled. “That was all Arioch. And you went along with it. Not my fault you didn't think twice before listening to a demon of chaos.”

“It sounded like such a good idea!” Nach wailed. Because at the time it *had* sounded like a good idea. Winter solstice was such a bummer—the shortest day of the year, so little sunlight, cold weather... So of course when Arioch had suggested bringing some joy to little children, Nach had thought it sounded like a fantastic idea. Little kids! Of course he wanted to see little kids joyful! Why not decorate their houses a bit and give them a couple small presents?

“Anyway, it was, what, a century ago at least? They can't still be mad about it,” Minos reasoned.

Nach flushed and turned away. “Well, I might have decided to make it an annual tradition. It was so much fun, and it really did bring so much joy, and the families were so excited to get decorations and food and presents. And I might have expanded the number of people I visited each year, but really, everyone deserves joy, so can you blame me? It was *technically* within the boundaries of my job description.”

Minos just grunted again.

“I know, I know, such large scale miracles need to be sanctioned, but I really didn't think of it like a large scale miracle, you know. It was just a bunch of tiny miracles. That's all,” Nach defended.

Nach looked back at Minos, who just raised his eyebrows. Nach felt like the demon was judging him.

“The maroon cloak was yours, so you're at least to blame for that. Never mind that Arioch suggested I borrow it in case I got cold. And I didn't even want credit! It's not my fault that a few people spotted me over the years, and when they asked who I was, it would be rude to ignore them. Not that they got my name right anyway,” Nach grumbled. “And really, you know how

much of a sweet tooth I have. You try turning down warm cookies and fresh milk and all sorts of sweets that people leave out for you.”

“It was a really warm cloak,” Minos grumbled, then he nodded toward the whiskey, raising an eyebrow again.

“Yeah, yeah, totally not my drink of choice. I’m trying to stay off the sweets though. It never ends well when I start in on them. And I have been *banned* from visiting mortals for the next two months. Can you believe it? Two months! I’ll miss all the good stuff! But I was called in to management and promised ‘dire consequences’ if I make an appearance topside.” Nach scowled. He couldn’t believe they’d actually placed a *ban* on him. It was so absurd. He hadn’t done the whole gift giving thing in years, after all. It wasn’t his fault the mortals had taken over something he had inadvertently started.

“I just wanted to bring some joy to people. I certainly never meant to start a whole... thing,” Nach finished lamely, sighing.

“Screw management,” Minos growled. “You did good.”

“Well, upstairs certainly doesn’t see it that way. It wasn’t *approved*, you know,” Nach grumbled. He just felt so... sad. He loved going topside this time of year. There was always such joy, and that was his *thing*. Maybe he should have felt more regret over the whole Christmas thing, but he *had* brought joy to so many people.

His musings were interrupted by a gasp, and the cutest little mortal soul bounded over to them. To Nach’s utter and complete shock, the man climbed into Minos’s lap, talking all the while.

“I leave you alone for two minutes, and you end up sitting next to the cutest daddy type, and I have to tell you he looks *exactly* like—”

“Don’t say it!” Nach interrupted.

The human stared at him, snuggling up to the grumpy demon and actually patting his leg. Which was beyond weird. Mortals feared Minos, Judge of the Damned. He was grumpy and scary and looked very demonic, even if he was a nice guy underneath it all. Mortals did not snuggle up to him, though.

The man’s quiet lasted about two seconds. “You totally sound just like I imagined. That deep and rumbly voice! I bet you have a fantastic laugh! And the white hair and dad bod totally do it for you!” The man then winked at him, patted Minos again, and then turned and *kissed* the demon.

Nach’s mouth might have fallen open.

“I’m Adam. We’re, like, soulmates or whatever. And you are...” he

trailed off, staring expectantly at Nach.

“Nachielus,” Nach admitted.

“Nicholas!” Adam blurted, leaning forward and grinning ear to ear.

Nach just sighed. “Nah-kee-el-us,” he pronounced slowly.

“Well,” Adam said, leaning back. “I can certainly see how people thought it sounded like Nicholas. Your totally sexy, gruff daddy voice probably didn’t help. I never really had a thing for Santa, but you could totally make me change my mind on that.”

Adam actually fanned himself then, at which point Minos growled, at which point Adam leaned over and started kissing the demon. Quite thoroughly.

Nach turned away, embarrassed. (Also maybe a wee bit turned on, because really, it was like watching live porn seeing how the two of them were devouring each other. And yes, Nach knew what porn was. He’d spent enough time topside, although he hadn’t actually *really* watched it. Of course.)

When the soft little moans and kissing sounds died down, Adam piped in again. “Santa, you look a little bummed out. Isn’t this, like, your time of year?”

Nach sighed again, reaching out toward the whiskey. “I’ve been banned from going topside,” he admitted. “The whole... Saint Nick thing wasn’t approved or sanctioned, and I got into a bit of trouble over it. Not that I ever claimed to be a saint or even an angel,” he grumbled.

“Management threatened him over it,” Minos scowled.

Adam gasped. “Aw hell no!” he cried out. “The world needs Santa! You’re like... magical and shit. And that’s totally an angelic thing. You go right ahead and go topside and do what you do, Santa, and fuck the management team. We’ll take care of them. We’re restructuring, you know. We got approval from the head honchos—god and the devil both gave us permission to make some changes in how things are run. We got your back.”

Nach looked at Minos, who just nodded his head.

The last time Nach had listened to a demon’s advice, it hadn’t ended well for him. But if he had to go back upstairs and do more paperwork, or listen to one more mocking whisper when they *knew* he could hear them, or sit through one more meeting that went over how to mitigate the “unfortunate solstice incident *a certain angel* had created,” he was going to lose his mind.

CHAPTER 2

Beckett



BECK PULLED a tray of cookies out of the oven, loudly singing along with the Christmas carols blasting. He had on his fuzzy snowman socks, his Santa pajama pants, and a bright red t-shirt that said “Believe” with a Santa hat over the script B.

He was so excited that it was *finally* time for Christmas. Not that he hadn’t been listening to Christmas carols and pulling out his Christmas gear since before Halloween. Some grumpy Scrooges, however, thought that was too early (as if it was ever too early for Christmas).

He placed the tray on the center kitchen island, inhaling deeply at the smell of the sugary, vanilla sweetness wafting from the cookies. He danced his way around the kitchen island to grab the bowl of icing he had pre-made on the kitchen table.

“For fuck’s sake, shut that shit off. It is way to fucking early for that,” he heard his roommate grumble.

He looked over to see Alan wearing plain black pajama pants and a gray t-shirt. Boring. He looked up at the clock then, squinting.

“It’s almost nine in the morning, Alan. You’re always up by now,” Beck answered.

“Echo, shut off,” Alan said, but the carols just kept playing. “ECHO, SHUT OFF,” he said even louder.

Beck couldn’t help it; he giggled. Alan shot him a dirty look.

“Santa, volume three,” Beck said, and the music volume lowered to a manageable level.

“For fuck’s sake, tell me you didn’t rename the devices,” Alan grumbled.

“Yup!” Beck replied, carrying the icing over to the cookies. “And it is *officially* Christmas, so I no longer need to listen to my carols on my earbuds.”

“You think it’s officially Christmas in July, too. And the outdoor decorations have been up for weeks. It’s a little too much Christmas,” Alan grumbled, walking over toward the cookies.

Beck gasped, hand to his heart. “There is *never* too much Christmas,” he defended. “Christmas in July is totally a thing! And it was only smart to hang the lights when we had warm weather! Most of the decorations aren’t even out yet!”

Alan reached his hand out to grab a cookie, and Beck slapped it away, adding, “Besides, you told me I had to wait until after Thanksgiving to go full Christmas mode. It *is* after Thanksgiving.”

“Jesus Beck—you’re baking Christmas cookies the day after Thanksgiving, and it’s *early*,” Alan whined, reaching out again for a cookie.

“They’re hot,” Beck warned, and he took more than a little satisfaction when Alan bounced the cookie from hand to hand, blowing on it. “That’s what you get for mocking my Christmas music. You certainly don’t complain about eating the Christmas baking,” Beck grumbled.

Alan may have been acting like a grump, and he would probably bitch for the next month about the Christmas carols and the holiday movies and decorations, but he would also be out there helping Beck build fake deer for the yard and get the tree set up, so Beck knew he didn’t mind too much.

He and Alan had been college roommates, and they were total opposites in more than just their Christmas spirit (or lack thereof in Alan’s case). Alan was tall, and Beck was short. Alan was tan with short, straight, dark hair, and Beck was pale with light brown, curly hair that was fashionably mid-length. (Ok, fine, it was boy band length, and the curls only added to the boy band hair effect.) Alan worked out regularly, and Beck... well, did Christmas shopping at the outlets count as a workout? Beck thought maybe it did.

Beck still remembered his first day in the college dorm, meeting this ultra masculine guy who was going to be his roommate. Beck had always been a bit femme, and he was definitely *not* straight. He had never, in his entire life, been attracted to a girl. He admired them, but that was more about the nail polish they wore or the cute outfits. He was lucky to have parents who supported him fully, and at the start of college, he was nervous as hell about a roommate who might not.

He'd blurted out that he was gay within five seconds of meeting Alan, at which point Alan had looked at him and just said ok, he was straight. Was that going to be a problem for Beck? He wouldn't, like, bring girls back to the room or anything if it made Beck uncomfortable.

It was sort of amazing, and it was the moment that Beck knew they were going to be friends. No one had ever asked him if it was a problem that they didn't have the same sexual preference as *him*. He had known right then that Alan was an awesome guy.

When they both turned out to be computer majors, it had seemed pretty perfect, and they'd roomed together all through college. Afterwards, they'd both scored tech jobs nearby, and with the rental market what it was and neither of them in a long term relationship, they'd decided to buy together and build some equity. Living together had worked out perfectly when things got crazy with Covid, and now they both worked from home (luckily the house had two bedrooms *and* two separate areas they could use for office space).

Although Beck was always looking for a boyfriend, he did love living with Alan. They'd both had a few relationships, and neither of them ever had any problems when the other person was dating. They were sort of like brothers at this point, and since Beck had never had a sibling growing up, it was really great to have someone like that now, only without all the fighting and sibling rivalry.

Alan had grabbed a plate and piled a few cookies on it, and he was sitting at the big wooden farmhouse table in the kitchen, munching away and scrolling on his phone. Beck swore his foot was even tapping to "Jingle Bell Rock." He smirked to himself. Alan pretended to be a Scrooge, but he got into the Christmas spirit too.

"Hey, it looks like the community center is looking for volunteers to be Santa and his elves for the holiday season. We gonna volunteer again?" Alan asked. "After all, you do look like an elf," he teased.

"I totally own the elf look. And absolutely—send me the info," Beck replied, starting to add some icing to the remaining cookies. The local community center was for everyone, but the director was lgbtq+ friendly and the place had rainbow flags in the front entrance, so it attracted a lot of lgbtq+ kids looking for a safe space. Beck loved working with the kids and teens there, and he felt like he made a difference and showed the kids it was ok to be male and femme. Alan helped out there too pretty often, which was

another cool thing about his roomie.

“It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas...” Beck sang along, smiling as he iced the cookies and thought about getting more Christmas themed sprinkles.

God, he just loved Christmas. Everything about it was so damn magical, and he was gonna enjoy it to the fullest for as long as he could.

CHAPTER 3

Nachisclus



NACH BREATHED in the chill air as he walked, smelling pine. He could almost scent snow on the air, and he thought of using just a little energy to bring about some flurries. Snow was just so pretty, and a light dusting brought people joy. He wouldn't make enough for people to have to clean off cars or to impede traffic—just enough to make everything sparkle.

No. Nope. Nothing to call attention to himself; he was even wearing human jeans and a plain, green sweater (he needed a *little* Christmas color, and it wasn't red or maroon, at least). If he started using his angelic powers topside, someone was bound to notice. He had no doubt that some lackey in management was keeping an eye on him.

He wasn't even supposed to be here, and he had *tried* to resist, despite Minos and his human encouraging him to go. But after another insufferably long meeting upstairs that accomplished nothing, Nach had gotten a pile of paperwork that would take at least three months to complete. He'd worked diligently, staring at the plain white walls, for days, but he'd finally needed a break and had gone down to visit Limbo again for a change of scenery.

Then the bartender had popped a brownie in front of him, the fudgy kind, and really, how was he supposed to resist that? Next came the cookies, and then some milk, and then Nach had been a little high on sugar, and, well... here he was, visiting topside.

Oops.

Damn demon bartenders.

Although Nach couldn't regret it, because this town was simply *lovely*. The street had old fashioned lamp posts strung with pine garland, and there

were lights sparkling everywhere in the late afternoon twilight, and stores were lit up and playing carols. It was so very lively and joyful. Nach paused on the sidewalk, breathed in again and soaking in the holiday spirit. It really *was* the most wonderful time of the year.

Then suddenly a short, pretty human dressed all in green was striding toward him, staring rather pointedly at him. The man had pointy shoes with bells on and a green hat with fur. He looked... well, he looked like the topside idea of an elf. Nach stared a little bemusedly.

“Well, we were beginning to worry! You’re almost late! Everything is set up, and people are already arriving! We thought you weren’t coming!” the man exclaimed, grabbing Nach’s arm and pulling him along from the direction he had come.

Nach noticed that the man had the prettiest green eyes—they were dark green, like evergreen trees. His nails were painted a matching dark green, and Nach could see brown curls peeking out from beneath the hat he wore.

The man must have noticed Nach’s hesitance, and also the fact that he was staring, but Nach couldn’t help it. The human really was so very pretty. His looks were lovely, but beyond that, the man simply radiated the holiday spirit. It was like he was glowing with it.

Suddenly the man was pressing a hand to Nach’s chest and leaning toward him flirtatiously. “You know, you really are the sexiest volunteer we’ve had yet,” the man purred. “I could certainly use a ride on your sleigh. You gonna give me what I want for Christmas, Santa?”

Then the guy fluttered his eyelashes, pressing even closer to Nach.

“Ah, umm,” Nach stuttered, blushing. “I, ah, don’t even know your name?” Nach managed to get out. He was trying very hard not to lean in and kiss the pretty human. Nach had experienced carnal pleasures (angel of joy and fulfillment, after all), but it had been quite a few decades.

Plus, they were in the middle of the street. But the human was just so enchanting.

The man laughed merrily then, backing up and patting Nach’s chest with a warm smile. “I’m Beckett, Beck for short, and you’ll do,” he said, starting to walk again and pulling Nach along with him.

Nach was powerless to resist, so he let himself be dragged along, despite his confusion in the sudden change in the human’s demeanor.

“You know, the last time we had a guest at the center one of the kids flirted with them, and they ended up being really nasty about it. I mean,

they're *teenagers*—some of them would flirt with a lamppost, for goodness sake. Anyway, when I noticed you staring at my nail polish, I figured it was better to check and see if you were *lgbtq+* friendly before you got a chance to be offended by some harmless teen. Plus, I gotta say, you totally have the sexy Santa vibe, so it wouldn't surprise me if you get teens on both sides of the aisle flirting with you, never mind the moms and dads of the little ones. But don't you worry, I'll protect your virtue." Beck turned around and winked at that, pulling Nach to a stop in front of a building that positively radiated the holiday spirit.

Huge candy canes lined the entrance, and someone had hung fresh pine garland everywhere. White twinkling lights brightened the entire facade, and holiday art decorated the large glass window fronts—he saw images from Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, and Yule.

Nach let out a breath. "It's lovely," he murmured. He sensed such joy inside. This was a place of such goodness, and Nach couldn't wait to get inside.

"Yes, we really did a good job this year," Beck replied, and Nach looked over to see the human admiring the building as well.

"You did this?" Nach wondered, amazed all over again by the joy and love this human radiated. He really *was* an elf, spreading Christmas spirit everywhere. "It's simply amazing."

"I certainly didn't do it alone. We all worked on it together. The kids and adult volunteers all had such fun decorating. Everyone added a little something that was meaningful to them," Beck replied.

Nach stared at him, and he was sure there was adoration in his gaze, because when Beck looked over, he blushed brightly before he grabbed Nach and pulled him through the doors.

It was chaos inside. Three or four more adults were dressed as elves, and they, along with a dozen other adults, bustled around as they were making final touches on what looked like a winter wonderland. A whole Christmas scene, complete with a huge bench coated in red velvet and a night sky background, ran along the far wall. Decorations, fake snow, tinsel, garland, and twinkling lights covered the entire room.

It was beautiful.

A photographer was setting up a camera, and someone was using rope to create a makeshift line organizer.

"So I'm sure you know the drill," Beck commented, pulling Nach along

past the chaos and toward a hallway that looked like it was filled with offices. “Kids and sometimes whole families will take pictures with you, and we’ll try to keep things moving. I just want to thank you again for volunteering to help—I’m sure you could’ve made a ton of cash today at a mall, especially since you look so authentic,” Beck finished, stopping at one of the doors at the end of the hall.

Ah, now Nach was getting the idea. It appeared that whoever was supposed to play Santa for this group hadn’t shown up. Well, he couldn’t let all these people down, could he? And it certainly wouldn’t do any harm to bring people a bit of joy. No miracles were even necessary. Nach reassured himself that surely this fell under his job description—he would just be spreading a bit of joy, that was all.

“It’s my pleasure. Christmas is my favorite time of year,” Nach stated.

Beck opened the door, which held a desk and chair, but also a rack with some hanging Santa suits. “We’ve had quite a few donations over the years, so I’m sure one will fit.” Beck started out the door, but before he shut it, he turned around and said, “And I’m sorry if this makes you uncomfortable, but you really do have one of the sexiest voices I’ve ever heard.” Then the beautiful elf winked and was gone, the door shut firmly behind him.

If he had stayed a moment longer, Nach would’ve been happy to tell him that it didn’t make him uncomfortable in the least, and that Beck was probably the cutest elf he’d ever met. Nach found himself uncomfortably turned on by the entire exchange. He had no problem with a bit of carnal fun, but he was here for a job, after all.

Nach pushed thoughts of the sexy elf out of his head and wandered over to the rack, but none of the suits looked really inspiring. They weren’t quite the right color, or the fur was faded, or the material looked cheap.

Nach twitched his nose (a habit he’d had for years when he used his angelic powers, and yes, he knew it had somehow made it into the folklore), and he was miraculously dressed in a burgundy suit. Well, maybe not *miraculously*, because he wasn’t going to do any miracles. Really, he was just dressing himself. That couldn’t count as a miracle, could it?

The suit was a cross between the current Santa suit that had become fashionable and the beautiful cloak he’d worn so very long ago when this all had started.

He thought it quite lovely.

He was admiring it in the mirror when he heard a gasp behind him.

“Holy shit! That outfit is amazing! And the color! It’s going to pop in the pictures, and so much better than just bright red. Where did you find that? I didn’t know the center had something like that! My god, the families are gonna go positively nuts over you!” Beck gushed, rushing over. He reached out and was caressing the fur along Nach’s chest, and Nach felt his face get warm. He might’ve leaned into the caress just a bit, as well.

Beck looked up, and Nach looked into those evergreen eyes again, getting lost in their depths. This human really did embody the Christmas spirit—Nach could see family and love and joy and carefree laughter. He leaned in just a bit further, and he probably would have kissed Beck if someone hadn’t chosen that moment to rush into the room.

“They’re lining up! Let’s go, Beck!” some tall guy cried.

Beck turned and shot him a dirty look. “Worst timing *ever*, Alan,” Beck grumped, but he grabbed Nach’s hand and pulled him toward the door.

“Hey! I’m Alan. You are?” the man asked as he ushered them both out and toward the winter scene.

“Nach,” he replied, and he wasn’t surprised when Alan snorted.

“Of course you’re Nick,” he laughed, winking.

Nach just sighed, and he noticed Beck give him a look. The cute elf leaned closer and whispered, “Knock?”

Nach beamed at him, nodding. “N-A-C-H,” he whispered back. Of course his cute elf had heard his name correctly.

“Well, Nach, let’s get this party started!” Beck said, and then he was gently pushing Nach onto the velvet bench, Alan was rushing off to control the line, and Beck went to lead the first family—a mom with two little children—up to see him.

Nach smiled broadly, and when the little girl and boy both clambered onto his lap despite the mother’s insistence that they *please* not climb on Santa, all he could do was laugh in delight. He couldn’t have chosen a better way to spend his time topside if he’s tried. It was almost like fate had intervened on his behalf to give him a perfect evening. As an angel, who was he to deny divine intervention?

CHAPTER 4

Beckett



WHEN NACH LAUGHED, it was like time stood still. Like, holy shit, the guy *was* Santa. It wasn't that fake ho-ho-ho shit that mall Santas did. No, this guy's laughter was booming and joyous and positively fucking magical. Not to mention crazy sexy.

Beck had to tone down his thirst, though, because this elf costume wouldn't hide much, and it was so totally *not* appropriate to be sporting a noticeable bulge at a family event.

Deep breaths, Beck, he said to himself. Only he was standing close enough to smell the guy, and Nach smelled *amazing*. It was like snow fall, evergreen trees, and a wood fire. He didn't know what kind of cologne the guy used, but he literally smelled like Christmas.

Beck thought he might be a little bit in love.

Nach further sealed the deal, because he was absolutely adorable with the kids. Beck backed away and stood next to the mom so he wouldn't be in the picture, and he heard Nach asking the kids what they wanted for Christmas.

The little girl burst out with the longest run-on ever, but Nach just patiently listened and nodded. The boy, although he'd clambered right onto his lap, ended up being a bit shy, but Nach leaned in and had a quietly murmured conversation with the boy that left the kid smiling brightly.

"Joey never talks to people," the mom said, and Beck turned to see tears in her eyes, though she was smiling brightly. "He's got a speech impediment, and he's really self conscious about it. Last year he refused to even get a picture with Santa," she finished.

The photographer, Leo, a guy who frequently helped out, had been

snapping away the entire time, and when the kids clambered off Nach and headed back to their mom, the guy said, “Damn, these are gonna be some amazing pictures. Look at this!”

Beck strolled over to glance at the camera as Alan led the next family up, and sure enough, the photos *were* amazing. They looked like they were professionally touched up already—the lights, the suit, the awe on the kids’ faces, and most of all, Nach himself.

“He looks like Father Christmas,” Beck whispered in awe.

“Yeah, I’d call him daddy for sure,” Leo smirked.

Beck gave him a little smack on the shoulder. “Hands off. I saw him first.”

Leo just laughed before looking back at his camera, snapping away again.

Beck couldn’t blame him. Every interaction was... magical. There was no other word for it. The kids were simply enthralled with Nach, and he took his time with each family. Despite that, the people in line didn’t seem to mind. Sure, they had elves handing out bottled water and snacks, but people still usually got grumpy, babies cried, siblings smacked each other—it was just how waiting in line went.

But as the night wore on, Beck noticed that it was probably the smoothest event the center had ever held. Everyone just seemed to be in such good spirits. The kids in line played an impromptu game of tag, and somehow none of the kids fell or messed up their outfits. The parents all chatted with one another, and no one yelled at their kids. The teens in line even looked happy (despite most of them being too cool to actually show excitement), and aside from the ever present flirtatious joking with one another, they all seemed to get along. People even stepped out of line to use the bathroom or wander for a bit, and people let them right back into their spot without a fuss.

It was like some kind of Christmas miracle.

Then there was Nach. All joking aside, Beck was a little bit in love with the man by the time the night was winding down. He was just... amazing. He was phenomenal with the little kids, showing patience beyond what Beck himself even had. He managed to coax smiles from shy toddlers and too-cool teens, and he remained glowing with happiness the entire time. It seemed like he got a charge out of the whole thing—the guy looked like he was having the time of his life.

Usually even the cheeriest volunteers got exhausted and flagged as the night wore on, but not Nach. When they took a break, Nach seemed almost

disappointed. One of the elves jokingly offered him some milk and cookies, and Nach happily took both, exclaiming over how amazing they were (which made Beck blush, because yes, he'd baked the cookies). The minute he was done, he clapped his hands together and headed right back to the bench, ready to start up again.

The guy had stamina.

But Beck tried not to think about that too much, or he'd end up in the land of naughty thoughts. He had to keep reminding himself that this was a *family event*, and it worked. Most of the time.

Because Nach was sexy as hell. Sure, he rocked the Santa look, and Beck had always been a sucker for more mature guys, but his personality only made him that much hotter. Beck decided he was definitely going to get the guy's number. There was no way he was letting this one slip through his fingers.

When the last family walked out the door, the director, Victoria, locked it, and a cheer went up from all the volunteers left in the center.

"Great job, everyone! Fantastic night! We've raised a ton of money for the center tonight, and it wouldn't be possible without all of you!" she yelled above the chatter. Everyone clapped again, and with that, people began to disperse. It was late, and it had been a long evening for everyone.

Beck walked up to Nach, who was looking quite pleased with the whole night. "I'll lead you back to the office to get changed," he told the guy, and Nach nodded and beamed at him, following as he walked back through the halls of the center to the office.

He ushered Nach in through the door, saying, "Just come on out when you're done. I'll wait here so no one goes in."

That seemed like a good excuse to hang around, and Beck was gonna get sexy Santa's number if it killed him.

While he was waiting, Alan strolled up. "Hey Beck, I'm heading out," he said. His roommate looked exhausted, but he'd done a lot of running around all night.

"Ok. Thanks again, Alan. You were awesome! And we really lucked out with our Santa, huh?" he asked, looking at the door.

"Um, about that," Alan started, scratching his neck. Uh oh—neck scratches usually meant nerves.

"What? What's up?" Beck asked.

"Well, it turns out that the guy who was supposed to play Santa showed

up like two hours late because of car trouble,” Alan grumbled.

Beck laughed. “What are you talking about? He’s in there getting changed—he wasn’t late.”

“No, that’s what I’m trying to say. I confirmed the guy that came in late. You were busy at the time, and I was over by the door. He was the guy who was technically signed up on the volunteer list. I checked with Victoria. We scheduled him for another day, because we obviously had a Santa who was a huge hit, and Victoria didn’t want to replace him. She worried for a minute because she didn’t have his info and hadn’t done a volunteer background check, but it’s not like he was ever unsupervised.” Alan shrugged. “That’s above my paygrade, so I wasn’t gonna argue with her. I just wanted to let you know, because you seem, well, interested in the guy, or whatever,” he finished lamely.

“Am I that obvious?” Beck groaned.

Alan laughed. “Everyone seemed interested in him, so don’t feel bad. But he kinda seemed interested in you, so I wanted to give you a heads up.”

“Did he?” Beck asked hopefully.

“Yeah. He kept looking over at you and smiling. He certainly wasn’t doing that with anyone else. You’re so great with the families though, and you work that line and make sure everyone is having a good time. Your Christmas cheer is kinda hard to resist,” Alan admitted.

“Aww, you say the sweetest things,” Beck joked. “Seriously though, I spotted him on the sidewalk, and I just sort of assumed he was our Santa, so...” Beck shrugged sheepishly. “I might have kinda steamrolled him into coming here without actually checking.”

Alan just chuckled and shook his head. “Alright. I’m heading out. Victoria and a bunch of other people are still here. Just, I don’t know, be careful or whatever. Not that I think that guy would hurt a fly. He just seems so... wholesome. Hell, if I weren’t straight, I woulda been on the sexy Santa train too,” Alan laughed.

At that moment the door opened and Nach peeked out. Alan blushed furiously, gave a rushed “See you later!” and ran out of the hallway like his Christmas cookies were burning.

Beck just smiled at Nach and leaned against the wall behind the door. He realized that he was still in the silly elf costume, which didn’t look horrible on him, but it certainly wasn’t his best outfit for flirting. Oh well, Beck could work it. He took off his hat and fluffed his hair a bit, smiling brightly at

Nach.

“So, Alan told me I sort of steamrolled you into playing Santa, and I’m really sorry about that,” he admitted sheepishly.

“Are you kidding? I haven’t had this much fun in decades!” Nach insisted, then he blushed adorably.

“Well, I’m really glad. You were great with the kids. We’d love to have you volunteer again. If you want to give me your number, I can send you some more information about the center.” Ok, so Beck knew it was a little underhanded, but hey, if the guy didn’t seem interested, Beck certainly wouldn’t go all stalkerish on him.

“Uh, well…” Nach said, and he looked down at the ground, suddenly shy and a bit nervous. “I, ah, don’t have my phone on me,” he muttered.

Beck raised an eyebrow, but he actually didn’t see a bulge in the guy’s pocket, so Beck didn’t totally give up hope. Maybe the guy really did forget his phone at home. Now that Beck thought about it, he hadn’t seen the guy look at a phone all night.

“Ok, well, can I walk to your car?” Beck asked.

“I, uh, walked here,” Nach admitted, looking a bit unsure.

Beck could’ve smacked himself. He’d grabbed the guy when it was still decently warm out and the sun was shining, but the temperature would’ve dropped drastically after dark, and the guy would be walking home in the cold.

“Geez, I am *so sorry*,” Beck rushed out. “I didn’t even think about the fact that it’s practically freezing out now that it’s dark, and you don’t have a coat or anything. Let me give you a ride!”

Beck grabbed the guy’s hand and pulled him out of the room. No way was he gonna let Nach’s good deeds end up with him freezing on the walk home.

They made it through the front room and to the door with lots of pats on the back and thank you’s and general well wishes, but Beck was on a mission. He started the car with the fob in his pocket and managed to steer them through the chaos and out the door, bustling Nach to his little coupe parked across the street (he’d gotten here damn early to get such a good spot).

He opened the passenger door, had a moment to wonder if Nach would fit—the guy was tall and stocky (in the sexiest of ways)—but Nach ducked into the seat, and Beck hurried around to jump in the driver’s side. The heat was already coming out warm, and he turned both their heated seats on. Damn, it

really had gotten cold. He was glad he had insisted on driving their impromptu volunteer home, never mind that it gave him a little extra time to see if the guy was interested in him.

He looked over, and *holy shit*, Nach was sexy. His cheeks were rosy from the cold, his lips were plump and pink, and his eyes practically twinkled in the low light of the car. They were the most beautiful golden-brown color, and it made him think of warm wood fires. He realized he was staring, which was probably totally weird, so he put his seatbelt on and looked around before pulling out.

Which was when he realized he didn't know where he was taking Nach. Duh.

“Uh, sorry, where do you live?” Beck asked, laughing nervously. “Gotta be nearby if you walked to the center, right?”

Nach hummed agreement, but he didn't answer right away, so Beck just kept driving. He assumed if Nach was in the other direction the man would've said something.

They had driven a mile or two and were out of the center of town and on the county road when Beck looked over at Nach. The man was staring at him, but he blushed and turned away when Beck noticed. “You can just, ah, drop me off right up here,” Nach murmured.

Beck looked at Nach curiously, but then he pulled over to the side of the road. They were on a stretch of 538 that literally had nothing—it was protected open space—so Beck knew full well the guy didn't live near here.

It hit Beck then. He had steamrolled the guy *again*, and now Nach didn't even want to let Beck know where he lived. God, he'd been casually flirting all night long, and Nach was just so damn nice that he probably hadn't known how to let Beck down. Then Beck was ushering him into his car, and, well, here they were, on a stretch of road with nothing nearby.

He felt a tentative touch on his sleeve, but he didn't look over, because he felt like a total asshole and he really didn't want to make Nach any more uncomfortable than he'd apparently already made him. Talk about reading a situation wrong. Beck wanted to bang his head against the wall and cry at the same time. He really liked Nach, but that was no excuse for making someone uncomfortable, and he always tried to respect everyone's space. He had seriously misjudged things.

“Look,” Beck said, still staring ahead. “I'm really sorry about assuming you were Santa, but it did seem like you had a great time. I do think you're

sexy as hell, and I would've loved to have gotten your number and seen you again, but I'm not some creep and I understand the word 'no.' I really did just want to repay the favor by driving you home. I definitely didn't mean to make you uncomfortable, but I can't really leave you in the middle of a dark wooded road at night, so if you don't want to tell me where you live, I'll call you a rideshare and you can give them your address and head home, and you don't ever have to see me again."

"Beck," Nach whispered, and he felt the touch on his arm get firmer. He still couldn't look over, though, because he really did feel a bit teary. He didn't know why, but the thought of never seeing Nach again—it made something in his chest ache.

"I am so sorry. I do have boundaries. I just... I really misread the situation, and I'm really sorry," Beck managed, and then his breath hitched a bit.

"Beck, look at me," Nach commanded softly, and Beck finally did turn toward him.

Nach was staring intently at Beck, but he didn't look mad or uncomfortable. Then he was leaning forward, and Beck really *was* totally clueless, because he was shocked when Nach's lips pressed against his.

They were soft and warm, and for a moment Beck was too surprised to even move, but then Nach started to pull back, and Beck definitely did not want the man to think he didn't want him, so he leaned into Nach, opened his mouth, and licked the seam of Nach's lips.

Nach opened up, and Beck let his tongue glide into the man's mouth, and on a soft exhalation of air, Nach's tongue touched his. They continued kissing, their lips slanting together, their tongues flirting with one another and gently touching, then retreating, then touching again.

It was soft, and gentle, and probably the sexiest kiss Beck had ever had.

Eventually Beck pulled back. He was hard as hell, and although he could've kissed Nach forever, he also needed some answers. He didn't want to steamroll the guy again, and any more kissing and they'd end up doing something illegal on the side of the road.

"I don't understand," Beck stated, because that really did sum up the situation.

Nach cleared his throat. "I, ah, I do like you. You didn't misread the situation."

"But then why wouldn't you take my number or give me your number, or

even let me drive you home?” Beck cried out, exasperated. Then he gasped. “Oh my god, are you, like, married or something?”

“No!” Nach cried. “No, nothing like that, I swear. I’m not attached to another person. I am very single and very much alone. I, ah, well, I’m not actually from around here. I just got into town when I ran into you.”

“Then I can take you to your hotel! It isn’t a problem if it’s back in town. I don’t mind driving back,” Beck assured Nach. “You do have a hotel where you left your stuff, don’t you?” Beck asked. Only Nach just blushed and shook his head no, looking down at his lap and fiddling with his jeans.

Nach didn’t have a car, but the train station was not too far from the center, so maybe the guy had just gotten into town and hadn’t found a hotel yet. Then Beck remembered that Nach had no phone and no luggage on him. In fact, Beck wasn’t even sure he’d seen the bulge of a wallet in Nach’s jeans.

Shit. Had Nach been robbed?

Their town was great, but Beck knew travelers were often victims to thieves, especially around the holiday season. Nach was such a sweet guy, and he seemed strangely innocent. It wasn’t that hard to imagine him nodding off on the train only to wake up with his belongings gone. The poor guy.

“Nach?” Beck asked gently. “Do you have anything—any luggage or a wallet?”

Nach shook his head again, still not meeting Beck’s eyes.

Well then, there was only one solution. Beck nodded his head, his decision made. “Well, I *insist* that you come and stay with me and Alan until you can get this all sorted out. We have a pull-out couch in my office, and at the very least we owe you a hot meal and good night’s sleep after you saved us today. We can figure out your stolen belongings in the morning. What do you think?”

Nach looked over at him, eyes shining, and he smiled so brightly that Beck almost gasped. Beck felt warm inside, like he was overflowing with love and joy. This guy... he just did things to Beck.

“I think,” he replied, still smiling, “that you are the most perfect example of the Christmas spirit I have ever laid eyes on. Thank you, Beck. I’d love to stay with you if it isn’t too much trouble.”

“No trouble at all,” Beck assured him, leaning back into his seat and checking the road before pulling back out to drive home.

He knew he’d have some explaining to do to Alan, but he just couldn’t

leave the guy at a police station to figure out his stolen stuff this late at night. He knew Alan would agree with him. He felt a bit guilty that he so badly wanted to jump on Nach's lap and tell him all his Christmas wishes (most of which were *very* dirty), but he wouldn't take advantage of his guest after the obviously rough day he'd had. He'd be the perfect gentleman. Or at least he'd try to be.

But, oh, that kiss.

He was in so much trouble. Beck sighed as he drove, glancing over to see Nach staring at him. Fuck. If the guy kept staring at him like that, his good intentions weren't gonna last until they got in the house.

CHAPTER 5

Nachielus



NACH KNEW he was staring at the beautiful young man, but he couldn't seem to help himself. He had never seen someone who radiated so much joy and Christmas spirit. It was like Beck was a shining light glowing in the darkness of winter.

Watching him with the people in line had been captivating. Sure, Nach might have sent a little joy out to the crowd (just a bit, really, surely not enough to qualify as a miracle), but it was Beck who made sure everyone was comfortable. He knew many of the people by name and chatted with them all. He made people laugh, and at one point he'd even started a sing-a-long with the entire crowd.

Then Nach had found himself being tugged along, because of course a gentle soul like Beck wouldn't let him walk home in the cold. He'd realized when Beck had asked where he lived that he had a bit of a problem on his hands. He should have come up with an address or directed Beck to a house at the very least, but he'd just sort of frozen.

Then he'd sensed Beck's distress, and when he realized Beck assumed Nach didn't want to give him an address, that Nach thought he wasn't trustworthy, it had made his heart ache. He couldn't have a beautiful soul like Beck thinking he'd done something wrong.

So Nach had kissed him. He still wasn't sure what had possessed him to do such a thing (and he had checked—there were no lust demons nearby, so it hadn't been an actual possession); Nach just couldn't resist.

The kiss had been divine. There was no other word for it. Nach was an angel of joy and fulfillment, so of course he'd experienced, and encouraged,

carnal pleasure over his eons of existence, but the past few centuries had been a bit of a dry spell for him.

But Beck—he was so beautiful. Nach had experienced a definite physical reaction to his adorable elf. In fact his, ah, physical reaction was *still* occurring. He was thinking decidedly naughty thoughts.

Well, maybe they were actually nice thoughts. He supposed that was a matter of perspective, wasn't it? Beck was single, and obviously interested, and although technically relationships between mortals and afterlifers was frowned on by management, it's not like Yah himself had ever issued an edict against such things. And he was sure that what he was thinking about would make both he and Beck very happy, so they surely qualified as thoughts of joy and fulfillment.

Beck pulled into a driveway in front of an adorable house, parked the car, and looked over. Nach barely registered all the decorations in the yard and on the house, because he was captivated all over again by Beck. The twinkling white lights made him glow, and his curly brown hair and soft, pink lips just begged to be touched and kissed. Nach had to clench his hands to keep from reaching out. He hadn't wanted anyone, or anything, so much in all his long memory.

“If you keep looking at me like that, we won't even make it in the front door,” Beck joked. “Come on sexy Santa, let's head inside.”

Nach tried to shake off his need as he got out of the car and followed Beck up to the front door. The yard was a literal Christmas wonderland, but it wasn't garish or overdone, and Nach was again enraptured by how perfectly Christmas Beck was.

Beck opened the door and led the way inside. The first thing that hit Nach was the smell. He smelled cookies, vanilla, pine, and the spices of a mulled wine or cider. As they walked into the main part of the house, Nach noticed the decorations, because the inside was as spirited as the outside. Beck had a real tree with a burlap sack at the bottom so it could be replanted; of course his elf wouldn't waste a tree for decoration.

Lights were twinkling throughout the room, there were cards and bows hung on the wall, and little signs with silly and cute Christmas sayings were scattered throughout the room they walked into. The house had an open floor plan, with the kitchen and the living room separated by a kitchen island with bar stools. A kitchen table sat off to the side in the kitchen, and Nach saw it had Christmas place mats already set.

“So, this is our place,” Beck said, fidgeting a bit. Nach realized he hadn’t said anything at all; he had just been soaking in all the joy and festivity.

“It’s amazing,” Nach murmured. He felt like he was being filled up with all things Beck, and it was a wonderful feeling. He hadn’t realized how empty he’d felt at work lately, but that was a problem for another time, because his beautiful elf was meandering toward the kitchen area, and Nach was powerless to do anything but follow.

“Would you like some hot cocoa and cookies? Or are you hungry for more dinner, since I know the sandwiches at the center weren’t much?” Beck asked, already opening the fridge and grabbing the milk, like he knew that of course Nach would want hot cocoa either way.

“Hot cocoa and cookies would be lovely,” Nach answered. “Can I help?”

“Nope! Just grab a seat and keep me company while I make our cocoa,” Beck answered. Then he confused Nach quite a bit by saying, “Santa, play holiday cheer, volume three.”

Nach was wondering if he ought to be performing some sort of holiday music miracle (just a tiny one, to have holiday music playing; surely not noticeable by management), but apparently Beck was talking to an electronic device, because music began softly playing.

“Alan is probably already sleeping, so we’ll keep it down,” Beck said, grabbing a pan from underneath the stove. Oh, his elf was going to make hot cocoa the old fashioned way. How very perfect.

Beck was shorter than Nach by quite a bit, and he was smaller than Nach despite the obvious love for sweet things he had. He was almost like a dancer as he glided around the kitchen, humming along with the Christmas carols, getting out plates and cookies and stirring the cocoa.

Nach would have been content to simply watch Beck work all night, but before long an assortment of cookies had been plated and two mugs with steaming hot cocoa appeared. Beck had even pulled out some homemade whipped cream and added a dollop to each mug.

“Shall we head to the couch to enjoy our treats?” Beck asked, and all Nach could do was nod.

They both grabbed their cups and Beck grabbed the cookies and led the way to the couch. It was a large, comfy, worn couch that had snowflake and snowman throws across the top, and it faced a gas fireplace that Beck turned on after he placed the treats on the coffee table. There were large double doors leading to a deck off to one side, and Nach could see a lovely backyard

with a deck and trees.

“The only thing missing is a bit of snow,” he heard Beck murmur contentedly as he sat on the other side of the couch, picking up his cocoa and sipping it.

Nach wrinkled his nose a bit (not *really* a miracle) and picked up his own cocoa. When he took the first sip, he couldn’t help the groan that came from tasting the sweet chocolate in his mouth.

“This is simply heavenly. And believe me, I know heavenly,” Nach gushed.

Beck smiled broadly. “Wait until you try the cookies,” he teased

Nach couldn’t resist such a dare, so he did.

Oh. Oh my.

He knew the sounds coming from his mouth as he ate the cookies were probably pornographic (again, not that he’d *really* watched porn, but you couldn’t help but hear it if someone else had it on). He couldn’t seem to control himself, though.

“These are unbelievable!” he gushed after he’d tried one of each type and sipped more cocoa, which warmed him from the inside. Then he looked over at Beck again, and he was warm for an entirely different reason, because his elf looked like he wanted to devour Nach in the same way that Nach had just devoured those cookies.

Nach liked that idea very much.

Nach put down his cocoa and turned toward Beck, and Beck must have seen it for the signal it was, because he was placing his own cocoa down and gliding closer on the couch. Then their legs were touching, and Beck whispered, “May I?”

Nach didn’t reply, only leaned over and kissed his elf. Those soft lips, the rush of air coming from his mouth, the press of a tongue against Nach’s lips—it was sweeter than any cookies or cocoa he’d ever had.

Then Beck licked inside his mouth, and Nach let his tongue playfully touch Beck’s, and his elf tasted like sugar and vanilla. Nach couldn’t get enough—he pulled Beck closer until he was straddling Nach’s lap, and their kissing went from sweet to scorching. Their tongues tangled together and they licked at one another. Nach wrapped his arms around Beck and pressed them together tightly; he felt like the two of them couldn’t be close enough.

Beck bit his lower lip, and Nach moaned, his dick jerking in response. With a bit of embarrassment, Nach realized he was thrusting his hips into

Beck, but Beck must not have minded, because his elf began rubbing himself against Nach in return, gripping Nach's shoulders tightly.

They kissed ravenously, and Nach needed to feel Beck's skin like he needed to breathe, so he slipped his hands up under his elf's shirt, groaning at the warmth and smoothness of his flesh. Beck pulled his mouth away, and Nach went to chase it, only Beck licked Nach's neck below his ear, then nibbled at it, and Nach could only pant and groan.

Oh angels, Beck managed to line up their cocks so they were grinding into each other. Nach couldn't stop thrusting up, and Beck was pressing into him and rotating his hips just the tiniest bit, and the friction was absolutely delicious. Beck's hands tightened on his shoulders, and Beck bit the side of Nach's neck, causing them both to groan.

Nach thought he might come in his pants.

Fortunately (or perhaps unfortunately), that didn't happen, as a voice interrupted their moment.

"Oh my god, Beck, did you see it was snowing!" a voice called out, and then the owner was appearing in the living room as Beck and Nach managed to pull apart to look over.

Alan was gesturing at the double doors, staring out at the fat snowflakes that were lazily falling from the sky, quickly coating the deck, grass, and trees in a shimmering, white blanket. (Nach had just...helped some clouds along. That was all. Surely that didn't qualify as a miracle. Although he was regretting it right about now, since it had interrupted... things.)

Beck groaned, leaning his head against Nach's shoulder while they both caught their breath. Alan finally seemed to realize that Beck wasn't home alone, and he blushed furiously when he saw Beck sitting astride Nach.

"Oh god! Sorry! I didn't realize you had someone over!" he rushed out.

"Alan, your timing tonight sucks," Beck grumbled.

Nach couldn't help the laugh that escaped, and Beck lifted his head and smiled at him softly.

"Well, how was I supposed to know you brought sexy Santa back?" Alan groused. "That's what cell phone messages are for, genius. Besides, you never miss tasting the first snowfall of the season, and you would've killed me if I hadn't told you."

Beck took Nach's face in his hands and gave him a firm kiss on the lips before climbing off his lap. "It's true," Beck admitted. "You always have to taste the first snow of the season. Come and join us?" he asked.

He reached his hand down, and Nach was powerless to resist. He would follow his elf anywhere.

Alan pushed open the back sliding glass door, and he swept out onto the deck, Beck following and pulling Nach along with him. It was cold out, but it was a refreshing, crisp cold. As he watched the two men lift their faces to the sky, grinning broadly and laughing like children, he couldn't regret the snow (and he still didn't think it quite qualified as a miracle). Watching Alan and Beck stick out their tongues to catch snowflakes, laughing and smiling, made something unfurl inside Nach.

This, right here. This was the true miracle.

CHAPTER 6

Beckett



SO BECK MIGHT HAVE BEEN a teensy bit mad at Alan for interrupting them, but he was right, Beck never missed tasting the first snowfall.

When Nach had dutifully followed them outside, he wasn't sure what he was expecting, and Beck almost felt self-conscious as he and Alan goofily tried to catch snowflakes on their tongues. But Nach had seemed so damn happy, and he had looked at Beck with... well, Beck almost wanted to call it love. He'd dated guys who hadn't looked that fondly and adoringly at him after months of hanging out and hooking up.

Then Nach had joined in, and they'd all tasted the snow together, laughing and bumping against each other and proclaiming over which snowflakes tasted the best. All the while, Nach's hand had remained firmly in Beck's, giving an occasional squeeze.

It could have been awkward, not that Alan would have made it that way, but Beck had dated a guy or two in the past who didn't understand their brotherly relationship. Nach didn't seem to mind in the least, however, and it was like the three of them had been friends for ages. It just felt so natural and fun, like they were all little kids again.

Eventually they were all thoroughly chilled, and they trudged their way back inside, shaking the fat snowflakes from their hair and clothes, giggling all the while.

"We all need hot showers now to warm up!" Alan stuttered, his teeth chattering a bit.

Of course, that made Beck realize that Nach had nothing to change into.

Nothing of his would fit, but Alan was probably close in size.

“Alan, can you grab some pj pants and a t-shirt for Nach to change into? None of my stuff will work. I’ll show him the shower,” Beck volunteered, hoping his roommate didn’t ask too many questions.

Alan gave him a weird look, but he headed to his room as Beck grabbed Nach’s hand again and showed him the bathroom. “So, yeah, it’s a shower,” he laughed. “I’m sure you can figure it out. There’s soap and shampoo and conditioner, and we always keep a couple extra toothbrushes in the vanity.”

Alan walked up to the bathroom door holding a bundle of clothes, and Beck took it and placed it on the counter beside the sink.

“Perfect,” Nach smiled. “Thank you so much.”

And there was that adoring look again. Beck stared into those warm, golden eyes, lost for a moment before he heard Alan clear his throat beside him.

“We’ll leave you to it then!” Alan cried cheerfully, pulling Beck out of the bathroom and shutting the door. He dragged Beck toward the kitchen, whispering, “Man, you’ve got it bad.”

Yes, Beck supposed he did. Because somewhere between the very hot make out session on the couch and tumbling into the house covered in snow, he had decided he was keeping Nach. He didn’t know where the guy was from, or what he did, or really anything about him, and maybe it was totally crazy, but when someone looked at you like Nach looked at him, you didn’t pass that up. Beck wasn’t a fool.

“So, why am I lending sexy Santa clothes?” Alan asked, heading over to the stove and looking forlornly at the empty pan then back at Beck.

Beck sighed, pulling out the milk and chocolate again. He supposed he did owe Alan some hot chocolate to help him warm up, especially since his impromptu guest was using the hot shower first.

“Well, it appears he just got in from out of town, only all his belongings were stolen, so I kind of offered to let him stay here,” Beck admitted.

“Ok,” Alan replied.

“I know, I know, I should have asked you first. But he has nothing, not even a wallet, and he did us such a big favor today,” Beck added.

“He did,” Alan agreed.

“And ok, yeah, I don’t *really* know anything about the guy, and sure, he could rob us blind while we sleep, and I’m sure you think it’s insane to have a complete stranger stay over who has literally nothing, especially when we

don't even know his last name," Beck rambled.

"Beck—" Alan started, but Beck just cut him off.

"But really, what do we have to steal anyways? I mean, yeah, our computers are worth quite a bit, but surely we'd hear it if someone was dragging those out. And anyway, you were just saying you wanted to upgrade. And if someone is that desperate, well, they probably need it more than us anyways," Beck rushed on.

"BECK!" Alan cried out, cutting off any more rambling. "I said ok, you doofus," he added, chuckling.

"But—" Beck started, fully ready to argue with Alan before he realized Alan had just agreed with him. "Hey," he added, "you're the voice of reason here. You're always telling me I'm too trusting and naive and all that."

Alan just chuckled. "After you catch snowflakes with a guy, I feel like you just have a certain level of trust."

"You're making fun of me," Beck muttered, pouring Alan's hot cocoa into a mug and setting it down in front of him, perhaps a little firmer than necessary. No homemade whipped cream for him either.

Alan just laughed again though. "I'm totally not. Maybe your holiday spirit or trusting nature has finally rubbed off on me, because I can't imagine that guy"—he pointed toward the bathroom, where they could hear the sounds of "White Christmas" being sung (Nach had a great voice, too)—"would steal from us or hurt us. He's fine to stay here as long as he needs to. Really."

Well then, Beck supposed Alan did deserve some homemade whipped cream, so he pulled some out of the fridge and put a dollop on top. Alan took a sip of his cocoa then, sighing in delight at the taste. Beck put the whipped cream back then walked around the kitchen island and gave his roommate a hug. Alan really was the best.

"I'll go get the bed set up—although I'm using the pull-out couch in *your* office. Unless you and sexy Santa plan on sharing a bed tonight?" Alan asked, eyebrows raised.

Beck thought about it for a moment, and the idea was appealing, but he really did plan on keeping Nach, so maybe a separate bed was a good idea. The last thing he wanted was for Nach to think he was a bang-and-go; he didn't want his sexy Santa disappearing in the morning because he felt awkward.

"Yeah, I guess the pull-out couch is a good idea. If I have my way, he'll

be staying for a few days. That's really ok with you?" Beck checked again.

"Yup," Alan said, taking his cocoa and heading toward the hallway. "Just don't let me hear you two banging!" he called as he left.

Of course Nach took that moment to open the bathroom door, but he only smiled at Beck, obviously too distracted to pay Alan any attention, thank goodness.

"There are little reindeer on my pants!" Nach beamed. "And my shirt has Santa hats!"

Of course Alan had lent out the Christmas pajamas that Beck had bought him. To be fair, Nach was a little stockier than Alan, and Beck always bought pajamas big so they'd be comfy.

"I have the same ones," Beck smiled, walking over to Nach.

"Oh, we'll match!" Nach grinned, and Beck couldn't help smiling in return. He was definitely wearing those pajamas now.

Beck started to reply, but when he opened his mouth, a huge yawn came out instead.

"Goodness, you're tired! Of course you are! It's been a busy day," Nach said.

"It has," Beck admitted. "I'm sure you're exhausted too, and probably a little emotionally drained after everything that happened. Alan went to make up the pull-out in the office for you. It's really comfy." Beck waited to see Nach's reaction. If he seemed disappointed, then Beck would gladly change his plans on them sharing a bed.

But Nach only beamed at him. The guy really was just so damn jovial. "That sounds lovely. You two truly know the meaning of hospitality."

Beck smiled in response, because it was hard to resist in the face of Nach's joviality. He led the way down the hall toward his office, which was apparently going to serve as Nach's room for now.

Beck opened the door and motioned Nach in, rubbing his head self-consciously. "It isn't much..." he started.

"Oh, it's lovely! And you have Christmas sheets as well!" Nach said, sitting on the pull-out and rubbing his hand along the themed flannel sheets. "And they're so soft!"

Beck chuckled. "I love Christmas, and we have holiday themed pretty much everything," he admitted. "It drives Alan a little nuts sometimes, but he puts up with me."

Beck didn't want to leave, but he had long term goals here. His sex drive

could wait a few days. Well, at least a day, he bargained with himself.

Nevertheless, he couldn't resist walking over to Nach for one final goodnight kiss. The man stared at him, looking at Beck with that adoring gaze again, and it took everything in Beck's power not to climb on top of him and ride him like a roller coaster.

Instead he leaned down, gently kissing Nach on the lips. He pressed his hands to Nach's face and used his sexy as hell beard to pull Nach's mouth open a bit. He licked inside then, gently letting his tongue explore.

When he finally pulled back, Nach's eyes were closed and he looked a bit dazed. Beck gently rubbed his fingers through Nach's beard until the man opened his eyes, and then he almost got lost looking into those beautiful, warm golden eyes. Beck had to leave before all his good intentions flew out the window.

"Sleep tight, Nach. Dream of me, and I'll see you in the morning." Beck winked, and then he forced himself to go out the door, closing it softly behind him.

He leaned against the wall for a moment. Fuck. He was definitely keeping Nach, but the man was obviously a bit innocent. He could go slow. Yes, he absolutely could.

Even if it killed him.

CHAPTER 7

Nachielus



NACH DIDN'T TECHNICALLY NEED to sleep, but he knew his little elf certainly did, and he didn't mind partaking in the human pastime of sleep from time to time. After another heavenly kiss, he watched Beck leave the room and shut the door softly behind him, and he laid down on the warm, soft sheets, marveling at how lucky he was to run into such a joyous man.

Beck was simply perfect. He had never, in all this time, met a mortal soul so full of joy. Something in the man called to him. He had only intended on staying topside for a day—just enough time to soak in some holiday joy—but he couldn't imagine leaving now. No, Beck and Alan would wake up confused and disappointed if he was gone. Well, nothing for it then, he'd simply have to stay. Surely he wouldn't be missed for just a few days. Management would probably assume he was still buried under all the paperwork they'd left him.

He closed his eyes, a smile still on his face. He had the thought to get up nice and early in order to repay his hosts with a lovely breakfast. Yes, that sounded like a lovely plan. With that idea, and the picture of Beck in his mind, he let himself float off to sleep.

Angels didn't often dream, but they could, and he dreamed of Beck. He went through each moment of their day together, from the moment the chatty elf had walked up to him in the street to the last goodnight kiss before he left. Then he dreamed of Beck on Christmas morning, delight and love shining on his face, and Beck making cookies, and Beck holding his hand as they shopped together. Always Beck, so full of joy and spirit. He dreamed of Beck

with tears of happiness glittering in his eyes as they stood together beneath the Christmas tree, and Nach felt such fulfillment he was near to bursting with it.

He was almost sad to awaken, but certainly real life Beck was better than dream Beck, so he rolled out of bed and listened intently, but it seemed he was the first one up. Perfect. He would treat his hosts to a lovely breakfast.

He tiptoed out to the kitchen before realizing that Beck's room and Alan's room were further down the hall than his, so he probably didn't need to worry too much about waking them up by being loud. He remembered Beck's electronic device then, and a little holiday music would certainly set the state.

"Santa, play happy music," Nach said. The electronic device actually replied to him, but he didn't think he would like the playlist it suggested.

"Santa, play holiday music," he tried again, and this time he was met with success. Perfect.

Now for breakfast. He opened the fridge. There appeared to be eggs, cheese, bread, bacon, juice, and milk. There was a coffee maker on the counter as well. Lovely.

Now if only he knew how to cook.

"Santa, how do I make breakfast?" he asked, wondering if the electronic device could be helpful.

It suggested steak and eggs, only there was no steak, which Nach *tried* to tell the electronic device, only it kept on talking over him no matter what he said. How rude.

Finally he realized he needed to say the device's name.

"Santa, I don't have steak," he said.

"Sorry, I don't know that one," the device replied.

Well, that clearly wasn't going to be any help at all.

He pulled out the various ingredients. His beautiful elf needed to eat. He was going to do something nice. Surely something so mundane as cooking didn't count as a miracle.

He wrinkled his nose, and bacon was in the oven, eggs were on the stove with ingredients sliced and chopped to make omelettes, bread was being fried with a sugary cinnamon smell wafting from it, juice was in glasses, and coffee was brewing.

Lovely.

Nach was just plating the food (he had managed to find the plates on his

own, and he couldn't resist using the ones with snowflakes on them) when Beck bounded into the room. Nach got a little thrill seeing that Beck had worn the pajamas that matched the ones he had on.

"Oh my god! It smells absolutely amazing out here! Nach, you didn't have to cook for us!" Beck cried. He skipped over, grabbed Nach's face in his hands, pulled him down, and gave him a big smooch on the lips. Nach could only blush. His elf was so full of joy, and Nach knew not all mortals were like that, especially first thing in the morning.

As if to prove his point, Alan stumbled into the room, half awake and rather grumpy. "Oh my god, not you too with the Christmas music," he mumbled. He shuffled his way over to the coffee maker, grabbing one of the cups and breathing in deeply.

"French toast! And omelettes! Let's eat at the table!" Beck cheerfully pronounced, already bringing plates and cups over to the kitchen table and setting them down. Nach helped, and Alan grumpily watched them both.

When everything was set on the table, Nach and Beck sat down, and Alan slinked over with his coffee to join them.

Nach watched nervously as they both took their first bites.

"Nach, oh my god!" Beck groaned out. Alan grunted in what appeared to be agreement.

Nach blushed, then took his own forkful.

Oh. Yes, this was lovely.

They all ate in silence for a bit, aside from the occasional moan of joy at the taste. The fried bread was certainly Nach's favorite—who knew breakfast could be so sweet? He had vastly underestimated the meal.

Finally, Beck broke the silence. "So, I, ah, took the liberty of throwing your clothes in the wash—I hope you don't mind. And we can pick you up some more stuff today. I have some errands to run anyway. We'll stop by the police station and file a report for your missing luggage too. As long as you don't mind tagging along with me," Beck finished.

Alan groaned. "Don't do it! He's going to be Christmas shopping. He'll make you go in every store and look at every decoration and he'll buy way more than he needs to."

Beck playfully threw a napkin at his roommate. "Hey. Don't complain, or there will be no presents for you," Beck teased.

"At least I should be thankful you aren't dragging me." Alan looked at Nach then. "He hates shopping alone, although I can't imagine why. So much

easier to get in and out that way.”

“I don’t mind at all,” Nach assured them both. “I love looking in all the stores,” he added, taking a sip of juice.

“You two really are a match made in heaven,” Alan mumbled, and Nach choked a bit at that. If he only knew.

Alan came over to smack him on the back. “Hey, no dying on us, Santa. There would be so many disappointed kids,” he joked.

Nach laughed at that. He almost wondered if Alan knew, but then he realized it was just because Nach had played Santa yesterday at the center.

“Well, I’ll leave you guys to it then. I’m going to get a bit of work done, and then I’ll be out for the evening. I’m heading to Mom’s for dinner. I assume you’ll be staying here?” he asked Beck, waggling his eyebrows a bit.

Beck nodded enthusiastically. “Text when you’re on your way home! Take your time!” he called out, and Alan laughed, heading out of the room and toward what Nach presumed was his office.

“Well, I’ll clean up since you cooked,” Beck stated, getting up and grabbing some plates to bring to the sink.

“Oh, no. Cooking wasn’t really any trouble. Not at all,” he admitted. “I can help with clean up.”

“Nope, I got it,” Beck insisted, then he walked over and leaned down, pressing his lips against Nach’s. “I just can’t seem to help myself around you. I hope you don’t mind,” he whispered, their faces still pressed close.

“I don’t mind at all. Kissing you is more lovely than milk and cookies,” Nach admitted, because it was, and he didn’t think there was much topside that was better than sweets. But Beck was his own kind of sweet.

Beck chuckled and swept in for another kiss, their tongues softly dancing together, their breaths intermingling. Beck still tasted of sweetness and joy on Nach’s tongue, and he couldn’t get enough.

On a sigh, Beck pulled back. “I’m not going to ravage you on the kitchen table. At least, not with Alan home,” he winked.

Nach’s face went hot at the thought of being ravished *anywhere*, never mind the kitchen table. He was uncomfortably turned on, more than he ever remembered being. It felt quite unfulfilling, to be quite honest. But he had the sense that finding fulfillment with Beck would be worth any wait.

Beck looked over and groaned. “Stop looking at me like that, Nach, or we won’t make it shopping. Go get dressed. I’ll be ready to go in twenty minutes, if that works for you.”

“Yes, ok,” Nach agreed, and he headed off to the spare room, where he found his jeans, his boxers, and his green sweater neatly folded. He blushed a bit at thinking about Beck washing his boxers, but if anyone could appreciate the Christmas themed underclothes (little Santa Clauses in their little sleighs, of course), it was Beck.

He sat down on the bed. It was hard to believe it had been less than twenty-four hours since he’d met Beck. They’d shared meals, caught snowflakes, shared kisses, and he’d had the sexy elf on his lap, and he was looking forward to quite a bit more of that. He realized, rather belatedly, what it meant that Alan wouldn’t be home tonight.

Oh. Oh my. How lovely.

Nach sighed. Yes, he should head back, but he wouldn’t. He *couldn’t*. It was like something was tethering him here, to Beck, and he had absolutely no desire to fight it.

He had never been so full of joy in all his life. He knew it would end, but he would enjoy it while it lasted, and he’d savor every moment with his elf. Perhaps all these golden snapshots together would last him through the decades or centuries of paperwork he’d have on his return.

It would be worth it. Beck was worth it.

With that thought, he shook off his worry and started dressing. He and his elf had shopping to do, and he’d never looked forward to anything more in his entire life.

CHAPTER 8

Beckett



THEY STROLLED DOWN the sidewalks of main street holding hands, and Beck knew he was probably glowing. A decent number of boyfriends hadn't wanted to hold hands; either they didn't want to call attention to the fact they were with a guy, or they just hadn't been into holding hands in general. Apparently there were a lot of people who didn't enjoy that, but Beck adored it. He loved strolling along, hand in hand with someone else. It was romantic. It was a connection.

Nach's hand was warm and soft in his, and he held a bunch of bags in his other hand, which he had, of course, insisted on carrying. God, they were like something out of a Hallmark movie at this point. Meet cute? Check. Holiday atmosphere? Check. Romantic kisses? Check.

Beck just hoped there wasn't a villain or switched identities in the picture, although he really didn't think that Nach was the prince of some faraway country no one had ever heard of who had escaped his bodyguards to try out a normal life for a few days before his arranged marriage to a princess he'd only just met.

Ok, so he really liked those sappy Christmas movies. Really, who didn't? (Aside from Alan, but even though he *said* he didn't like them, he more often than not ended up on the couch critiquing them as Beck watched them.)

The point was, the afternoon had been perfect. Nach had even helped some little old lady in one of the stores. She'd thought she lost her wallet, but Nach managed to find it for her. In another store, he'd helped some harried dad find a toy the store thought they were out of. The dad had been praising Nach up and down, swearing he saved Christmas. Not that Beck blamed the

guy—no one wanted disappointed kids on Christmas morning.

Nach really was too good to be true. It was like the guy was made of good luck. Even at the coffee shop, his favorite barista had been all down in the dumps, because apparently the person she'd been seeing had broken it off. Then while she was making their coffee (well, hot chocolate with peppermint for Nach), her phone had pinged. She'd checked it, looking like Christmas morning had come early, and when she brought the finished drinks over she'd whispered excitedly that her best friend had just confessed interest in her now that she was single. The barista had seemed over the moon about it, and Beck had gushed and gossiped with her until another customer had walked in. Nach had seemed just as happy for it, even though he didn't know her.

"Oh!" Beck stopped, so distracted by his thoughts that he'd almost missed the police station across the street. "We should cross! We can file a report about your lost belongings."

"Ah, yes, the police station," Nach agreed, looking a bit wary. "No need for it, really. I've already taken care of everything."

"You were there yesterday? Geez, they didn't even set you up with a hotel? I thought better of our local police," Beck grumbled. They'd just taken his report and then set him out? Beck was almost of a mind to go over there and tell them off. Where was their Christmas spirit?

"No, no," Nach assured them. "Your police are lovely, really. I wasn't looking for assistance."

Of course, Nach had probably been too dazed to even process everything. Then he'd run into Beck, and next thing he knew, he was playing Santa Claus.

"You know, it will sound terribly selfish of me, but I have to admit I'm really glad I ran into you on that sidewalk at that moment, and I'm really glad you're staying with us, too. Of course I'm sorry you lost your belongings, but, well, I can't regret meeting you. It was almost like it was fate," Beck admitted.

Nach stopped them, pulling Beck to face him. "I don't know about fate. I *do* know that everyone has free will, and it was your kind decision to take me in and your joyful spirit that sees the best in everyone. You are like sunshine, brightening the day of every person we meet," Nach praised. "I am blessed to have met you, Beckett."

Beck couldn't help it, he leaned in and kissed Nach, right there on the sidewalk with people walking by. By Nach's reaction, the guy didn't seem to

mind.

Then, as Beck pulled back, Nach wrinkled his nose a bit, and Beck was just about to ask if they should stop at the drug store for allergy meds, because Nach seemed to be wrinkling his nose a lot today, when a big fat snowflake landed on *his* nose.

Everyone around them literally stopped. The daylight was fading, so the lights were turned on and twinkling down Main Street, and now there was even snow again.

Beck giggled gleefully, and he pulled Nach back to him, unable to resist another kiss. Their breaths were hot as they leaned into each other, and Nach must have set the bags down, because his arms were wrapping around Beck.

Nach's warm lips against his contrasted with the gentle snowflakes that swirled down and landed on his face, but even those didn't feel terribly cold. Or perhaps it was just that kissing Nach made something inside of Beck burn even brighter.

He pulled away, giggling again, and opened his eyes, pressing his forehead to Nach's. He had the sudden and totally insane urge to tell Nach that he loved him, which was just beyond crazy. This *wasn't* some movie, after all, but everything was so fantastical, and he had the undeniable feeling that Nach was quite literally perfect for him. Maybe Nach didn't believe in fate, but Beck was starting to.

They stared into each other's eyes for a moment, and no one around seemed to mind—he thought he even heard an uttered “Aww” or two as people walked by. He knew they'd get cold before long, so he grabbed Nach's hand in his and waited patiently while his sexy Santa picked the bags back up.

“Come on. One more stop before home,” Beck smiled. “As long as you don't mind?”

“Of course not. I shall follow wherever you lead,” Nach replied.

Aww, the guy was really the sweetest freaking person he'd ever met.

When they ended up at the doors to the center, Nach beamed at him and happily followed him inside.

There were a few volunteers scattered about, and it looked like a few of the teens had just finished a game of basketball in the gym, because they were lounging on the couch in shorts and tanks. He knew a few of them, and he wandered over, Nach in tow.

“Marcus! How's your mama?” Beck asked.

“She good, bro. Feeling better now that she’s a few weeks out from surgery. Who you got wit’ you?” Marcus asked.

“Dude, that’s Santa!” cried one of the guys.

“Yo, Santa!” they cried out, laughing and smacking each other while they burst out with some rather juvenile jokes, including some references to his “sleigh,” questions about where “Vixen” might be, and some comments about what might happen if they got on the naughty list.

Beck could only roll his eyes. He looked over at Nach, but the guy was taking it all in good spirits, as usual.

“Old man! You gonna give Beck here a ride on your sleigh tonight?” Caleb called out.

Beck really did like Caleb, but he was slightly mortified at the turn things were taken. He was just about to reign the boys in (pun intended), when Nach stepped in.

“I’ll have you know that no one has ever complained about my sleigh before. I’m sure that when you grow up, you’ll find your own someone special who will let you ride their sleigh,” Nach replied.

A chorus of “Ohhh! Burn!” came up from the teenage boys, but Caleb just laughed good naturedly. Nach didn’t even seem to realize what the insult was, but Beck knew implying these boys were just boys (which of course they were) was always seen as an insult, never mind the sexual implications of it all.

Teenage boys. It was a wonder the human race survived.

“Come on, Santa, let’s leave the boys to it,” he chuckled, pulling Nach away from the rowdy bunch. “I just wanna check in on Victoria and make sure everything is alright after the craziness of last night. She always works the day after an event, even if it’s the weekend.”

When they wandered back through the center hallway to the office and knocked on Victoria’s door, however, it seemed that things were not alright. Victoria was usually calm and collected, but she looked like she had been pulling on her hair, her office was in total disarray, and she was actually mumbling to herself.

“Geez, Victoria, what the heck happened in here?” Beck asked.

She turned toward him, and Beck could tell the woman was near tears.

“What’s wrong? How can we help?” he blurted, walking over to rub her shoulder in comfort.

“Unless you can make something appear out of thin air, I don’t think you

can help,” she muttered.

“What got lost?” Beck asked gently. “We can help you look.”

Victoria let out a mirthless laugh. “Lost implies it was ever here to begin with. I can’t believe this. I am *never* trusting someone else to do a job that needs to get done again. *Never.*”

“Victoria, what’s going on?” Nach asked, and when she looked over at him, she took a deep breath, seeming to calm down a bit.

“We need a permit to do fundraising. Our Santa pictures, the breakfast we host, and the holiday market in the gym are some of our biggest events for raising money. They enable us to buy presents for families that don’t have enough. We buy Christmas meals with that fundraising money. Heck, that money is used for programs all year round. And it’s gone,” she finished, her breath hitching.

“Someone stole the money from last night? Oh my god, Vic! We’ll call the cops! But the other events haven’t happened yet, and we’ll still make a ton of money from those. It’ll be ok, even if we don’t get the missing money back,” Beck assured her.

“No. The *permits* are gone. As in, I don’t think that useless assistant that I had ever filed for them. Town hall called after last night’s events, saying they don’t have them on file, and we can’t hold the rest of the events without them,” she cried out.

Beck gasped. “I can’t believe that the town would be so... so... unChristmasy!” Beck seethed.

Victoria gave a watery laugh. “Oh, Beck, I do love you. It really isn’t their fault though. They felt awful about it. But those permits have to do with town ordinances, police officers on duty, parking, vendors, nearby store hours, and a million other things. They could have fined me for last night’s event, but they aren’t going to. But it means we can’t hold any more events, and by the time new permits go through, almost all the events I set up will have passed. When she said they didn’t have copies, I figured that useless sack of poop I called an assistant hadn’t filed them like I asked, even though he definitely withdrew the money. I knew he was rotten, which is why I fired him, but I just... I don’t even know. I just hoped, I guess,” she finished lamely.

Beck sat down in the spare chair, feeling deflated. Well, shit. He *loved* all the Christmas events at the center. He volunteered at quite a few of them, as did Alan.

He looked over at Nach, who was looking through a binder, and he was about to say “Bless you,” because the guy totally looked like he was gonna sneeze, but then Nach asked, “Do they have a round seal on them?”

Victoria sat up. “Yes,” she answered, and Beck swore she was holding her breath. Hell, Beck was holding *his* breath.

“And a stamp with the city name?” Nach asked.

“Ohmygod!” Victoria yelled out, jumping up and rushing over to Nach. She grabbed the papers he had in his hand, flipped through them, and then actually leaned over and kissed the man on the lips.

Beck *almost* felt jealous, but since Nach looked awkward as hell about the whole thing, he had to resist laughing instead.

“Ohmygod, ohmygod, ohmygod!” she burst out, flipping through them. “I swear I looked there, like, three times!”

At that moment, her phone rang, and she rushed over, picking it up. “Hello?...Yes!...Yes, I just found our copies of them too!...The extra police were scheduled already?...Marcy, that’s fantastic! Just hold on one second.” She turned to them, covering the mouth piece on the phone. “Marcy just found the town’s copies, too! Thank you so much, though—you guys helped save Christmas! I gotta take this. You all good?”

“Yup, just checking in. We’ll let you get to it,” Beck answered, grabbing Nach’s hand.

“Thank you, guys,” she said, then she looked at Nach. “You really are a miracle worker,” she announced, then she waved them both off as she went back to her phone call.

Beck led them out of the center, still tightly clasping Nach’s hand. “Ready to head home, my sexy Santa?” Beck asked.

Nach blushed and nodded. Adorable.

Beck was really glad they’d grabbed a late lunch in town, because he suddenly couldn’t wait to get Nach back to an empty house. His sexy Santa deserved some rewards for all his good deeds today, and Beck had some definite ideas in mind.

CHAPTER 9

Nachielus



IT HAD BEEN a lovely day with Beck, and Nach was amazed at how perfect his elf really was. Beck brought smiles and joy to everyone he talked to, and Nach loved seeing him spread happiness to all his acquaintances. It seemed like everyone who knew Beck loved him; Nach even had a moment or two of uncharacteristic possessiveness flare up, but Beck seemed oblivious to any flirting, holding Nach's hand and shooting him grins and winks all day.

Nach might have possibly helped out a bit in spreading some joy, too.

But really, could he be blamed? He was an angel of joy and fulfillment. It was his *job* to bring people joy, to see them fulfilled. So when people were upset or sad or feeling hopeless, well, it was only right that Nach helped out a bit, wasn't it?

And did any of those things *really* count as miracles? They were all so mundane—finding toys, getting people to confess feelings, moving a few clouds with snow in them. Ok, so fine, creating permits out of thin air *probably* counted as a miracle, but surely only a teeny tiny one. Nothing to call upper management's attention to him, or at least he hoped not.

"Oh!" Beck cried out, stopping. They were heading back toward the car since the sun was setting and it was getting chilly, but Nach noticed a large sign advertising "Christmas in the Park," and sure enough, it seemed that vendors and stands were set up in the public park down the side street.

"That looks lovely! I wouldn't mind a walk through," Nach assured Beck, smiling.

"Are you sure? You don't have a coat, and it is getting chilly," Beck

admitted, looking a bit forlorn. “And we are almost to the car,” he added.

“Well, that means we can drop the bags off before we go look in the park then! And I’m sure you’ll keep me plenty warm enough,” Nach added, blushing a bit even as he said it. He wasn’t really up to practice with flirting, but based on Beck’s smile he must have done ok.

“Oh yeah, I’ll definitely keep you warm. I promise to warm you up later, too,” he added, winking.

Then he pulled Nach along, throwing the bags in the car and finding a hat and scarf for Nach to wear. Nach dutifully bent down to have the colorful red hat placed on his head and the scarf wrapped around his neck.

Beck already had his coat and scarf on (his elf seemed to get chilly quite easily), so they headed off to the park. It was still just barely fluttering snow, and a pretty white coating was sparkling on the trees. Nach was quite proud of the job he’d done. It was like Christmas times of old.

They wandered into the park, stopping by various stands and looking at the wares, when Nach realized what was up ahead.

Oh. Oh no.

This was not good.

Beck seemed to notice it at the same moment based on his cry of glee. “The Christmas animals are here! I wondered if they’d be back this year! These guys own a farm and they bring their reindeer out to events at the holidays.” Beck paused, looking over at Nach, then he added, “They’re super guys, and they treat their animals humanely and everything—you can tell they love them, if you’re worried about that.”

Beck must have noticed Nach’s hesitation as he stared at the fenced enclosure where the reindeer were being kept.

“No, ah, I’m not worried about that. I’m sure they do treat them well,” he agreed, getting ready to back up. But it was too late already.

They must have smelled him, because suddenly five reindeer were staring straight in his direction. Then they were clopping their way over to the fence closest to him, and next came the grunting.

Beck pulled him along, and Nach supposed there was nothing for it now. The reindeer would only end up breaking out of their enclosure if he ignored them.

All animals liked Nach—he was an angel of joy, after all. Most of them were content to get some attention, a few pets, and be on their way. When he’d first started his solstice hobby, he’d certainly had the occasional horse,

dog, or cat follow him around, and there was that one time with the polar bear—polar bears were *very* hard to reason with, and that one in particular had taken quite the fancy to him. Sometimes he wondered if the whole yeti myth was partly his fault. But really, when a polar bear wanted to walk like you on two feet and hold your hand in their paw, you just let them.

But herd animals were definitely the worst at being attention seekers, and reindeer took the lead out of all of those. Back when Nach had started spreading solstice joy, there had been lots of villages near forested areas, and lots of reindeer, and without fail he ended up with company for his gift giving. He didn't mind it, and he may have taken a ride or two, he had to admit. But the flying thing, well, that was *not* his fault. That had been Arioch's idea (he should've known not to let a demon of chaos tag along), and it had sounded like a fine plan to bring the reindeer along with them while they flew to the next area to deliver some joy (in Nach's case) and a bit of chaos (in Ari's case).

"Oh, they really like you," Beck wondered, staring in awe as the darn reindeer nosed in as close as they could to where Nach and Beck were coming up to the fence.

Nach just chuckled a bit, reaching out to pet the reindeer on their noses.

"Oh no! Don't—" started a man, but then he trailed off, watching sort of slack jawed as Nach pet each reindeer in turn.

"Now, you be nice to Beck here as well, you hear? He's a sweet little elf who would like to pet you too," he told them, and one of the reindeer bumped his head forward into Beck, who reached up and pet him.

"Oh my god, I'm petting a reindeer," he laughed, grinning broadly at Nach.

"Yes, you both are, apparently," said the man who had started to chastise them earlier.

"Oh! Nick! I'm sorry! This is Nach," Beck said, then he started giggling uncontrollably.

"Nick, Nach! Nach, Nick!" Beck giggled, introducing them, and yes, the similarity in their names was a bit humorous.

Nach finished petting the last reindeer (he couldn't play favorites) and turned to face Nick.

"You know, I've never seen them so good with someone. Sometimes they can get a little feisty, which is why I was warning you not to reach into the enclosure," Nick started, but then he gave a laughing cough as one of the

reindeer pulled Nach's scarf to try to get him closer again.

"Stop that!" he whispered over his shoulder. "This scarf belongs to Beck!"

The reindeer backed off, grunting the whole way, and Nach turned toward the little herd.

"Alright, go back to spreading Christmas cheer. I'm not staying," he whispered to them. "Go on. Back to work." He made a shooing motion with his hands, and turned back toward Nick and Beck, who were both just staring at him.

"Yes, ah, I have a way with animals," he admitted. "Lovely to meet you, Nick, but Beck and I were just on our way home!"

He grabbed Beck's hand then and pulled him along, back toward the front of the park.

"That was... you..." Beck started, obviously at a loss for words.

"It's gotten chilly!" Nach said, changing the subject rather awkwardly. "I was rather looking forward to you warming me up."

Beck shot him a *very* heated look, and Nach blushed hotly, but Beck was now very firmly pulling him along. Before he could even process his embarrassment, he was being pushed into the car, Beck was climbing into the driver's seat, and they were on their way back to Beck's house.

Which was empty. And where Beck was going to warm him up.

Oh my.

CHAPTER 10

Beckett



BECK MAY HAVE BROKEN a traffic law or two to get them home, but he couldn't wait to climb Nach like a Christmas tree. He wasn't sure how he'd managed to keep himself in check last night, and he couldn't believe now that he had even bothered. But last night also felt like it was years ago.

It seemed impossible that he had only spent two days with Nach. Although he loved sappy holiday movies where people fell in love at first sight, he didn't *actually* believe in such a thing. Yet he felt like he'd known Nach for ages, and more than that, he knew deep in his heart that Nach was a good person—the best person—and maybe *his* person.

Plus, not for nothing, the guy was hot as hell. He had the whole Santa look going on, but he was totally sexy Santa, and Beck needed some of that. Now.

Nach was also kinda oblivious to his own sex appeal. People had tried flirting with Nach (Beck had resisted smacking them upside the head—barely), but he seemed utterly oblivious; he only had eyes for Beck, which was totally swoon-level sweet. Beck had the impression that Nach was a little innocent in the bedroom, and that only made him want to do dirty things to his sexy Santa even more.

By the time they pulled into the driveway, Beck was needy as hell. He looked over at Nach, who was slightly shell-shocked, probably from Beck's driving. (That light had definitely still been yellow when they'd started to go through it. Plus, there were no cars on the other street—Beck had checked. Stupid to even have a light there, really.)

“Ready?” he asked, and Nach looked over at him, warmth lighting up his eyes.

“Yes, I am,” Nach murmured.

Oh yeah, sexy Santa knew exactly what the plan was. Hallelujah.

Beck unclipped his belt, hopped out, strode over to grab Nach’s hand, and made his way quickly to the front door. They could leave the bags until later—he had plans that couldn’t wait. He opened the door, pulled Nach inside, and slammed the door shut behind them. And that was as far as his restraint lasted.

Nach was bigger than him, but he was pliant as Beck backed him against the hallway wall, grabbed his beard, and pulled him down for a kiss. Nach gave a little groan at the tug on his beard, which only fired Beck up even more.

He licked the seam of Nach’s lips, and his man obligingly opened his mouth. Beck slipped his tongue inside, and somehow Nach still tasted like hot chocolate with a hint of peppermint—he was delicious. Beck groaned, gently licking the inside of Nach’s mouth. When Nach’s tongue ventured into his mouth, he sucked on it, and Nach groaned again, louder this time.

Their kiss turned frenzied—it was like they were trying to devour each other. God, Nach was an amazing kisser. The little mewls and groans he made were such a turn on too. Beck adored a responsive lover (he liked positive feedback—didn’t everyone?), and although Nach was this big stocky sexy bear, Beck could get him to make those deliciously filthy sounds. So fucking hot. He wanted to unwrap Nach like a Christmas present (and yes, he acknowledged to himself that his Christmas puns were totally corny, but they were also true).

Beck broke off the kiss, both of them panting. He looked at Nach, who was flushed, his lips red and plump, and his eyes closed with a blissful expression on his face.

Beck couldn’t wait to take him apart.

He grabbed Nach’s hand and dragged him into the bedroom, though Nach stopped once they entered the doorway.

He hadn’t seen Beck’s room yet, and Beck really let his love for Christmas reign free in here.

“You have a Christmas tree in your room! And snowflake sheets! And lights on the ceiling!” Nach beamed, obviously thrilled with the set up.

Beck laughed gleefully, dragged Nach the rest of the way in, and pushed

him on the bed so he was leaning back and resting on his arms, his legs dangling off the edge. Beck strolled over to turn on the Christmas lights and shut off the main light (and yes, there was some shameless ass wiggling), all while Nach stared at him. He looked like he was ready to lick Beck like a candy cane.

Yes please.

Beck stripped his shirt off, then stripped his pants and socks in one swoop, leaving his boxers on (he thought Nach might appreciate them). He looked at Nach, who was a little slack-jawed at his almost bare body, and then Nach noticed the boxers.

He let out an involuntary guffaw, and Beck playfully touched the bells on the front. On one leg the boxers read, “Jingle My Bells And I’ll Guarantee A White Christmas.”

“What do you think, Santa? Wanna jingle my bells?” Beck laughed, wiggling his eyebrows.

Nach boomed out laughter, but he quickly sobered as he stared at the bulge in Beck’s boxers. Beck sauntered over to the bed and climbed up onto Nach’s lap. The sexy man sat up, wrapping his arms around Beck.

“Why, Santa, is that a candy cane in your pants, or are you just happy to see me?” Beck teased, wiggling his hips a little on Nach’s very hard cock.

Nach chuckled, then moaned, and then his gaze fixed on Beck’s. He really did have the most beautiful eyes. They were full of warmth, and Beck imagined he saw love in them as well.

“You’re so beautiful, Beckett,” Nach whispered, and then they were kissing again, and Beck grabbed Nach’s bottom lip between his teeth and gave a little bite, and Nach made the most lovely rumbly sound.

“Less clothes,” Beck panted, and he climbed off Nach, stripping the man’s sweater and throwing it... somewhere. Then he grabbed the top of Nach’s pants and boxers, and his sexy Santa obligingly lifted his hips so Beck could pull them both down.

Beck stood back, admiring Nach’s body for a moment. Fuck. He had a total dad bod, which just did it for Beck. He had a sexy smattering of hair across his chest and on his legs, and his cock was flushed red, a wetness at the tip to show how turned on Nach was—it was so fucking hot.

Nach was eating Beck up with his eyes the whole time, and Beck stripped his boxers off to let his own cock break free. Nach licked his lips at the sight, and when Beck gave his dick a nice stroke, tightening his fist as he got to the

head, Nach whispered, “So beautiful.”

Beck had never felt sexier.

“Please,” Nach moaned.

“What do you want, my sexy Santa?” Beck asked, stroking himself again. Nach watched, enthralled.

“Let me taste you, please,” Nach begged, and Beck’s dick jumped in his fist at the thought.

Beck groaned and nodded his head, and then, before he could move, Nach was on his knees in front of Beck, his hands on Beck’s thighs, and he swallowed Beck down in one smooth motion.

Beck cried out at the heat and tightness of Nach’s mouth. Beck wasn’t huge, but he wasn’t a slouch in the size department either, and he was amazed when Nach’s lips pressed against his skin. Apparently Nach didn’t have much of a gag reflex, and when he swallowed around the tip of Beck’s dick, it was almost too much.

“Oh god, you’re gonna make me come!” Beck cried, and Nach pulled off. He licked Beck’s dick like it *was* a candy cane, every so often softly sucking on the head, swirling his tongue around.

“Fuck, Nach. I can’t. Get up here,” he cried when Nach swallowed him down again.

“You taste even better than your amazing homemade chocolate chip cookies, and I didn’t think anything was better than those,” Nach said, standing up.

Beck smirked and pushed his sexy guy back until he fell on the bed, then he climbed on top and straddled Nach, kissing him again like a starving man.

When Beck kissed over to Nach’s ear, the man moaned out, “I can’t get enough of you, my sexy elf. You’re so perfect. So beautiful. You shine with joy.”

Beck chuckled. “You make me joyful, Nach. God, you’re sexy.”

Beck kissed his way down Nach’s chest, pressing his hard dick into Nach’s leg as he slid down (and keeping Nach’s hard cock against his own body, because fuck, it was hot feeling how big and hard Nach was against his skin). He stopped at Nach’s pink nipple and gave it a lick, sucking gently when Nach made more of his sexy sounds. He nipped at it, and he could feel Nach’s dick jump against him.

He slid down further and licked at the drop of precum on his sexy Santa’s cock. Beck moaned—Nach tasted sweet, like chocolate and marshmallows—

and he took Nach into his mouth, swirling his tongue around and gently pressing into the slit, looking for more of that wonderful flavor.

“Oh my sweet Beck, you feel so good. Your mouth feels better than heaven,” Nach gasped, breathing heavily.

Beck smiled as he took Nach into his throat (he was no slacker at blowjobs either), gently caressing Nach’s balls with his hand at the same time. The sounds coming out of Nach’s mouth made Beck hump against the bed, because fuck, it was hot, and he needed some friction against his dick.

“Beck, please. By all the archangels, please,” Nach cried out.

Nach’s dick felt even harder in his mouth, and his balls pulled closer to his body. Beck popped off his dick, proud that he had brought Nach so close to the edge.

“Do you want to come in my mouth, or do you want to come inside me?” Beck asked, leaning up to look at Nach’s face. Nach’s eyes went wide at the mention of coming inside Beck. Oh yeah, Nach seemed like anal was definitely an option. Hallelujah. Beck checked in, just in case. Nothing was sexier than consent, after all.

“Do you want to fuck me, Nach? Because I would really love to ride you, my sexy Santa,” Beck purred.

Nach groaned and nodded his head frantically. “Fudge, yes. I want to be inside you, be one with you.”

Beck smiled when Nach said fudge. His sexy Santa was so fucking adorable. He slid up Nach’s body and straddled him, leaning over to his bedside drawer to pull out the lube.

“Fuck, I don’t have condoms,” he admitted. He hadn’t had sex in... well, a really long fucking time.

“You don’t have to worry about that. I haven’t been with anyone in longer than memory, and I cannot give you anything,” Nach said, looking up into Beck’s eyes.

Beck had *never* gone bare with a guy before, but looking into Nach’s eyes, he had the feeling that he could trust Nach with everything, and suddenly he couldn’t stand the idea of something coming between the two of them. It was weird; Beck wasn’t like that—he used condoms. Always. But all his worries just sort of melted away—he fully trusted that Nach was telling him the truth.

“I haven’t been with anyone in a really long time, and I was tested three months ago. I’ve never gone bare before,” Beck admitted, because he wanted

Nach to know.

Nach groaned, laid flat, and pulled Beck forward on his chest until he was gripping Beck's ass. Fuck, Beck could feel Nach's breath on his dick.

Then his sexy Santa licked at Beck's cock while his hands were massaging Beck's ass, pulling his cheeks apart.

"Oh god, Nach," Beck cried out as Nach sucked him down and inserted a finger into his hole at the same time, and Beck had no idea how Nach had gotten the lube on his hand, but it felt too good to think about it much. His man was magical.

There was so much pleasure that Beck could barely process it. Nach stretched his hole, another finger joining the first, and he rubbed against Beck's prostate, alternating one finger and then the other, making sparks fly behind Beck's eyes. He hadn't even realized he'd closed them. At the same time a gentle, warm, pressure engulfed the head of his dick as Nach sucked on him.

"Oh god, Nach. Please!" he cried out.

Impossibly, a third finger joined the first two, and Beck was torn between pushing forward to get his dick further into Nach's mouth and moving backwards so those delicious fingers could continue to massage him inside. He ended up doing both, thrusting forward and then back, and Nach groaned, "Mmmhmmm," around his dick, letting Beck know how much he liked that. It was sensation overload, and Beck was close to coming.

"Need you inside me, Nach. Need to feel you filling me up," he panted, and he moved backwards, groaning as Nach's head followed for a moment, like his man didn't want to give up the feeling of Beck's cock in his mouth.

Then Nach's fingers pulled out, and Beck felt empty for a moment, but he slid backwards on his knees, his hips lifted up. "Need you inside," he moaned again, and he felt Nach's hands under his ass, ready to guide him down.

"Yes, Beckett, my beautiful elf. So sexy," Nach murmured.

Beck looked down into Nach's eyes, and they were shining with love and joy. Nach grabbed his cock and pressed it against Beck's hole, and Beck slid down. They both moaned as Nach's dick smoothly slid inside Beck.

Holy fucking fuck, Nach was big. The stretch was delicious though—no pain, just the sensation of being filled up. All the while, they stared into each other's eyes. It was overwhelming and beautiful, and Beck had the urge to laugh and cry at the same time. It was all so much.

Beck closed his eyes as he sank down the rest of the way, but Nach

murmured, “Look at me, my beautiful elf. So perfect. So sexy. So warm and kind and generous. You feel so good around me. I have never felt anything so good in all the eons.”

Beck was flushed with desire and pleasure at Nach’s words, and he opened his eyes to stare again into that loving face.

“Fuck, Nach. You fucking undo me. It’s too much,” he whispered.

They stayed that way for a moment, for an eternity it almost seemed, with Nach filling him up, their eyes locked, and Beck swore something passed between them, something magical and deeper than anything Beck had ever felt.

Beck started slowly riding Nach, sliding up and down his shaft, his hands planted on Nach’s chest. Nach thrust up into him every time Beck pushed down, and Beck cried out when Nach’s dick hit his prostate.

Sex had never felt so good, and as much as Beck wanted it to last, he couldn’t help speeding up. Nach’s dick was pushing into his prostate on every thrust now, and Beck’s dick was bouncing against Nach’s belly, and even that felt good. Beck slid his hands forward the tiniest bit until Nach’s nipples were between his spread fingers, and then he squeezed his fingers closed, seeing those tight little peaks between them.

Nach moaned out and thrust even harder, and fuck if Beck didn’t literally see stars. He could only hold on, squeezing Nach’s nipples again, as that fat cock positively pummeled his insides, rubbing him, punching into his prostate, causing tingles to spread through his whole body.

Then Nach was grabbing onto Beck’s cock, and it only took one stroke, his fist squeezing the head, before Beck was coming so hard he thought his soul might have left his body.

Nach opened his mouth, catching some of the cum that sprayed out of Beck’s dick, which only extended his orgasm, because fuck, that was hot, and then Nach was filling him, a warmth and pressure he felt deep inside.

The moment seemed to last forever, both of their orgasms just going on and on, and Beck didn’t know if it was just that he’d never come at the same time as the person he was with (apparently that wasn’t just a myth and could actually happen), or if he was just in some kind of orgasm-haze, but it seemed like Nach actually glowed bright white, and Beck could swear he almost saw glowing white wings before he closed his eyes, falling forward onto Nach’s chest.

They both panted, coming down from the high, and eventually Nach’s

softening cock fell out of him. His sexy man wrapped his arms around Beck, kissing him on top of the head and holding him close. Yeah, he was laying in a mess, and yeah, they'd need to get cleaned up, but Beck needed a moment, because he had never had such a powerful orgasm in his entire life. Nach's arms also just felt too damn good wrapped around him.

He was keeping his sexy Santa. No doubt about it. He wondered if he could talk Nach into moving in. Alan probably wouldn't mind. Was it absolutely crazy? Yes. But Beck didn't care.

He just hoped Nach felt the same way.

CHAPTER 11

Nachielus



THEY MUST HAVE DOZED OFF, which was strange for Nach. He'd felt Beck getting sleepy, and his sexy little elf had muttered something about cleaning up, but then his breathing had been deep and even, so Nach *might* have cleaned them up. Not, like, a miracle or anything. Hygiene couldn't possibly be considered a miracle. Just a little intentional thinking about cleanliness. That was all. Really.

Nach would have been content to lay there and hold Beck in his arms, because his elf felt like he was made to be in Nach's arms. He may have also been thinking about how he could stay topside for as long as possible. Surely he wouldn't be missed upstairs. He could, like, pop in each day to go to "work," do some paperwork, and then pop back topside to be with Beck. Surely such a plan could work. The commute might be a little far, but he didn't need to worry about that—perks of being an angel.

Nach had been daydreaming about a lifetime with Beck—baking together, decorating, going to craft fairs, volunteering at the center, making love (lots of making love)—and somehow he must have dozed off amidst all the happy thoughts.

He woke suddenly to a door slamming, and he felt Beck stir on top of him.

"Hmm?" his sexy elf murmured, but before Nach could ease him back to sleep, he heard more banging from the kitchen.

Apparently Beck did too.

Beck sleepily groaned and sat up, sliding off Nach and rubbing his eyes. "Is Alan home?" he asked.

“He must be,” Nach agreed, and they both flinched when they heard another bang accompanied by a curse.

Beck looked at Nach, eyes wide. “He isn’t usually so grumpy. Something must have happened.”

They both pulled on clothes rather quickly, which was a shame, because Nach would have gladly stared at Beck’s naked body for quite a bit longer. Really, whoever thought the naked body was sinful was just silly; it was a work of divine art. Nach didn’t ever think he’d seen such a perfect example as Beck, however, but maybe he was a little partial. His sexy elf was so full of love and joy, and it made him shine both inside and out.

They dressed in record speed, with only a few longing glances at each other, and Nach followed Beck out to the kitchen area.

Alan was sitting at the kitchen island with a plate of cookies, his head in his hand. His posture looked utterly defeated. Nach couldn’t imagine a family dinner making someone so despondent, and he wondered if he needed to switch out Alan’s family for a nicer one.

No, that would definitely qualify as a miracle. He supposed they’d just have to comfort Alan in the human way.

“Hey, Alan, what’s going on?” Beck asked.

Beck gasped when Alan raised his face, because the man had obviously been crying. His eyes were red, and they filled with tears again at Beck’s question. Beck rushed in to hug him, and Nach followed, placing his hand on Alan’s shoulder.

“What’s happened? Is everyone ok?” Beck cried out, still hugging his roommate tightly.

Alan shook his head no, and then a fresh cascade of tears came. Nach could only stare helplessly, gently squeezing Alan’s shoulder and trying to give him some calm as Beck rocked him back and forth, still hugging him.

Alan eventually gathered himself together, wiping his eyes and blowing his nose with tissues that Beck helpfully brought over.

“It’s Ma,” Alan finally said. “They found something on her last scan, and she didn’t want to tell us until she had more news. She really thought it was nothing, and she didn’t want to worry us. Well, it isn’t nothing. It’s bad. It spread, and the prognosis isn’t good. She said she’s going to fight and do everything she needs to. They ran some more tests on Friday to see the best course of treatment, but Beck... the prognosis isn’t good.”

Upon repeating those words, fresh tears came, and then Beck was crying

too, even as he murmured words of comfort to Alan. Nach enfolded them both within his arms, trying to infuse some peace into them.

Alan finally pulled away, murmuring about taking a moment, and he went into the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

Beck turned to Nach and buried his head in Nach's chest. "Not Mama B. She's the best mom ever, and she's so young! She's got so much left to give! God, she's the reason Alan is such a great guy. She'd do anything for anyone. I've been to family holidays and dinners, and all through college she sent both Alan and I care packages. She and my mom have even gone out to lunch, and they talk on the phone. I just can't... I can't even imagine..." he trailed off, crying softly.

"Shh, it'll be ok, Beck. It will. I promise," Nach murmured.

Well, there was nothing else for it. This would *definitely* count as a miracle. There was no doubt about that. Life saving events always came to the attention of upper management, but what could Nach do? Yes, death was only a step into another realm, but Alan and Beck wouldn't see Mama B until they themselves journeyed into the afterlife, and Nach had seen the effects of grief on families. Even if she could overcome whatever she had, it didn't sound like it would be easy on her or those who loved her.

He couldn't stand to see his Beck so sad. He knew this kind of miracle would cause endless problems, and he wondered what management would do to him. With a pang he realized that it might mean he couldn't see his sexy elf again, and his whole being ached at the thought. But maybe he was alone in his infatuation, and Beck might just move on if Nach had to leave. His breath hitched at that thought, but the pain he felt coming from Beck was worse.

And if his elf *would* miss him? If he asked Nach to stay? Well, Nach would find a way. He'd heard rumors of fallen angels—all very hush hush, but Nach would do anything for Beck. He would give up his wings, give up the right to enter heaven; he'd even give up his immortality if that's what it took. His chest ached with Beck's pain, and he needed to make things better for his elf.

So he wiggled his nose, and it was done.

Of course, Beck was still crying softly against his shirt and Alan was still enclosed in the bathroom.

Ah, what was one more miracle or two at this point. He was already in for it. No reason not to have some lab results come back early, and have a doctor

happen to look at them at... Nach looked at the clock—ten o'clock at night. No reason for the doctor not to call Mama B and give her the news. No reason to not have that all happen about ten minutes ago (although that was slightly trickier to accomplish).

Alan's phone rang on the kitchen counter. "Alan!" Nach called. "Your phone! I think you better get it!"

Alan came out of the bathroom, red-eyed and sniffling, and looked at his phone. He pressed the answer button as soon as he saw who it was.

"Everything ok?... Wait, what? Slow down... What do you mean the doctor called? I was just there twenty minutes ago, and it's after ten o'clock... He said what?... But that can't be... Are you sure?... He's sure?... I can't believe it. Yeah, ok... Yeah, I'll come back over." Alan paused then, and apparently it wasn't his mother on the phone but rather his sister, because he said, "Sis, are you absolutely sure?" She must have answered, and then he hung up the phone.

"Holy shit. Holy shit!" Alan cried out, a smile spreading across his face. Beck was still cuddled under Nach's arm, but they'd both been watching the phone call.

"What is it?" Beck asked.

"I can't even fucking believe it. It's like the biggest Christmas miracle ever!" Alan bounced over and hugged Beck tightly enough to get a squeak, then he hugged Nach just as tightly.

"What happened?" Beck demanded.

"The doctor happened to call the lab to ask about her test results—apparently something didn't feel right to him or something, I don't know. Anyway, she's fine! Healthy as a horse, the doctor said! He said the initial tests must have been wrong or something, because there's no way everything could have cleared up just like that, and apparently he was muttering about labs being wrong originally or something, but he said these are one hundred percent my mom's labs and she is one hundred percent ok. Jess wants me to head back over there, because everyone is gonna celebrate."

Alan was rushing around, gathering his coat and hat. "Hey, do you guys wanna come?" he asked, pausing at the door.

Beck smiled. "No, you go, spend this time with your family, but tell Mama B we'll be stopping by soon."

"Ok!" Alan called out, and then he was out the door and gone.

Beck breathed out a sigh. "Holy shit, this last half hour has been like a

roller coaster. I can't even process it."

"Sit, and I'll get you some tea," Nach said, rubbing Beck's arms.

Beck smiled at him, then tilted his head. "Hey, are you ok? You seem a little... worried, or something."

"I'll be ok. I'm just glad Alan's mom is alright," he said softly. Then he leaned down and kissed Beck softly. In the midst of their kiss, though, he heard a faint chime, so he ushered Beck over to the couch and made his way into the kitchen.

Darn interoffice mail—it chimed at you and appeared wherever you were. He figured he'd have more time, especially since heavenly messages weren't supposed to be delivered with mortals around. He saw some writing appearing on the stove top, but he studiously ignored it. If he didn't see the message, then he couldn't do what it said, now could he?

"Hey, did you hear that?" Beck asked as a slightly louder chime sounded.

"Ah, hear what?" Nach called, shielding the stove with his body when Beck turned around to look into the kitchen.

Only then another louder chime sounded, and Nach could see writing forming on the countertop too. He wanted to growl in frustration at the leadership team.

"That noise," Beck responded. "I just heard it again!"

"Everything is fine!" Nach called out loudly, trying to splay his body across the counter top now as well. Beck was giving him a really odd look, but better than seeing the writing. He still hadn't read it, either, so surely...

"Uh, is writing appearing on the microwave?" Beck asked curiously.

Nach slid his body across the counter, blocking the microwave now. "Nope! Haha. Definitely not! Because that would be weird, right?"

Beck stood up, walking toward the kitchen. "Um, I think it's appearing on the cabinets now, too?" he said.

Nach climbed up onto the counter, spread his arms to cover the cabinet, and tried to maneuver himself to cover the microwave too.

"Haha, nope! No weird writing appearing all over the place!" he cried out. A chime rang out again. "No weird chimes either! Probably just your phone! You better go check it!" Nach suggested hopefully.

Beck only stared at him incredulously, mouth slightly open. Then his eyes flicked up, then flicked back to Nach. Ever so slowly, as if he might startle Nach, Beck lifted a hand and pointed at the ceiling.

Nach looked up.

Aw, fudge. The message was scrawling across the ceiling now too.

He jerked his head down, because he was *not* going to read the message, but the movement was a little too much for his precarious position on the counter, because he tumbled onto the floor with a thump.

Well, this certainly could be going better.

CHAPTER 12

Beckett



BECK GASPED when Nach tumbled off the counter. He ran around the kitchen island and knelt down beside Nach, who had his eyes closed.

“Are you ok?” he asked urgently. Fuck, had Nach hit his head?

Although Beck should probably be wondering about his own head, because there were definitely words being written out of thin air on pretty much every surface in his kitchen. (He was a little afraid to check the living room or any other rooms in the house—dealing with the ghost writing in the kitchen was enough.)

Nach wiggled his nose, opened his eyes and looked at the ceiling, muttered, “Fudge,” and then slammed his eyes shut again.

And Beck suddenly made the weirdest connection in his head. He almost laughed out loud, except Nach did a lot of nose wiggling, and a lot of really great things had happened today. The lady in the store, the guy, the barista... even Alan’s mom.

Holy shit. Nach was a witch. Or maybe it was a genie? He always got those two 60s shows mixed up.

“Ohmygod!” Beck cried out, giving Nach a little shake. “You totally grant wishes! Or do magic! Because I can’t remember if nose twitching was on *Bewitched* or *I Dream of Jeannie*.”

Nach sighed and opened his eyes, but he kept them firmly on Beck and *not* on the writing on the counters. And stove. And ceiling. And now also the floor.

“I’m not a witch or a genie,” he said morosely.

“Nach, there’s, like, magical writing appearing all over my kitchen. And I

wasn't the one who hit my head. And crazy stuff has been happening all day!" Beck insisted.

He knew it sounded totally crazy, but it was also true.

"Those weren't *really* miracles. Just little things to bring some joy, that's all," Nach muttered, but that still didn't help Beck figure things out.

So he looked at the kitchen island, which helpfully also now had writing.

"Nachielus, Angel of Joy and Fulfillment, you are hereby ordered—" he began, only Nach's hand covered his mouth before he could get anything else out.

He looked down at Nach, who looked frantic.

"Don't read it!" he hissed. "If you don't read it, then I can't do it!"

Nach stared at Beck imploringly, and Beck nodded his head. Nach slowly removed his hand, and Beck kept his eyes on Nach.

"Nach?" Beck questioned softly. "Are you, like, really an angel?"

Nach sighed again, looking sad. "I'm sorry I didn't tell you, Beckett. We aren't supposed to give that information out."

Beck mulled that over for a moment. He was a little hurt that Nach hadn't told him, but really, that wasn't something you just came out with. Beck had made plenty of assumptions without asking questions, and he couldn't blame Nach for just going along with things.

But what about whatever this thing was between them? Was he just some one night stand, some Earth-bound adventure, for the angel?

"So, what was, like, the plan? Were you just gonna disappear one day? Or just pretend they found your stolen stuff and give me a fake number to call?" Beck murmured, unable to meet Nach's eyes at the thought.

"No!" Nach cried out loudly enough that Beck jumped a bit. Nach reached up and grabbed his face, looking him in the eyes. "No," he said more softly. "I would never have done anything to hurt you. I would never have disappeared or lied to you."

Beck swallowed thickly, because he saw only sincerity in Nach's eyes. "Well, I hate to tell you, but you leaving at all would hurt me. I don't want you to go. Not ever, Nach. I know that's crazy, and I know we've only known each other for a couple days, but you mean something to me. You're important to me. You make me happier than I've ever been. It's like I feel you right here"—Beck pointed to his chest—"and it *hurts* when I think of you not being with me."

"Oh Beck. I won't leave, not if I can avoid it. I'll do whatever it takes to

stay with you, because I feel the same way. I have given joy and fulfillment to millions over the eons, but Beck, you are *my* joy. You fulfill me in a way nothing else ever has. Perhaps it *is* crazy, but I love you, Beck, and I would do anything for you. I would give up immortality itself for you,” Nach confessed.

Beck leaned down and kissed Nach, their lips brushing against each other. It was soft and gentle and Beck felt the love deep in his bones, like he was finally warm after being cold for too long.

They probably would have ended up taking things further, because the kiss was getting a bit heated, but a loud chime interrupted them.

Beck leaned up, looking into Nach’s eyes. “I love you, too, Nach. My sexy angel.” He smiled. “But maybe we should get you off the floor, yeah?” he laughed, standing up and pulling Nach up by the hand.

When they were both standing, Beck looked out into the living room and realized the tv, the couch, and even the back doors were also now covered in writing.

Nach was studiously ignoring the writing and staring at Beck’s face. Beck kinda hoped he didn’t end up with writing all over his forehead since Nach wouldn’t look anywhere else.

“So, I hate to ask, but maybe we need to figure out this whole writing on the wall thing? Because I don’t think Alan will be too thrilled to come home to words on every surface. Although, I guess you probably healed his mom? So he would actually forgive you anything,” Beck realized. Another chime sounded then. “Still, the chiming is kinda annoying.”

“Yes, I suppose I better explain,” Nach admitted. “I didn’t realize how... persistent the messages would be, but then I’ve never ignored interoffice mail from the leadership team before. I suppose I shall have to read it at some point, but perhaps some backup might be in order. I think I know just who to contact, as well.”

Nach was thoughtfully rubbing his beard, and Beck had a moment to mull over the absurdity of his life at this moment.

Apparently he had fallen in love with an angel (which was crazy but also kinda cool). And apparently heaven had a leadership team. And sent interoffice mail. And was annoying. And now his sexy angel was going to call for some sort of assistance, because this interoffice mail was obviously *not* good news. Maybe Nach knew he was being called back to heaven, and he didn’t want to go?

“Ah, I think I know what to do?” Nach finally admitted, although he didn’t sound very confident. “I’ll need a mirror, though, I think.”

Beck followed him over to the entryway, where they had a small mirror hanging at head height on the one wall inside the door. (What? Beck liked to make sure his boy band hair was looking good before he left the house.)

Nach proceeded to... draw on the mirror? With his finger? It looked a little weird, and Nach looked more than a little unsure. When he finished, he turned and walked out into the living room a bit, so Beck did the same, not sure what to expect.

If he gave a slightly high pitched, loud scream when a short, red demon appeared in front of the Christmas tree, could he really be blamed? The demon was shorter than him but bulky, it had black horns, a tail, and it was wearing some type of loincloth kinda thing. It also looked pissed.

Beck had backed up into Nach, who wrapped his arms firmly around Beck, pulling him over to his side and keeping one arm firmly around him. And that’s when Beck felt something else at his back, so he looked over, and holy shit, Nach had wings. Beautiful, white, feathery wings. Beck had to resist the urge to reach out and pet one, but now probably wasn’t the time.

“Why is an upstairs afterlifer summoning me? What business do you have, angel?” the demon growled out.

“I was, uh, trying to summon Minos?” Nach admitted.

The demon scoffed. “Ha! Like Minos has time to deal with angelic interference. The Judge of the Damned is busy and cannot be bothered with upstairs nonsense. What do you want, angel?” it asked.

“Well, I need to speak to him,” Nach demanded. “It’s important.”

The demon seemed to really notice Nach then, squinting a bit.

“Is that you, Santa Clause?” it finally howled out, cackling. “Have you been naughty? We even heard downstairs about your Christmas fiasco. We thought you were banned from topside!”

Beck looked over at Nach, more than a little confused, but Nach was blushing brightly.

“Wait. Hold on. Nach, are you *actually* Santa Clause?” Beck whispered.

The demon chose to answer, however, and his poor Nach looked more than a little mortified. “What was it? You just wanted to give some kids some presents?” it chortled. “Every year! And put up some lights? And maybe create some feasts? How did you *not* think you’d make it into human folklore?”

“Well, it was a sad time of year, and people needed joy,” Nach admitted sheepishly. “And we had such fun the first year, and so it... expanded. The lights were just pretty, because the nights were so dark and long, and food was sparse, so what was a feast or two in the mix?”

Beck was staring at Nach. O.M.G.

He was literally dating Santa Clause.

He had *slept* with Santa Clause. (And it was really good sex, too, but still. Santa Clause.)

Ok, so maybe the whole thing was actually kinda cool. Beck loved Christmas, so wasn't it, like, pretty much perfect that he'd end up dating the actual Santa?

“Wait, wait. What about the sleigh?” Beck asked, thinking about all the Christmas folklore surrounding Santa.

“Well, I often borrowed some sleighs in the villages I was in to carry around the trees. I didn't ever make the sleighs fly though,” Nach assured him.

“That was just the reindeer, wasn't it?” the demon laughed out.

“Hey, that wasn't even my idea. Ariocho didn't want to leave them behind, and he was the one who made them fly!” Nach insisted. He turned to Beck then. “Animals... like me. A few times a demon of chaos tagged along, and really, that's my fault, because I should have known better. So yeah, that's where the flying reindeer come from.”

“You didn't ride in the sleigh; you pulled trees with it?” Beck asked.

“Some of those homes were dark and dank and, well, people didn't bathe as much back then, especially in winter. Some fresh pine always added a lovely odor, and the trees brightened things up, and then the people could use the wood for burning and keeping warm. It was a kindness. And yes, it looked pretty. Festive and fun,” Nach admitted.

“You started quite a mess. I heard the leadership team was madder than a pit worker with no one to torture,” the demon laughed.

As if on cue, there was a chime, and writing started scrawling across the few empty walls.

“Ohhhh, looks like someone is in trouble,” the demon singsonged, finally seeming to notice the writing that was pretty much everywhere at this point.

“Yes,” Nach bit out, clearly frustrated. “Which is why I need to see Minos. Now.”

“It doesn't work like that, angel. We don't answer to the likes of you, and

your trouble with the leadership team isn't a problem for demons," it replied nastily.

Nach sighed. "Look, Adam told me—"

"Oh! You talked to Adam?" it interrupted, suddenly looking a bit nervous.

"Yes," Nach ground out, "and he's the one who told me to come topside and that he and Minos would take care of any trouble."

"Well, shit, why didn't you say that to start?" the demon demanded. "Fuck. You better not tell him I wasted any time. I will *not* go to another 'sensitivity class,' and if I get benched from the department dodgeball game because you rat me out for not getting him right away, I will hunt you down and flay the skin from your body," it snarled.

"Um, ok," Nach agreed.

"Great!" the demon said, smiling (which was a little creepy—a few too many teeth in that mouth). "I'll send him right up! And remember, I did a great job! If you get a survey to fill out, I'd appreciate all five star ratings!"

Then the demon was gone.

Beck just looked at Nach, but his man... err, angel... looked just as confused as him.

Then a *huge* maroon demon appeared in his living room, and he was absolutely terrifying. Holy fuck. And tucked under his arm was a cute guy who *looked* human, and who did not appear to be terrified. In fact, he was smiling widely and actually clapped his hands in glee.

"Santa! OMG! And look what you found! He's a cutie! And awww, look at you all protectively wrapped around him. So romantic! You guys, like, a couple? You look like a couple. Have you two messed around? How's angel sex? I gotta say, I give demon sex ten out of ten stars. Those tails!"—Adam fanned himself—"But angels don't have tails, and they all seem a little uptight. I had a *horrid* experience with the upstairs crew, but Nach is a sweetie! So you're in good hands!" the guy babbled, wandering over and shaking his hand. "I'm Adam! You are?" he asked.

"Uh, Beck," he managed to answer.

"So nice to meet you! So exciting!" he gushed, but then he seemed to notice the writing everywhere, because his face took on a definite pissed off look. "Those fuckers," he swore, wandering around the apartment.

Honestly, it was all a bit much for Beck, and Nach must have sensed it, because he pulled Beck even closer, hugging him tight. Beck just really

hoped that Adam and the super scary, big demon (Minos?) could manage a Christmas miracle here, because Beck could not lose Nach.

CHAPTER 13

Nachielus



NACH WAS FEELING hopeful now that Adam and Minos were here, although he realized that seeing his wings, meeting a random demon, and then meeting the Judge of the Damned and Adam (who was really a bit overwhelming) might be a lot for his human to handle.

He could feel Beck's worry, and he hugged him tight. He couldn't lose him.

"I can't lose Beck," Nach blurted out. "I haven't read the messages, because I *might* have performed a rather large miracle that *might* have gotten the attention of the leadership team. I'm not even supposed to be topside. I'm sure they're calling me back, and I won't go. I won't leave Beck behind. I can't. I was hoping... well, I was hoping you could help smooth things over with them," Nach admitted.

Minos chuckled at Nach's confession. "Just couldn't help yourself, could you?"

"He saved Mama B's life!" Beck burst out. His elf was shaking a bit at confronting the demon (and Nach realized, perhaps a bit belatedly, that Minos was probably a bit frightening to have standing in your living room). "She was really sick, and he saved her. And if he's the angel of joy and fulfillment, isn't that his job? To make people joyful? That's what he did. What he *does*. He brings joy wherever he goes. Aren't angels supposed to help humans? Because he was just doing his job, and there's no way he should get in trouble for that!" Beck cried out.

Nach hugged him close again.

"I can't lose you, Nach. I love you, and I can't lose you, but I won't let

you give up your immortality either,” Beck murmured, and Nach leaned down to kiss his adorable elf. Oh, how he adored this man. He could hardly believe the strength of his feelings.

The kiss may have gotten slightly out of hand, because they were interrupted by some rather pointed throat clearing.

“Not that I don’t love a little live porn show,” Adam interrupted, “and you two are H-O-T together, and super sweet too, but let’s leave that for after dealing with this nonsense, hmm?”

Nach pulled back, giving Beck one last peck on the lips, because he just couldn’t resist.

“So what do we do?” Nach asked.

“You’ll have to read the message,” Minos grumbled. “Demons know it’ll just follow you around if you don’t.”

“I’ll do it!” Adam volunteered. “I can give you the general idea. That ought to satisfy the alarms, although I’m not really sure you’ll need our help anyways,” Adam admitted cryptically.

Adam and Minos shared a knowing look, but Nach had no idea what they were thinking. Adam sort of shrugged and nodded his head toward him and Beck, and Minos shrugged back and nodded, and it was all rather odd.

Adam then cleared his throat and focused on one of the many messages. “They are always so pompous,” he mocked, then he started reading. “It has come to our attention, blah blah blah... hmmm...” he mumbled under his breath a bit. “Nach! You didn’t just perform *one* miracle!” he cried, stopping and looking over at Nach.

“Well, I mean, I didn’t think the rest *really* counted as miracles. Just little trifling things, surely,” Nach defended.

Adam laughed delightedly. “My, my—you have quite the list of transgressions according to them!” He read through them under his breath, and yes, it was a rather long list. Adam smiled at some, gave awww’s at others, and eventually, after quite a bit of time, must have reached the bottom of the list. “Damn, Nach, you don’t do anything by half measures!” he laughed.

Nach just blushed, and Beck hugged him a little tighter. “I spread joy! It’s my job!” Nach defended.

“You certainly do!” Adam giggled. “I especially liked the ‘post-coitus cleanup’ miracle.”

Beck groaned, and Nach mumbled, “I didn’t think that *really* counted as a

miracle.”

“Nachielus, you have a very loose interpretation of miracles,” Adam laughed. “But here’s the serious part,” he continued, going back to reading. “Not permitted topside, blah blah blah, the unfortunate solstice incident”—Adam snorted at that—“unsanctioned miracles, blah blah blah...” Adam got quiet as he finished reading, then he sighed.

“How bad is it?” Nach asked softly.

“Pretty bad. They’re calling for your immediate return, mountains of paperwork, and a demotion that would include a block on your ability to perform miracles,” Adam admitted. “It also has a cease and desist warning for communication or contact with any mortal souls whatsoever.”

With that, the writing disappeared. Nach supposed its job was now complete since the message had been delivered, even if he hadn’t read it himself.

“Well, I just won’t go,” Nach pronounced. “What else are they going to do to me? I’m already being demoted, according to the letter. So I won’t go back. They can take away my ability to do miracles. I can live like a mortal soul. I’ll miss bringing smiles to people’s faces and bringing joy to others’ lives, but I’ll do anything and give up anything to stay with Beck,” Nach admitted. He loved his job, but Beck was worth more to him than everything else.

“Hey,” Beck interrupted. “That’s bullshit.”

Everyone turned to look at Beck, including Nach. Maybe he’d read this all wrong? Fudge, did Beck not want him around?

“Nope—no sad face. You are absolutely staying with me, and I love you, and no ‘leadership team,’ or whatever the heck they are, are stopping that. So wipe that sad look off your face,” Beck demanded.

Nach breathed a sigh of relief.

“What’s bullshit,” Beck continued, “is the idea of you not doing your job and bringing joy to people. Nach, you *are* your job. You created a whole holiday built around joy, for fuck’s sake. Sure, you did it with some miracles, and sure, you did a lot of miracles over the past few days, but those only accounted for half the smiles that you brought to people. Playing Santa at the center, smiling and waving to everyone we meet, helping people in stores, complimenting everyone who made every drink or food item you consumed over the last few days... Nach, my beautiful, sexy angel, you *are* joy. Maybe you help that along with a miracle or two, but you do it even without those.

You'll keep on bringing people joy even if those assholes take away your miracle ability," Beck finished.

Nach looked at Beck in wonder. His elf was right, and he could keep on bringing joy even without miracles. What would he do without Beck? He was about to kiss him again when Adam interrupted that train of thought.

"I like him," Adam whispered to Minos, nodding his head toward Beck. "He's a keeper."

"Yes, he reminds me of someone," Minos chuckled, staring pointedly at Adam.

Nach would have gotten warm fuzzies over the demon and his human (because they were cute together), but he had a bit of a crisis on his hands.

"So, what do I do?" Nach asked.

Suddenly, a shrill, high pitched noise sounded. Everyone in the room groaned. Not again.

"What the hell is *that*?" Beck demanded.

"That," Minos stated calmly, "is a recall notice. It is meant to transport the recalled individual to management's office."

"Oh hell no," Beck said, grabbing onto Nach even harder, like he could prevent him from being transported away. "They are *not* taking him!"

Nach admitted to himself that he was more than a little concerned. If they forcibly recalled him... But the sound, shriller and louder, blasted out again, and still nothing happened.

Adam smirked. Minos grumbled a laugh. Beck stared at them both like they'd lost their minds. Nach was feeling similar.

"I knew it!" Adam cried out gleefully. "Aww, Minos—we got another pair of soulmates!"

"Indeed we do, my soul," Minos grumbled.

"What *exactly* is going on? Because they are *not* taking my Nach!" Beck snapped.

"I really do like you!" Adam smirked. "You're feisty! Which you gotta be when it comes to corporate afterlife assholes. So... to make a really long story short, we think you guys are, like, soulmates. Which means they *can't* separate you two. Oh, and you'll be together forever. Congrats!" he announced cheerily.

Nach stared at Adam, mouth slightly open. Soulmates? Together forever? He then looked down at Beck to see him smiling broadly.

"God, I really am living in a Hallmark movie," Beck joked.

“Eh, more like a dirty gay romance with fated mates,” Adam responded.

“Ohh, that sounds interesting,” Beck admitted.

“Well, have I got a reading list for you, then,” Adam gushed, but Minos just murmured, “Adam,” which apparently got the chatterbox back on track.

“Ah, yes, I guess we’ll get to that later. We do have more important things to deal with, I suppose. We’ll have to do some drinks in Limbo or something,” Adam reassured Beck. Beck just sort of nodded confusedly, and Adam plowed on. “Anyway, as for the demotion and the removal of powers, well, Minos and I will handle that.”

“I told you that you should have taken over leadership, my soul. We wouldn’t have to deal with this mess if you had,” Minos scowled.

“Aw, big guy, you’d miss me too much helping you hand out punishments. You know how I love going to work with you,” Beck gushed, winking at the big scary demon. He turned back to Nach and Beck then, clapping his hands. “Anyways, it might take a few months, because Yah knows the leadership team *loves* paperwork, but we’ll straighten it out. And trust me, the leadership team will face suitable punishment for this fuck up. Seriously, telling an angel of joy they can’t spread joy? We’ll take care of whoever made *that* decision,” Adam declared, rolling his eyes.

“You two will have each other, even if Nach doesn't have his powers,” Minos added.

“Yup! Sound good, you guys?” Adam asked.

“Uh...” Beck mumbled.

“Well...” Nach started, but Adam and Minos were apparently done.

“Perfect! We’ll keep you posted! Hopefully it’ll only be a few months. Enjoy each other! And Beck, we’ll chat about those books!” Adam beamed, and then he walked over and jumped up into Minos’s arms.

“Congratulations. You are truly blessed if you’ve found your soulmate,” Minos murmured as he stared adoringly at Adam, and then the two of them were gone.

CHAPTER 14

Beckett



THE SUPER SCARY demon and the super outgoing human left, and Nach and Beck were standing together, arms wrapped around each other.

Beck waited for the shrill sound again, or for Nach to disappear too, or for him to wake up in his bed and find out that this whole thing was really a dream.

Nach must have been waiting too, because it seemed like they stood there, holding each other, for quite awhile. Eventually Beck rested his head against Nach's chest, and they both relaxed a little bit. Shortly after that they made their way to the couch in silent agreement and sat down, still wrapped around each other and cuddled up.

Beck wasn't sure how much time had passed—they were apparently both processing everything—but eventually he spoke.

“Soulmates, huh?” he asked Nach.

“I had no idea such a thing existed. There were rumours, of course—little whispers here and there—but I didn't really listen to them,” Nach admitted. “To think of having someone who is your other half, who is perfect for you, for all of eternity? It was unfathomable to imagine.”

“Are you happy about it?” Beck asked, feeling a little nervous.

Nach looked down at him, and Beck saw love shining in his eyes. Love and adoration. Nach leaned down, gently kissing his lips, licking the seam until Beck opened his mouth. He loved the feel of Nach's beard against his skin and the taste of Nach—still peppermint and chocolate. They explored each other's mouths, but it was soft and slow. Later they would have time for passion and frenzy, but now they just enjoyed the feeling of each other.

Eventually, Nach broke away. “I am beyond happy, my sweet elf. I never dreamed I would be blessed with someone as wonderful as you. You told them that I bring joy even without miracles, and perhaps that’s true. But you do so as well. I could see your soul shining with joy from the first moment I met you.”

“Do you regret losing your miracle ability?” Beck asked, still feeling anxious. He had no doubt that Nach loved him, but he had been stripped of a part of who he was. That couldn’t be easy.

Nach hmm’d thoughtfully. “I have faith that Minos and Adam will fix this. But even if they can’t, I regret nothing. You were right—I can carry on my job even without miracles. Beyond that, you are so full of joy that I know you’ll help me. You already spread joy everywhere yourself. You are the most giving, kind, wonderful soul I have ever met. I may have performed countless miracles over the eons, but I never really knew what it was like to get my own. Now I do. You, my dearest Beckett, are the true Christmas miracle. If I never perform another miracle, your love is worth it.”

Beck leaned up and kissed Nach. Oh, how he loved this man... or angel. Whatever he was, Beck adored him.

“What about you?” Nach asked. “This has been a lot. It’s been a whirlwind of an evening. Are you okay with everything that’s happened? You’re sort of stuck with me now,” Nach joked, but Beck could sense his angel’s worry in the question.

“Oh Nach, you are more than I could ever have asked for. If I’m your miracle, then you’re mine. I have never been happier, and I’m definitely not ‘stuck’ with you. I’m blessed to have you in my life. I was trying to figure out how to keep you long before I knew any of this,” Beck admitted.

They stared at each other with love, leaning together to kiss again. Before long, the soft, gentle kisses became urgent, their mouths slanting against each other, and then Nach was kissing down Beck’s neck. Beck felt Nach’s beard scratching against his skin, and he fervently hoped he’d have some whisker burn to show for it. The feeling was exquisite, and he wanted a mark from his lover. His soulmate, apparently. Beck almost laughed in joy at the thought, but then his shirt was over his head, and Nach’s tongue did something amazing to his nipple, and he could only gasp.

“Bedroom. Lube. Inside me,” Beck cried out, barely able to form words. He would have loved to have taken Nach right there, but he did like a little lube, and that was one miracle Nach couldn’t perform right now. Beck didn’t

mind, though. They would manage just fine the old fashioned way.

Nach chuckled at Beck's urgency, and then they were kissing and (rather clumsily) making their way to the bedroom, clothes being shed as they went.

By the time they got to Beck's room they were both naked, and while Nach pushed the door shut, Beck spread himself out on the bed, pulling the lube out of the bedside drawer.

He didn't waste a second in squeezing some onto his fingers, and then he inserted a finger into himself and groaned, and Nach stared at him and groaned right along with him.

"Angels and demons, that is the sexiest thing I have ever seen," Nach ground out, absently giving his cock a long stroke, almost like he couldn't help himself.

Beck licked his lips and inserted another finger, because fuck, he needed that cock inside him. Now.

"Come make love to me, my soulmate," Beck murmured.

Nach climbed up the bed, and Beck took out his fingers, hastily wiping them on the bedspread (that's what laundry was for, after all).

When Nach was fully on top of him, they gazed into each other's eyes. God, Beck loved this man. He felt like they were tied together, like they were two halves of a whole, and he supposed they were.

They both moaned when Nach entered him, their eyes never leaving each other. Beck wrapped his legs around Nach, staring up into those beautiful, golden eyes.

"I love you, Beckett," Nach whispered.

"God, I love you too, Nachielus. With all that I am," Beck returned.

It was a perfect moment, and Beck wished that they could exist in it forever. He was filled up with his lover, they were staring into one another's eyes, and Beck had never felt so connected to anyone before in all his life. He felt tears rush to his eyes at the beauty of it, and he saw Nach overcome with emotion as well.

They made love slowly, reveling in the feel of each other's bodies, leaning together to kiss, then breaking apart to stare into one another's eyes. They basked in the moment, sharing soft kisses, letting their hands wander over each other's skin, smiling and murmuring words of love the entire time.

It couldn't last forever, however, and eventually they both felt the urgency of their orgasms approaching. Nach pumped into him faster, hitting Beck's sweet spot, and Nach's belly rubbed against his cock, causing

amazing friction. He felt the orgasm overcome him like a tsunami, crashing over him and making him cry out, and he heard Nach cry out at the same time, the two of them coming together, bliss overwhelming them both. It was like his orgasm would never end, and he felt like he left his body because the feeling was so intense.

Eventually Beck came back to reality to find himself on his side, wrapped in Nach's arms. Aww, his sexy Santa hadn't wanted to crush him. Nach was softly running his fingers through Beck's hair, and Beck looked at him with love.

"We don't need miracles. We make our own," Nach smiled.

"Yes, but we'll have to do our own 'post-coitus cleanup' this time," Beck giggled.

"Nothing would make me happier than to clean up my soulmate," Nach admitted, and he started to pull away, but Beck pulled him back.

"In a moment," he whispered. "We have all the time in the world, after all, so we'll clean up in a moment."

Nach settled back in, and they basked in the feel of each other. Yes, there was cleanup to do. And Beck would have to explain something to Alan—he had no idea what. They'd have to figure out clothes and all the ordinary mundane non-miracle things for Nach, but Beck wasn't worried. They'd have each other, and they'd figure it out together.

They were soulmates, and that was all that really counted. They could face anything together, and they would do it with joy.

Beck couldn't wait.

Epilogue



“**ARE** you guys totally sure you don’t mind me being here for your Christmas morning?” Alan asked.

Beck and Nach were snuggled up on the couch, matching pajamas on, Christmas carols playing, and the house twinkling with Christmas lights. It really was sort of magical, and Alan didn’t want to ruin what could be a really romantic moment.

Alan had his own matching pajamas, which was probably a little weird, but his roommate had insisted. Alan grumbled about Beck’s enthusiasm over Christmas all the time, but the truth was, he also kind of loved it. Beck was like the annoying younger brother he’d never had. Not that he was that much younger. Or his brother. But whatever.

“Of course not!” Beck cried out.

“You’re family! Why would we not want you here for Christmas morning?” Nach asked, seeming genuinely perplexed at the thought.

Alan smiled, grabbing the mug of hot cocoa Beck had left sitting on the kitchen island for him. He took a sip and sighed happily. Ah, Beck had spiked it with a little coffee, too. Perfection. He could smell the french toast casserole cooking that Beck had just put in the oven, the odor of cinnamon and vanilla wafting through the house, mixing with the pine of the tree.

Alan really did love Christmas morning, and he was so glad the two lovebirds hadn’t minded including him in everything. It was kind of funny, when Alan thought about it, that his Christmas obsessed best friend had managed to hook up with a guy who looked just like Santa Clause. Alan had

a good chuckle over it pretty often.

Nach was really a great guy, though. He was a lot like Beck, in some ways. The two clearly loved everything Christmas related, and they were both such generous, kind people. Alan was beyond happy for Beck. He knew it was all pretty quick, but it just seemed sort of natural that Nach would move in with Beck. After all, Nach's stolen possessions still hadn't been recovered. Poor guy.

Nach had managed a bunch of odd jobs playing Santa at different stores, and he was in really high demand. Alan had heard him saying once or twice that he shouldn't take money for the jobs, but most people insisted, and since the poor guy had to buy a new wardrobe, it was probably for the best. He'd done a ton of charity events leading up to Christmas, too—the guy really did have a heart of gold.

“You guys still good for coming over to my family's later?” Alan checked.

“Yup! We'll hit my mom's and see my family—you're still invited, you know—and then we'll head over to yours,” Beck answered.

“Yeah, I know, and maybe I'll do a quick drop in to say hi, but I really want to get over to Mom's early,” Alan said, sitting down on the couch at the other end from the two snuggle bugs. They really were so cute together.

Nach patted his leg and Beck smiled at him, both of them offering him comfort over his mom. Alan had to look away or he'd end up choked up.

The health scare his mom went through had been really awful, and everyone still couldn't believe that everything was actually ok. It seemed like a miracle that was too good to be true. She'd gone back for more tests, though, and it was like nothing had ever been wrong. Hell, her cholesterol was even down, and her knee that had been bothering her for ages seemed better than ever. The doctors were amazed over it, but Alan was just thankful beyond belief. He joked that he had gotten a Christmas miracle, and Beck and Nach always just laughed a little, probably thinking he was being silly, but it really did feel like a miracle.

Alan was so relieved and grateful this Christmas season, and he was even more happy that Beck seemed to have found his own miracle with Nach. It was kind of amazing how seamlessly the guy seemed to fit into their house. There was no weirdness and no awkward moments, and Alan never felt like he didn't belong. It was like the three of them had always lived together, and Alan was honestly grateful to have Nach around. The guy was pretty

awesome (even if he did really look like Santa, which was kind of weird sometimes).

He knew at some point they'd probably want their own space, and Alan was sort of dreading that, but for now they both seemed happy with him there. Alan didn't love the idea of living alone, and since his own special someone didn't seem to be popping up, he was just glad they had made him a part of their little family.

"Presents!" Beck called out gleefully.

Alan had gone out last night to hang out with his siblings and to give Beck and Nach their own private Christmas Eve celebration (he knew they didn't mind him around, but he also knew they would want some alone time). He figured they'd already exchanged gifts with one another, because there were less presents under the tree, but he was really excited to exchange with them this morning.

He and Beck never went overboard on gifts, but he still always agonized over what to get, because he wanted it to be perfect. This year he thought he'd done okay though.

There was a flurry of unwrapping, and Alan was excited to have gotten the newest game he'd wanted (ok, so he was a nerd) along with some super cozy socks, a couple sweaters, and a funny mug. Beck and Nach seemed to enjoy his gifts, too, including matching aprons he'd found that said "Mr. & Mr. Clause." They got such a kick out of those that he didn't know if the two of them would stop giggling.

Then there was only one final present under the tree, and Alan handed it to them, feeling a little nervous. He thought he'd done well with this one. "This is for both of you," he said, handing it over.

When they opened it and saw the hand-crafted ornament with "Nachielus & Beckett" written on it, they both marveled over it, and Alan thought he even saw Beck wipe away a tear. He smiled to himself, glad to have gotten it right.

"Oh my god, Alan, it's perfect! It is our first Christmas together!" Beck gushed.

"The first of many," Nach murmured to Beck, and then the two of them were kissing and staring at each other, and Alan looked away to give them some privacy.

What a Christmas. It really was an amazing year, and they were all so blessed. He was so thankful for Beck, and Nach, and his mom's health, and

just... everything.

His musings were interrupted when he thought he saw something else sticking out from behind the tree. He looked over at Nach and Beck, but they were still making goo goo eyes at one another, so he set his mug down and reached for it. It seemed like a scroll of paper with a thin gold filament holding it rolled up, and when he picked it up, the gold fell off and the paper sort of just unraveled in his hand.

“Hey guys, is this yours?” Alan asked, looking at it curiously. He looked over, but yup, those two were still kissing. It was sweet, though, so Alan didn’t mind, and they always kept it PG when he was around.

He read it to himself, but it made no sense and was really weird, so he cleared his throat, hoping to get the attention of the two Christmas kissers, and started reading it out loud.

Merry Christmas!

I am pleased to inform you that the unfortunate incident with management has been handled. No further issues with the leadership team shall arise, since the entire incident has been adjusted in their records. All paperwork concerning your topside visit and the ensuing incidents has been permanently deleted, and any sanctions from the team have been lifted. You are fully reinstated to your previous position.

However, I would strongly suggest keeping future endeavors to small matters so as not to once again call the attention of the leadership team. (Adjusting records is quite tedious work.)

I deeply apologize for the delay in this matter, but your predicted meeting occurred a bit sooner than forecast. I wish you all the best, however, and am glad that you have found such happiness.

Please continue to bring joy to the world, and enjoy your time topside.

Wishing you all the best,

Joe

DoS (Department of Soulmates)

“Where did you get that?” Nach demanded.

Alan looked over, and the two kissers were staring pointedly at him.

Well, at least he'd gotten their attention.

"It was shoved under the tree in the back," Alan said, handing it over. "What is it? Does it have something to do with one of the charity organizations you work for? Did they find your missing stuff or something? It doesn't seem to make sense."

Beck and Nach were both reading it over, though, so he supposed he'd have to wait for answers.

"Joe?" Beck asked. "What kind of name is Joe? A little... plain, isn't it?"

"I have never before heard of a Joe. It's absurd," Nach answered, shaking his head.

"What? Joe is a pretty normal name. What's wrong with it?" Alan questioned. Poor Joe was getting picked on. Alan knew what it was like to have a plain name, so he felt kinda bad for the guy.

They both finally looked over at him, as if they'd forgotten he was there for a moment.

"Yes, ah, it is from an organization I worked for. Work for, I guess. There was a bit of trouble when I came to town, but it seems that might be cleared up," Nach mused.

"Try it!" Beck exclaimed. Then he put a hand up and warned, "Only small though, my sexy Santa."

Alan had no idea what was going on, but Nach scrunched up his nose, and Alan was about to say "Bless you," but rather than a sneeze, the timer for the French toast went off.

"Yes!" Beck shouted, and Nach grinned broadly, and then the two of them were making out again.

"Don't worry, I'll get it," Alan grumbled, but he wasn't really mad. He had thought the casserole had at least another thirty minutes before it was done, but he supposed not. From their excitement over the timer he guessed those two were pretty hungry, too (if they could stop making out long enough to eat, that was).

He wandered into the kitchen and pulled it out of the oven, and yes, it smelled divine. He set out the plates (Christmas themed, of course) and the syrup, and apparently they'd cooked some bacon and sausage too, so he grabbed it all and got it to the table as Nach and Beck wandered over, still staring adoringly at each other.

As they all sat down to eat, Alan was once again so grateful for his best friend, and for Nach as well. He wasn't sure what the future would bring, but

this Christmas season was turning out to be pretty amazing.

With that thought, he dug into his breakfast. He moaned in happiness at the first bite, and they all started discussing their plans for the day and what they might want to do for New Year's. As they all chatted and ate and laughed, Alan couldn't help but think it was all rather magical.

Maybe there was something to Christmas miracles after all.

Author's Note



Dear Reader,

Writing a Christmas book was *not* on my agenda, but suddenly a sweet angel who'd only meant to spread a little cheer and ended up starting a human tradition popped into my head, and he demanded to be written. At first, I wasn't sure who his soulmate would end up being, but I think Beck was simply perfect for him.

I loved writing Nach and Beck, and I hope you loved reading them! They were both so sweet and cheerful, and it made my holiday season a little brighter to have them around.

If this is your first foray into my books, you can find Adam and Minos in [*A Beginner's Guide to Death, Demons, and Other Afterlife Disasters*](#). Ariocho, the demon of chaos responsible for the flying reindeer, can be found in [*A Beginner's Guide to Revenge, Chaos, and Other Absurd Escapades*](#).

I'm sure there will be more than a few questions about Joe as well (because what kind of angel name is that, after all?). Rest assured that Joe is already bouncing around in my head. Some of you may have already figured out exactly who he is, too, and he'll eventually be getting his own HEA.

If you enjoyed this book, please leave a review! Reviews and word of mouth recommendations are what keep us authors going. It really does make a difference, so please let us know what you think!

Happy holidays, everyone—without you none of this would be possible. Thank you!

Happy Reading!
Shannon Mae

About the Author

Shannon Mae began her journey in the M/M romance world as an avid reader, then a beta reader, and eventually an editor who works with the unparalleled Tammy B. PA from [Aspen Tree E.A.S.](#)

When a dear friend suggested she should write her own book, she decided to do just that. She gravitates to writing paranormal romance, since that genre is her first love, and her books tend to be low-angst and filled with happily-ever-afters.

She is an unfailing optimist with a side of snark and sarcasm. When she isn't editing, writing, or working her day job, which she loves, you'll find her on some outdoor adventure or embarking on a hands-on project (that is probably slightly more complex than she thought it was).

She lives in a small, seaside town on the east coast, and she spends her free time with her eye-rolling, sassy teenage daughter and her adorably loving dog.

Life is a place full of mysteries and wonders, and she hopes to capture that joy and fun in her writing. Adding some fun, sexy times makes it all complete.

Shannon Mae loves hearing from readers!

Join [Shannon Mae's Menagerie](#) for updates and all kinds of fun things!
Visit Shannon's website at <https://authorshannonmae.weebly.com/>



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