



Merry Merry Biker (Thirteen Bikers for Christmas)

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Category: Action&Adventure

Description: LANA MERRY

Christmas was my favourite time of year. I loved everything about it: Christmas jumpers, fluffy Christmas socks, Christmas music, the colours, the food. It all made me happy.

Never in a million years did I think I'd be scraping a biker of the tarmac on my way home just before Christmas.

Merry, Merry, Christmas to me!

TOMMY O'SHEA

I'd lived a hard life, but now I was retired, and it was time to go home. The sprite in the window caught my eye just as I was driving through the village.

Never in a million years did I think I'd be spending Christmas under her tree and in her bed.

And then fate stepped in!

NOTE: This book is intended for mature readers 18 years and older. It includes sexual situations, strong language, and violence.

Total Pages (Source): 12

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:28 am

TOMMY (Ricochet) O'SHEA

The alley smelt of piss and rotten food. Filth, debris, and refuse filled it. Completely at odds with the bright lights and trendy bars just a street away. I'd only be adding to the squalor before the night was out. Plus, trash always seemed to end up with more trash. I'd chosen the perfect night for doing what I intended to do. My captive had long since stopped pleading with me. He knew it was pointless. His pleas fell on deaf ears. He didn't deserve forgiveness. Not for what he'd done to me.

It was a pitch-black night, with no moon to brighten the sky, clouds heavy in the sky. And it was cold. So damn cold that our breaths were blowing white with every exhale. 'Not that he'd be breathing for much longer,' I thought as I slid my knife along his throat, blood spraying in an arc across the dirty alley wall and ground. Dropping the dead weight of him at my feet, I waited as he bled out his last breath, a quiet echo in the darkness.

He was the last one. It had taken me years, but I'd found them all. Every last one. Every person who I'd thought was a friend and found family. The ones that had burned me and nearly killed me for nothing more than money.

Not that as an assassin I had many friends, but we'd worked together on enough jobs both as a group or sometimes in teams of two or three that there had been some trust built among us. At least there had been on my part. I guess I'd been wrong. Whereas I had a moral compass and code, they didn't. Because money talked and they'd been offered enough to finish me off. I'd not seen it coming, and they'd nearly succeeded. It was unlucky for them I'd lived with violence for most of my life, that and they didn't take into account that I was an O'Shea, and it took a lot to kill us.

With the last piece of my past lying dead at my feet, I knew it was time. It was now safe for me to go home to what little family I had left. Not yet, but I'd go to them soon.

Turning, I walked away, only stopping long enough at a local homeless encampment to drop off an item of clothing before moving on to the next one and doing the same until I came to the empty warehouse where I'd stashed my bag of spare clothing and my bike.

Changing out of the last bit of clothing, I bundled them up and dressed in my leathers and boots. Swinging my leg over the seat of my bike, I settled back, enjoying the feel of power thrumming beneath me. Slowly pulling out of the warehouse, I rode off into the night, only stopping long enough to toss the rest of my clothes off a bridge and into the Thames for it to do what it wanted with them.

I was a free man for the first time in a long time. And I was going to enjoy everything about it. It wasn't long and I was riding out of London on the M25 just as the sky started to lighten. As I sped down the motorway, the sun rising at my back, I decided that I'd spend some time riding around the country before I went home.

Maybe this year I'd make it home in time for Christmas. I'd kept a check on my family from afar and from what I'd found out, it looked like my cousins were starting to settle down. It would be good to be amongst family again. Not right now but eventually.

With that thought, I accelerated around a slow-moving truck and took off down the motorway, wanting to enjoy the relative peace and the added benefit of there being not much traffic at this time of the morning for as long as I could.

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TOMMY

The freedom of being on my bike was one that never got old. I'd been riding since I'd been old enough to have a licence. I'd left home as soon as I could at eighteen and never looked back. At the time there was only my uncle, aunt, and cousins to look back on and they'd understood my leaving.

My father had been nothing but a drunk who took pleasure in leaving bruises on those weaker than him and a mother that had long since checked out after years of taking abuse, no matter how often help had been offered.

'Fuck me,' I thought, that was twenty-seven years ago. Jesus, I was getting old. My bones and joints ached all the time and when I woke up in the morning, I felt every one of my forty-five years. Living the life of an assassin hadn't been kind to my body.

Slowing my bike down to the thirty miles per hour speed limit as I entered a village that I'd not been through for years. As it had been a few years since I driven through here, I immediately noticed all the changes. Feannag Village had been run by the Crow MC for what must be close to sixty years. By the signage on some of the business shop fronts, it looked like they now owned most of the businesses along the high street. It was good to see they were a good family. Rhett, my oldest cousin, had married one of their daughters years ago, but from the information that I'd found out recently, he'd divorced her when he went inside. I hoped that it hadn't caused a rift between our families. My guess was he wanted her to move on and live her life. It's what I would have done.

The one set of traffic lights at the centre of the village turned red as I approached, forcing me to come to a stop. Setting my foot down to the ground to stabilise my bike, I looked around me with interest. The street and all the shops along it were decorated for Christmas. Festive lights in all windows, including a brightly lit Christmas tree in the corner of the café, reminding me that Christmas was just a few days away. It made me wonder how my family was going to take me being back in their lives and not lying six feet under somewhere in the world like they'd been led to believe.

A slight flutter in my peripheral vision caught my eye and my attention was drawn to a window down the way. The beginnings of a smile twitched across my face as I watched a tiny sprite. Well, she seemed tiny from this distance, and she reminded me of a sprite. She bounced around dancing and singing in what looked to be a beauty parlour and hairdressers, the signage on the front showing it was owned by the Crows.

Even my cold dead heart couldn't help but be warmed by the sight of the sprite with bright red hair tied back in green ribbon dressed as one of Santa's helpers in an elf costume as she bounced around, stopping every now and again to sing into the broom that she was pushing around the floor.

My lips twitched again into a semblance of a smile, unfamiliar muscles pulling at my cheeks as I watched her, as I enjoyed the unexpected show she was putting on for anyone who cared to watch. I wondered what it must be like to be so happy and carefree. I couldn't remember if I'd ever felt that happy and carefree. I hoped that she never lost that feeling.

An unfamiliar tug in my chest took me by surprise. Making me wonder at the feeling that was tightening my chest in such a way, I contemplated it and brushed it off just as the traffic lights turned green again.

I accelerated and pulled away from the traffic light and drove past the happy sprite still cheerfully dancing around with the broom. Leaving her behind me had me wondering if the tightness I felt was sadness that I didn't know how to feel happiness anymore. It had been so long since I'd felt that particular emotion. Shaking off the slightly melancholy feeling, I rode out of the village once again on my way, but at least this time, I had a destination in mind.

I'd been travelling around the country and then through Europe for months before swinging back around to the UK and coming back to the village of my birth. I'd wanted to ensure that it was safe after completing my last job to visit what little family I had left.

Not that they were expecting me. In fact, I think my turning up may come as a bit of a shock as a rumour had been spread of my death about three years ago. I hadn't seen any reason to dispute the rumour as it worked in my favour in my current job of cleaning up those that had betrayed me. It was much easier being an assassin when people thought you were dead. But I did feel bad about not letting Uncle Colm know.

It would have hit him hard thinking me dead and buried, especially as Rhett had not long been sentenced when the news had circulated.

With no traffic on the road, I opened up my bike and flew along, making good time. I was about five minutes away from my Uncle Colm's turn off when it happened.

A deer jumped out into the road from the surrounding forests, taking me by surprise. I jacked my bike to the right as hard as I could in an effort to miss hitting it and while I missed the deer, my back wheel skidded on a patch of ice. My bike and I hit the tarmac at speed, my bike going one way and me another.

'Oh fuck, this is going to hurt, ' I thought as I skidded down the road. Curling up, I protected my head as much as I could, but it still hit the road pretty hard and even

with my helmet protecting me, the blow was hard enough to knock me out. As everything went dark, my last thought was, ‘Typical, I managed to survive a bomb blast on the other side of the world, being buried in rubble only to be taken out by a deer five minutes from home.’

Groaning in pain, I started moving each of my limbs to ascertain how much damage I’d sustained. Moaning as I moved and then hissed as my muscles pulled. My head was pounding, and I could feel the nausea in the pit of my stomach and hoped I’d get my helmet off before I spewed, if I spewed. It was not one of my favourite pastimes, and I held back more often than not.

From experience, I knew that I had a mild concussion. Although my concussion wasn’t a bad one, my head still thumped in time with every beat of my heart. Slowly moving around, it didn’t seem like any of my limbs were broken. Bruised and strained but not broken. My leathers and helmet had done their job except on my left side which felt like it was covered in road rash from where I’d skidded down the road. Guessing that they hadn’t been able to hold up to the friction.

I’d kept my eyes closed as I was cataloguing my injuries. In the background, I thought I heard a voice, but I’d not heard a car drive up, thinking it must have pulled up while I’d been unconscious. Knowing I wasn’t up to moving my head yet or I’d throw up, I waited. Yep, it was definitely a voice, female, and she seemed to be chanting something, but I couldn’t quite make out what it was. It was only as she got closer that I could hear what she was saying, and I wanted to laugh when her chants turned from ‘don’t be dead’ to ‘don’t let there be blood.’ Just my luck to be found by somebody squeamish.

And then there she was—my cheerful, singing and dancing Sprite from the window. Her red hair covered in a green wool hat with a massive red pom-pom on the top. She fell to her knees and started to run her hands up and down my legs to check if they were broken. It was then that I realised from how she was assessing me that she’d had

some form of medical training.

She was muttering all the time; I felt a wave of nausea come over me just as she reached my head and lifted the visor up. Closing my eyes and inhaling, I hoped like hell I didn't throw up.

Opening my eyes, I looked into eyes that were a dark chocolate brown, ringed with dark lashes; there was a dusting of freckles dotted across her nose and her lips were plump and pink.

"Hey," she said softly. "I'm calling an ambulance, but as we're in the middle of nowhere, it may be a while before they get here. I can't find anything broken, but I'm not sure if you have any internal injuries."

Calling an ambulance was something that I couldn't let her do. I'd had to resurrect my identity, and it wasn't ready for close scrutiny yet. It had been a long time since I'd used my real name, having used several aliases over the years and while I had a contact filling in a fake history that would explain the missing years, it would take time. He was almost done and by the new year, all the relevant information would be in place, but until then I didn't need to have any official government departments pulling up my legal name.

"No hospital," I muttered, my eyes closing as darkness threatened again. "Promise, no hospital."

"Mister, you need a hospital after that fall."

Grabbing her hand, I said louder, "No hospital, Sprite, dangerous. Promise."

"Okay, okay," she agreed shakily. "No hospital. Do you have a name?"

Opening my eyes again, I struggled to focus on her and for some unknown reason I needed her to know my real name. A name I hadn't uttered in years, "Tommy, Sprite, name's Tommy."

Darkness took me again; my last thought was that I hoped she did as she promised. Me being in a hospital would raise all sorts of questions that I wasn't in any condition to answer.

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LANA

It was the twenty-third of December, and all was right in my world. I'd really lucked out in finding this job, it was perfect for me. I was happiest when I was taking care of people.

And since the sight of blood usually makes me pass out. As I'd found out the hard way when I started nursing, this job suited me better. Nobody wanted a nurse that passed out at the sight of blood. I mean, passing out was never a good thing, but a nurse definitely didn't need to be passing out over patients. So, that meant my dream job went out the window in a hurry. I tried being a paramedic but that involved blood too, so that was another dream down the drain. I'd changed direction and become a massage and beauty therapist instead.

Now here I was running a hair and beauty salon, and I loved it. It was the next best option for me. No blood involved. There was nothing like job satisfaction when someone came in stressed and overwhelmed with rock-hard and tense muscles, and they left you feeling relaxed and happy with a smile on their face.

To make my life even better, it was Christmas, my favourite time of the year. I'd always loved Christmas, especially as it had been my mum's favourite holiday; her next favourite had been Easter. She'd go all out at Christmas and start decorating our front garden in November. Our house, by the first of December, was always fully decked in Christmas lights and decorations. It must have cost my parents a fortune in electricity, but my dad never complained.

This would be my sixth Christmas without them, and it didn't get easier. I missed

them most during the Christmas holidays, but at least they were together. Or I hoped so. God wouldn't be so cruel as to split them up in the afterlife.

I'd been invited up to Crow Manor by both Bren and Avy for Christmas Day, but I decided I'd rather spend this Christmas by myself getting my new house sorted and painted. I'd sold the house I'd grown up in when I'd moved here to take this job, and I'd bought myself a fixer upper in the next town not far from the O'Sheas.

I loved it. It was a small plot that butted alongside their property, and I know that Mr. O'Shea had sold it to me at a lot less than market value, but his argument was that he didn't want neighbours and if he had to have them, then he'd rather have someone he liked. The plot of land had a small three-bedroom bungalow that I was slowly refurbishing. I never thought I'd be any good at doing handiwork, but I found myself loving it.

There was something so satisfying in making my home habitable. I'd worked hard over the last year to get it liveable, and I was now in the final stages. There were just the floors left to sand, a few of the walls left to paint.

Once that was done, I'd be able to start moving furniture in. It was going to be bliss to sit on a couch and not on the camping gear that I was using at the moment. The only piece of furniture that I'd been using from the start was my bed. After only two nights on a blowup mattress, I'd had enough. I wasn't a nice person when I was tired, and for the sake of all those around me, I'd set my bed up so that I could get a decent night's sleep.

I'd had to use contractors for the big jobs like the plumbing, electrical, and fitting of the kitchen and bathrooms, but my bosses had lots of contacts, and they were willing to help me; plus, I got a decent discount as I worked for the Crows. It seemed they were related to most around the village either by blood or by marriage.

I may have lost my family, but I'd certainly found a new one with the Crow MC. They'd welcomed me with open arms. I found it so hard to believe that I'd been living here a year already.

Shaking off my weird mood, I put my Christmas music on, turning the volume up high. Going to the cleaning cupboard, I took the broom out and started pushing it around the front of the salon, making sure everything was clean and ready for us when we came back in January. The thought of having the next ten days off filled me with happiness. There was so much that I wanted to get done during my time off. With a happy smile and a bounce to my steps, I danced around the room, stopping every now and again to sing into my broom.

I was happy. I had a good life, a job I loved, and a house that was mine. What more could I want? I loved my life. Was I lonely sometimes? Sure I was. But so far, nobody had piqued my interest. Maybe one day, if I was lucky, I'd find the right man.

I danced and worked my way around the room with the broom until I ended up by the large floor-to-ceiling windows at the front of the salon. Looking out of them, I noticed the lone biker sitting at the one traffic light we had in the village. He seemed to be watching me through the window, but with his visor down on his helmet, it was hard to be sure. He wasn't part of the MC as there was no Crow logo on his bike, his jacket, or his helmet. I guessed he was just riding through. Maybe on his way to his family for Christmas.

I wondered what he was thinking while he watched me. I was dressed in my elf costume, having helped Santa give out presents earlier today at the yearly village Christmas gift giving. It had been started last year by the teenagers of the Crows and had continued this year. Knowing how much I loved Christmas, they'd roped me in to help. We'd had loads of fun and the kids had left happy after each of them getting a present from Father Christmas.

Trying not to be obvious about it, I continued to sweep. I watched the biker from under my lashes. He was sat so still on his bike waiting for the lights to turn green. A dark silhouette in an otherwise brightly lit street, dressed in all black with his helmet obscuring his eyes. A little shiver ran down my spine; he was a little intimidating, even from this distance.

That didn't stop me from peeking at him every now and then, though. There was something about him that called to me, and I couldn't take my eyes off him. My body hummed and there was a warm tingle in my belly as if I could feel his touch, even though he was on the other side of the road to me. When the lights turned green, my gaze followed him as he slowly drove by, he dipped his head slightly as he rode past where I stood silhouetted in the window and then he was gone, disappearing into the darkness as if he'd been part of my imagination.

Shrugging off my fantasies about the lone biker, I hurried to finish the cleaning so I could lock up and get home. There was a pot of stew and dumplings waiting for me in the slow cooker, and I had a night planned of watching some of my favourite Christmas movies. Locking up and setting the alarm, I hurried to my car. It wasn't anything special, just a regular Ford Focus, but I'd opted for an Estate rather than a regular hatchback when I'd bought it as I knew I'd need space to load anything I bought for my house refurbishment.

My teeth were chattering, and I was shivering as I got in and started the engine, waiting for her to warm up and the heat to start circulating. Pointing the vents towards me, I sighed in bliss as the heat started to wend its way around me.

Turning the volume up on my Christmas tunes just as Fairy Tale of New York started on the radio. It was one of my favourites, and I boogied and sang along as I put my car in gear and drove out onto the main road in the same direction that the biker had gone.

There wasn't a car in sight as I drove down the road singing away with nobody to hear me or to complain about my out-of-tune voice. I'm well aware that I sound like a wailing cat when I sing, but that doesn't stop me from doing it. And certainly not when it comes to Christmas songs. As I come around the corner, I hurriedly slam on my brakes in an emergency stop when I see a bike lying in the middle of the road. The emergency braking has my back-end skidding slightly on what I'm assuming is black ice. We'd had warnings earlier on the radio to be careful of it while driving. Instantly, I recognise the bike as the one that my mysterious rider had been sitting on.

Slapping my hand down on the button for my hazard lights, I shakily push the release button on my seatbelt so that I can get out of my car. All the while wondering where the biker is. Getting out, I pull my coat tighter around me just as snow starts to slowly fall from the sky.

"Oh, no," I whisper as I get to the bike and see he's not lying anywhere near it. "Where are you?" I wonder aloud. Looking up and down the road. Just at the edge of where my headlights stop, I think I see something shiny at the edge of the road. Hurrying towards what I hope is the biker, all the time I'm chanting out loud, "Please don't be dead, please don't be dead." I see his leg move as I get closer and the chant changes to, "Don't let there be blood, don't let there be blood."

It won't do for the both of us to be passed out on the side of the road if I see any blood.

Falling to my knees on the road next to him, my training kicks in and I run my hands up and down his arms and legs to see if anything's broken. I don't take off his helmet just yet as I know it may still be protecting him.

Keeping up the litany of words as my training comes back to me as I assess him, cataloguing any injuries that I can see. Once I'm assured that none of his limbs are broken, I move to his head and open the visor. Startling slightly when I see bright

blue eyes peering up at me. He was awake and I could see that he was in pain from the lines bracketing his face and the way he's clenched his lips closed.

Wanting to reassure him, I speak softly, "Hey, I'm calling an ambulance, but as we're in the middle of nowhere, it may be a while before they get here. I can't find anything broken, but I'm not sure if you have any internal injuries or damage to your back."

He took me aback when he insisted that he not go to a hospital and then proceeded to make me promise that I wouldn't take him. Making me wonder what he was running from. He was adamant, though, that he does not go to a hospital, and something told me that whatever it was he was running from, he was no danger to me, so I promised.

"Okay, okay," I promised shakily as he closed his eyes again. "No hospital. Do you have a name?"

"Tommy, Sprite, name's Tommy."

Then he was out like a light again.

"Fuck," I whispered hoarsely as I hurried back to my car and got a tarp out of the back of it. I wasn't going to be able to pick him up, and the only way I was going to get a man his size into my car was to drag him up. Luckily, I still had the ramp that I'd used when I loaded the cement last week.

Laying the tarp on the ground next to him, I manoeuvred him into the recovery position, hoping against hope that he didn't have any internal injuries. He most definitely had a concussion, though, and I was worried about what other damage he had to his head.

But I'd made a promise, and I always kept my promises. I just hoped this one didn't come back to bite me on the arse.

Once I had him on his side, I pulled the tarp until it was as far under him as it could go, then I laid him back down on it. Rushing back to my car, I put it in gear and drove it closer to him, opening up the boot and setting up the ramp before proceeding to try and pull him into my car.

It felt like a lifetime but eventually many long, sweaty, and heart pounding minutes later, I had him in the back of the car and not once had he opened his eyes during all this time. I wasn't sure if I should be worried or happy that I managed to manoeuvre him without causing him too much pain. Covering him with the blanket I always carried in my car, I got out and went to the bike that was still in the middle of the road. I knew I couldn't leave it there because it was a hazard. Opening his saddlebags, I saw they were filled with personal effects. Taking them off the bike, I took them back to my car and set them on the front seat. He'd need a change of clothing once he was back up and on his feet.

Walking back down the road to the bike, I tried to pick it up, but it was so freaking heavy. Eventually, just as I was thinking I was going to have to leave it, I made one last ditch effort and got it up on its wheels and pushed it towards the ditch at the side of the road, where I let go and had gravity do its job, cringing a little at the further damage I'd done to it.

'Ah, well, not much I could do about it now,' I thought, dusting my hands off and jogging back to my car. Checking on the biker once more, I noted that he hadn't moved. Checking his pulse quickly, inhaling a relieved breath when I find it's steady.

Cranking up the heat and turning down the Christmas music so that I could hear him if he made a noise, I drove us slowly home, hands still shaking slightly and heart pounding. I've never been so relieved to see my house. Reversing up to the front door, I switched off the car. Taking a deep breath to try and steady myself before flinging open the door to get out. Hurrying to unlock my front door, I'm wondering about where the best place to put him would be once I managed to get him in the

house.

Starting a fire in the small pot belly fireplace I'd installed in the living room, I decided that it would be better to have him closer to the kitchen and the bathroom, so having him on a mattress on the floor in front of the fire would be the best thing.

Rushing to what was eventually going to be my spare room to get the mattress from the guest bed. It was lucky that I'd finished decorating this bedroom last weekend and had lugged my spare bed and mattress over last Sunday, intending to set it up this week. Taking hold of the mattress that was leaning against the wall, I pulled and tugged on it to get it moving towards the living room.

Laying it down near the fire, I put a plastic cover over the top to protect it, then added a fitted sheet. Going to my bedroom, I got my larger first aid box and brought it back to the living room with me. One thing about training as both a nurse and a paramedic, I had a first aid box suitable for an apocalypse.

Once I had the living room set up and somewhere to bring him, I went back to the car and opened up the boot. Setting up the ramp again, I took hold of the tarp and tugged and pulled as I moved him into the house in the reverse of how I'd got him into the car, but at least it was easier to manoeuvre him down rather than up.

Puffing and panting for the second time that night, I vowed to make use of my free gym membership the MC offered to its staff in the new year.

Finally, I had him close to the mattress, but not wanting him to get the sheets dirty, I proceeded to cut off his riding gear all the time trying not to think about how much they cost and simultaneously praying there wasn't a lot of blood.

When he was down to his underwear, I gently manoeuvred him onto a sheet to clean him up. The tarpaulin was fine for moving him, but it was filthy, and I didn't want

him to get an infection if I could help it.

Taking a deep breath, I braved having a good look at all his injuries. He had bruising already appearing on his body, especially around his ribcage on the one side. From the looks of the bruising, it looked like his ribs were going to be bothering him for a while.

The worst injury seemed to be the gravel rash from where he'd skidded. While there was blood, it had clotted already and wasn't oozing out, so I was good, even if I did have to take a few deep breaths and blink at one point to stop the blackness from taking over. I could just imagine what he'd think if he came to and found me passed out on top of him.

It took time to clean up his scrapes as best as I could without moving him around too much. Applying an antibiotic ointment that I'd picked up on my last trip out of the country, I also found a pack of broad-spectrum antibiotics in the medical box, checking the date on them to make sure they were still good. I was relieved to see that they were fine for two more months. I wasn't sure yet how I was going to get them down him, but I'd worry about that later.

As I ran a clean washcloth down his abs to get rid of the last of the blood, I couldn't help but take note of his muscular physique and all the different scars that were scattered along his body. It was like a road map showing that he'd lived a hard and dangerous life. I recognised most of the scars. They'd been caused by bullets and knives, for the most part, by the looks of it. Yep, there was no doubt in my mind that this man was dangerous with a capital D.

That didn't stop me from thinking that while he may be dangerous, 'He was also one fine specimen,' I hummed to myself in appreciation as I swiped the washcloth across his body. A body that was solid muscle and I'm talking muscles on top of muscles. He must work out a serious amount to look like this. Not even the Crow men had this

much muscle, and they worked out daily.

When he was as clean as I was going to get him with a cloth and water, I rolled him onto yet another clean sheet and tugged him onto the mattress with it. Groaning and panting for breath by the time I got him situated comfortably. Covering him up with another sheet and a blanket. I sat back on my heels knowing that the next job would be to remove his helmet.

Leaning forward, I unclasped it and gently manoeuvred it off, revealing a thick head of black hair, with hints of grey smattering through the sides. He had a groomed and well-kept beard. Even passed out and with some bruising, he was good looking. He was tanned for this time of year, so he must have been somewhere hot in the last few weeks. I felt around his head to see if I could find any lumps or blood, but his head seemed fine. The helmet had done its job. I could see a little bruising around his left temple. I wished he'd let me take him to the hospital. I was worried about his brain and if there was swelling or not.

“Why the fuck did I promise not to take him to the hospital?” I muttered angrily to myself.

“Because I asked you not to,” he replied gruffly.

With a squeak of fright, I started and nearly dropped the helmet that I was still holding on his face.

“For fuck’s sake,” I breathed out shakily, “give a girl a little warning next time.”

He gave a pained chuckle before replying, “How am I supposed to warn you I’m awake?”

Shrugging, I said, “I don’t know—clear your throat or something.”

He started laughing again, then groaned, holding onto his ribs where I could see bruising coming out.

“Stop laughing,” I ordered him. “Or wait until your ribs are healed a bit more. I really wish you’d have let me take you to the hospital. I’m worried that you may have internal injuries that we don’t know about, plus the concussion. You’ve been out a long time.”

He lifted a hand and cupped my cheek, turning my face towards him. My eyes caught and held his, my breath hitching slightly in my throat.

‘God, this man was delicious looking.’

There was something about him, even though he was all bruised up and could barely move, that called to me. Now that I could see his face, I knew he was quite a bit older than me, but my body didn’t seem to care and if I was being honest with myself, I didn’t care either. A familiar tingle was building in my belly as I looked into his eyes. A tingle I hadn’t felt in probably two years. I’d been too busy organising my life to be even remotely interested in dating.

It took me a bit, but I realised he’d been talking to me while I’d been daydreaming about riding the man like a pony. I needed to pull myself together.

“Sprite, are you listening to me?” he grunted, looking amused as if he knew where my head had been.

Shaking my head, unfortunately dislodging his hand from where it had been on my cheek.

“Sorry,” I apologised a little sheepishly, “I was wool-gathering. What did you say?”

A wide grin broke over his face, and it changed his whole look. There was something familiar about that grin, but I couldn't place it.

"I said that I'm fine. I have a slight concussion, nothing's broken, my ribs are bruised. Trust me, it's not the first time I've had injuries like this. If I thought it was more, I'd let you take me to the hospital."

I couldn't help but be captivated by his blue eyes again. Pulling my gaze from his, my brow wrinkled with a small frown, I declared, "I did notice all the scars when I was cleaning you up. I'll let it go for now, but if during the night you take a turn, I'm getting you to a hospital."

Our gazes held in a stare, and I wondered which of us would blink first. I should have known it would be me, but I held my ground even after I'd blinked, "Okay," I ordered needing him to give me an answer he wasn't going to die on my watch.

"Okay, Sprite," he agreed with a small smile.

"Lana," I retorted.

"What?" he said in confusion.

"My name is Lana," I informed him. "Lana Merry."

"Beautiful name, Sprite. Suits you. I'm Tommy."

"I know," I responded. "You told me when I found you. Do you have a surname?"

Tommy's face split into a grin, "I do."

Ugh, this man was frustrating. Huffing out a slightly annoyed breath, I asked, "Well

are you going to tell me?”

“Not yet,” he informed me. “But I promise you have nothing to worry about with me, I’d never hurt you.”

That was the one thing I hadn’t been worried about. My gut was rarely wrong, and I’d felt from the start that he wouldn’t hurt me.

“I know,” I acknowledged. “Even injured, you could have hurt me already if you wanted. I have good instincts, and I know you’re dangerous, but not to me. Trust me, if when I found you and my gut had told me that something was off, I’d have ignored your orders, locked myself in my car and called an ambulance. There’s something familiar about you, though. I’ll let you keep your secrets for now. You can tell me when you trust me more.”

He seemed surprised at my words. Knowing I still had a tonne of stuff to do tonight and needing to get away from all the deliciousness laid out before me, I slapped my hands on my thighs and stood up.

“I’m going to go have a quick shower, then I’ll get us something to eat and drink. I have some antibiotics that I’d like you to take once you’ve had something to eat. It will help stop any infections. I won’t be long,” I assured him as I walked off down the hall to my bedroom, needing to get away before I attacked the man and rode him like a pony.

Jesus, what a time for my libido to make an appearance. Going straight to my bedside draw, I rummaged around until I found my vibrator, changed the batteries, and took it with me into the shower. Some self-care was needed if I wanted to be able to look the man in the face again tonight.

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TOMMY

From my place on the floor in front of the roaring fire, I watched, slightly amused, as her little arse sashayed down the hall to where I knew the bedrooms were. I'd recognised the house as soon as I'd opened my eyes. You didn't live in it for most of your life and not remember your childhood home. Although it had changed a lot since I'd lived here. It looked like she was doing a complete refurbishment. The house had certainly needed it over twenty years ago, so I could only imagine the state it had been in when she'd moved in.

The small pot belly fireplace I was lying in front of was new, as was the flooring. When I'd lived here, the floor had been covered in a god-awful brown carpet with big orange flowers that had been popular in the seventies. My last memory of this house was leaving my father lying knocked out on that very carpet and my mother cowering in the corner.

We'd lived in this house on the charity of my Uncle Colm. Uncle Colm was Dad's older brother, and the two of them differed like night and day. While Uncle Colm had been a hard-arse and didn't take any disrespect, he'd loved his wife and boys. He'd never have lifted a hand to any of them. The same could not be said for my father. How he'd fallen so far from the family tree was anyone's guess.

When I was twelve, I'd watched Uncle Colm as he'd beat the shit out of my father after I'd appeared at their house with broken ribs, a broken arm, and a black eye. The black eye hadn't been my first by my father, but it had been my last.

I'd known as soon as he'd hit my ribs and heard the crack that he'd broken them,

along with my arm that he grabbed and rammed over his leg. I can't even remember why'd he'd gone after me that day, but I'd been hurting enough to ignore my mother's pleas and had walked to my uncle's house. Uncle Colm had taken me to the hospital, and we'd lied through our teeth about a motorbike accident. We'd told him that my cousins and I had gotten hold of a motocross bike, and I'd crashed it while not wearing protective clothing.

The doctor hadn't believed us, that much I knew. He'd taken Uncle Colm aside to talk to him. It wasn't the first time I'd been in Accident and Emergency, but it was the first time my parents hadn't accompanied me. Uncle Colm had said something that had appeased the doctor and I'd left the hospital with him, a brand-new cast on my arm and painkillers for my ribs. That was the day I'd moved in with Uncle Colm's family. From that day on, I only went home if my mother asked me to and only if my father wasn't at home.

I don't know how many times Uncle Colm tried to get my mother to leave, but she wouldn't. Hell, we'd all tried at one time or another to get her to leave. She'd made her choice and nothing we could do would persuade her that there was more for her out there than to be used as a punching bag.

I'd had plans to join Uncle Colm's business at sixteen, but he'd wanted me to finish school first before I got embroiled in the illegal arms trade. In the end, I'd chosen the military much to his disgust, but he'd still been there for me when I'd graduated, and he'd been there for me every time I'd come home on leave.

The military was where I stayed for the next twenty years before I handed my notice in. My intention had always been to come back home. But fate had another plan for me and instead I'd fallen into my next job by accident. I'd found being a civilian had been boring. After twenty years in the military, I'd needed the danger. It had been well-known throughout my unit that I thrived on danger. The more dangerous the assignment, the better as far as I was concerned.

Being an assassin for hire had never entered into my thoughts or my retirement plans. But I had all the right training and it paid good money. I was set for life on the money I'd earned while I'd been a man for hire.

I'd earned the name Ricochet. It was a name that was notorious in the underground. My name came about because my speciality was having a bullet ricochet back into the target. The first time it had happened purely by accident, but I'd cultivated the persona and practiced that shot until I could do it in my sleep. The name had stuck.

I'd never been out of work in all the time I'd been freelancing. Between how I got my name and the fact that I made it known that I would only take on a job once I'd scoped it out to ensure that no innocents were involved. I'd started to do this after the first time someone had tried to pull one over on me and have an innocent killed. Instead, I'd gone after the person who'd put the contract up, and by the time I was finished with them, nobody ever tried to get me to assassinate an innocent again. It was also well-known that I didn't ever take on jobs that involved violence to women or children.

The people I'd been hired to kill were the worst of the worst. The ones that didn't deserve to be walking on this earth. Funnily enough, I'd done more work for my government after I'd left the military than I'd thought I'd do. Not that they knew who I was because I never met with anyone face to face. All my jobs were done anonymously under my handle.

Taking on anonymous jobs had become much easier now that we had the internet and even easier once news of my death surfaced. If I'd known how much easier it would be to set up jobs once I'd supposedly died, I'd have done it earlier instead of being nearly blown to smithereens by accident. It all worked out in the end because it had allowed me three years to tie up loose ends. Now that I'd done that, I was home to stay. It had certainly been an interesting homecoming so far.

Hearing the shower come on, I groaned slightly as the image of my Sprite naked in the shower entered my head. My cock that had been at half-mast since she'd first put her hands on me rose to the occasion at the thought of all that water cascading down her naked body, across her breasts and down her legs.

"Fuck," I muttered and restlessly moved my legs under the sheet. Pushing the sheet and blankets down, I slipped my hand into my boxers so that I could take a firm grip of my cock, holding it harder than I usually would to try and stop me coming before I was ready to. You'd think with the amount of pain I was in and the concussion he'd be out for the count but NO. Just the thought of my Sprite naked down the hall and he was ready to go.

From down the hallway there was a stifled moan, followed by a cry that stopped short as if she'd bit her lip to stop the noise from escaping.

"Ah, Jesus," I muttered as pre-cum slid down my shaft, covering my hands. Having an idea what that cry meant had me gripping my cock tightly as I slowly pumped my hand up and down my shaft, knowing there was no way to stop this just as another whimper echoed its way down the passage to me, jerking my hand faster I could feel my orgasm fast approaching.

It had been a long time since I'd had the pleasure of being with a woman. As another cry went up from down the passage, there's was no holding back the orgasm that streaked through me, my back bowed slightly as cum splattered across my stomach and up my chest. Pain raced through me as my body and head throbbed, not happy with the fast movements I'd made. Taking a deep breath, I inhaled and exhaled, blinking to get rid of the blackness that threatened my vision.

"Fuck me," I whispered, then gave a rusty chuckle at my predicament. I'd have to figure out a way to clean up before she came back. Turning my head slightly, I caught sight of the T-shirt I'd been wearing under my leathers laying not far from me. With a

strained groan, I rolled over and snagged it, sweat beaded my brow and nausea rose, but I beat it back. Wiping down my chest and across my stomach, cleaning myself up. The shower switched off just as I pulled the blankets back up to my chest. Relaxing back against the pillows, relishing the warmth from the fire, I was fucking exhausted. And after my massive orgasm, I was feeling sated and happy for the first time in a while. Allowing myself to relax further into the mattress, I fell into a deep sleep, but not before vowing that as soon as I was up to it, I would repay my Sprite with an orgasm that would knock the one she'd just given herself out of the park.

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LANA

A bit of self-care went a long way to relaxing me after the evening I'd had. Dressing in warm leggings with reindeer on with a long fluffy Christmas jumper, and with warm fluffy socks on my feet, I threw my bright red hair up in a messy bun. Now that I was dressed, I was ready to get on with the rest of the evening that I'd originally planned; I'd just have a guest joining me instead of being by myself.

Leaving my bedroom and hurrying down the hall to the kitchen, I had to pass through the living room on my way. Stopping when I saw Tommy fast asleep. Tiptoeing over to have a look, I felt his head to see if he was running a temperature, but he was cool to the touch, his face relaxed as he slept. I was pleased; sleeping would be good for his healing. I'd wake him in an hour or so and get him to take some antibiotics and have some food.

Leaving him to rest, I went to the kitchen and took the lid off the slow cooker, breathing in the delicious scent of chicken stew. I was starving and couldn't wait to dig in. Taking the dumpling dough from the fridge, I popped them in on top of the gravy and closed the lid. Another twenty minutes and I'd be able to eat, and I was looking forward to it.

Switching the radio on, I turned it down low, enjoying the Christmas music that was playing. Bopping my way around the kitchen to the Christmas tunes filled me with happiness. Humming under my breath to the radio, I pulled open the fridge again and took out a bottle of red wine that I'd started. Seeing the fridge full of food made me glad that I'd done my big shopping yesterday; it meant I didn't have to leave again for the next few days and with my unexpected houseguest that was a blessing.

Taking my favourite wine glass from the cupboard and pouring myself a glass of wine, I sat down at the kitchen table and took a big sip with a sigh of contentment. Was there anything better than being at home, with good food, Christmas songs, and a decent glass of wine?

Half an hour later, with a second glass of wine, a bowl full of goodness, I curled up in my camp chair with a blanket, settling in to watch one of my favourite Christmas movies of all time. I mean, who didn't enjoy a little boy pulling pranks on burglars. I laughed every time I watched Home Alone. I had a whole list of movies I watched over the Christmas period. I'd get to the Die Hard movies eventually, along with the Lethal Weapon ones. They'd been my mum's favourite.

Around midnight, I switched off the telly and checked on Tommy once again. He was still sleeping soundly, but I wanted to get the antibiotics down him. Going to the kitchen, I made up a quick cup of weak chicken soup, grabbed some water, painkillers, and the antibiotics, setting it all down on the floor next to him. Kneeling down, I gently shook him, whispering his name softly. He groaned but didn't wake up. With a sigh, I shook him a bit harder. I hated being woken up like this and figured he would too, but there was nothing for it if gentle wasn't working.

"Tommy," I spoke loudly.

He gave another groan but opened his eyes, squinting slightly at me. "Sprite," he mumbled, his eyes closing again.

Shaking his shoulder insistently until he opened his eyes again.

"I need you to take these pills and have something to drink," I told him, pulling gently on his arm until he was partially sitting up. I hurriedly tucked a bean bag and some cushions behind him so that he was semi-reclining.

He was groggy and tired, neither of which filled me with glee; head injuries were tricky. I still wished he'd let me take him to the hospital, but I guess the man had his reasons and I'd been around the Crow MC and the O'Sheas long enough to know that sometimes you didn't need to be asking questions about certain things. Steadying the mug in his hands as he took a sip of the soup, his eyes widened at the flavour, "Fuck, Sprite, this is delicious."

I grinned at him, happy that he was enjoying it. "Sorry it's not more, but I didn't want to give you anything heavy if you're still feeling nauseous."

"Nah, this is more than enough," he assured me as he drained the last of the dregs out the bottom of the mug. When he was done, I took his mug and handed him the pills, explaining what they were. Once he swallowed them, I helped him settle back down, moving all the pillows away from behind him.

Adding another log to the fire so the room was pleasantly warm as my heating turned off during the night, I stacked a few more blankets next to him on the floor within easy reach if he needed them.

"I'll be checking on you every couple of hours, but if you need me before, then just shout. I'll leave my door open," I told him as I stood back up and went to leave. Hiding my grin as I turned away because the man's eyes had been glued to my arse the whole time I'd been bent over adding wood to the fire.

"Okay, Sprite."

I was nearly out of the living room when his next words stopped me in my tracks and sent a shiver through me.

"And, Sprite, just saying... be prepared the next time you bend over like that in front of me."

Turning slightly, I winked and sent him a sultry smirk over my shoulder. “I’ll hold you to that, handsome,” I told him before I sauntered down the passage with a definite swing in my step.

Still smirking ten minutes later as I settled into bed after setting my alarm to wake him up in a few hours. It was going to be a long night, but at least I didn’t have to get up and go anywhere tomorrow.

It seemed like I’d just closed my eyes when the alarm went off. Groaning tiredly, I swung my legs out of bed and trudged down the passage to the lounge, shivering a little in the cold. Waking up a grumpy biker was not on my list of favourite things to do at this hour of the morning, but needs must. Tommy muttered at me but woke up enough to tell me his name. Calling it good, I put another log on the fire and hurried back to bed.

I could have cried when the alarm went off two hours later, heaving myself out of bed and stumbling down the passage, not wanting to open my eyes and wake up completely. Shaking Tommy’s shoulder, I woke him up just enough to get his name before I stumbled my way back to bed, collapsing in a heap, pulling the covers over me and huddling into my bed, wondering if I should put the heating back on but knowing that it would come back on in a few hours anyway, I decided that sleep was more important.

Waking up a few hours later, gasping for breath and sweating, I threw off a blanket, wondering what the hell was going on. Was the thermostat broken?

There was a slight moan as my hand that had thrown the blanket off hit something hard beside me. Pushing up on my elbows, I turned and looked to the usually empty left side of my bed. It wasn’t anymore; instead, it was filled with a large, muscular body. A hot body. A very hot body and not just in looks but in temperature . ‘Jesus, the man was like a furnace.’

Lying back down with a mutter at the cheek of him taking over my bed without asking first, although I suppose it was more comfortable than a mattress on the floor. I was just falling back asleep when I suddenly sat up, worried that he was running a temperature. Pressing the back of my hand to his forehead, I sighed in relief when I found it to be cool. Nope, no temperature; the man just ran hot.

Lying back down, I turned on my side and drifted back to sleep, figuring he was in too much pain to try anything anytime soon. ‘More’s the pity,’ I sighed softly before falling back asleep.

I’m not sure how many hours had passed when I woke again. We’d both turned, and we were now lying on our sides. I was the little spoon to his big spoon. Tommy’s arm was wrapped around me with one large hand covering my breast. I whimpered slightly, then bit my lip as he moved his fingers, brushing over my engorged nipple; the wetness between my legs made me wonder how long we’d been in this position. Hurt or not, the man definitely woke up happy if the hard rod pushing up against my backside was any indication. It seemed that even in pain, the man was horny.

Squirming slightly, I wondered how to get myself out of the position I’d found myself in. The more I squirmed, it seemed, the harder he got. Biting my lip to stop another whimper of need from escaping.

I stiffened slightly at his deep, gruff, rumble whisper in my ear, a whisper that had goosebumps rising over my skin, “Sprite, unless you’re good with me giving you a better orgasm than the one you gave yourself last night, you need to stop squirming because I’m so hard I’d gladly fuck you into the mattress.”

Not sure what it said about me that his words sent a thrill through my entire body, and I was hard-pressed not to rock back against him. The thought of him hard and thrusting in and out of my body sent a gush of wetness into my panties, and I gave another shiver, then gasped when, with a, “Fuck it,” he had me on my back, my

sweatshirt off and he was lying between my legs, his hard cock pressing up against my clit, his mouth was on mine, his tongue twining with mine. With a needy whimper, I wrapped my legs around his hips and rocked my hips, so his cock was hitting me just right up against my clit with every thrust. It had been years since I'd had a man in my bed; it wasn't going to take me long to detonate, especially as this man knew just how to swivel and thrust his hips.

Before long, my needy whimpers, turned into loud wails as an orgasm tore through me until I was as limp as a noodle, my arms still wrapped around Tommy, who was breathing hard, his head nestled in the crook of my neck, his breath trailing across my now naked breasts. Tommy lifted up on his elbows so that he could look at me. He had a slightly bemused look on his face, and I wondered what was wrong. Raising my eyebrows in query. He chuckled and shook his head as if he couldn't believe what had just happened.

“What's wrong?” I asked curiously.

“Sprite, I just came from dry humping you. The last time that happened, I was a teenager. I may have to hand in my man card.”

Throwing my head back, I laughed. He shook his head and grinned down at me, obviously not minding my laughter, even if it was at his expense.

Still smiling, I ran my fingers through his hair, unbelievably comfortable with him even though we'd only met the night before. There was something about him that was so familiar, but I just couldn't put my finger on why that was. I'd listened to my gut in the past, and it rarely let me down, and it told me I could trust this man.

Not that I particularly cared what it said about me being so comfortable with a man I barely knew. I mean, the man had just delivered me one of the best orgasms I'd had in a long time, and he'd barely touched me. But yeah, I suppose if we were going to

sleep together, I should at least know the man's full name.

Giving a little shrug replying, "It felt good, who cares if we dry-humped. It's the best orgasm I've had in years. Imagine what we'll be like if we get naked."

Lowering his head, he groaned and rubbed his forehead against my breastbone, "Fuck, you're going to kill me. I've been courting death for years, but I think my luck has run out now that I've met you."

Laughing at his dramatics, I pushed him off me and swung my legs out of bed to get up.

"Not that I haven't enjoyed this, but I need a shower and food. How are you feeling, do you want any pain pills?" I queried as I stood up and put my sweatshirt back on, hiding my breasts from view, pulling it down over my hips as I looked at the beast of a man taking up most of my bed. One hand rested behind his head, the muscles flexing as he moved a little, his dark hair mussed from sleep; all in all, considering the fall he'd taken yesterday he was looking pretty good. I imagined his head had to be hurting, but you wouldn't say so from the way his eyes were wandering up and down my body. I'd have thought he'd be good for a little while, considering we'd both just had a fantastic orgasm, but it looked like he was ready to go again.

Snapping my fingers at him to get his attention, smiling when he scowled at me. I'd have to agree with him there was nothing more annoying than having someone snap their fingers at you.

"What," I muttered, "you weren't answering me. I needed to get your attention somehow."

"I'm good, Sprite. I took some more painkillers about four-ish. I'll probably need some more in an hour or so but want to eat something first. Go shower, and if it's

okay with you, I'll use the spare bathroom, then get the coffee on."

"Of course it's fine," I assured him, then remembering to let him know about his bags, I swung back around. "Before I forget, I brought your bags that were on your bike in with me. I put them next to the front door."

"Thanks, Sprite," Tommy replied with a smile. With one last long lingering look at the hunk of deliciousness in my bed, I disappeared into the bathroom. I'd have to be careful about getting attached to him. From the amount of clothes and personal items he'd had on his bike, he was either a wanderer or he was on a run. He didn't wear any colours, but that didn't mean he wasn't part of a club. It was looking like this was going to be my most interesting Christmas in a while, and I can't say I was disappointed in my early Christmas present so far.

Turning on the shower, I cheerfully hummed, 'Deck the Halls' while washing my hair. It was shaping up to be an interesting few days.

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TOMMY

I scrubbed a hand over my face to stop myself from ogling her cute little arse as she sashayed into the bathroom for her shower.

“Fuck me,” I mumbled, pressing my head back into the pillows. Her scent filled the room. I don’t know what it was about this chick, but I couldn’t seem to keep my hands off of her. I was too jaded for her cute little arse, never mind that I was too old. Although she didn’t seem put off by me at all. And what the fuck was with the dry humping? I hadn’t come like that since I was a horny teenager. Laughing under my breath at my idiocy, I swung my legs out of her comfortable as fuck bed and walked to the guest bathroom. Other than the floor layout, nothing of this house in anyway resembled the hell hole I’d grown up in.

I’d wandered around a little, looking around in the early hours of this morning when my bladder had woken me up to take a piss. It had not been fun getting up off the floor with my ribs. After I’d taken some of the pain pills she’d left out, I couldn’t face getting back down on the floor and crawling onto the mattress. I’d looked for another bed, but not finding one, I’d gone into Sprite’s room; I’d stood for a while debating about whether or not I should climb into bed with her and if she’d freak out if I did.

Finally, the pain and tiredness had won out, and I’d laid down next to her, my body instantly relaxing into the softness of her mattress. I could have cried in relief. It hadn’t been long after that that I’d fallen asleep, only to wake up to a rock-hard cock and Sprite squirming in the bed next to me.

Washing up quickly, I left the bathroom and found my saddlebags exactly where she

said they would be. Finding some comfortable clothing, and because the house was cold, I hurriedly dressed in a pair of tracksuit bottoms and a long-sleeve T-shirt. A couple of minutes later, I heard the boiler kick in, and the house started to slowly warm up. I assumed this meant that she had her heating on a timer. Going into the lounge, I put another log on the fire so that the house would stay warm when her heating went back off.

Picking the blankets up from the floor, I folded them and added them to a camp chair she had set up in a corner. It was only then that I realised she didn't have any furniture. There was, however, a huge arsed, fully decorated Christmas tree and Christmas decorations all over the house. My Sprite seemed to really love Christmas.

Tidying up as much as I could with my fucked-up ribs, I picked up my cum stained shirt from last night, along with any other dirty clothes and set them by the washing machine. I'm sure she'd not mind me using it, but I'd ask her first. Finding all the makings for coffee, I started a pot before looking in the fridge for something to make for breakfast. Seeing that she had bacon, sausage, and eggs, I took them out and started cooking. My stomach started growling in hunger at the scent of bacon. The soup from last night, while delicious, had long since worn off.

Turning the bacon, I noticed that the coffee was ready. Opening cupboards until I found mugs, ignoring the Christmas-themed ones, I found a large black one at the back of the cupboard and filled it to the brim with the delicious black gold, closing my eyes as the first hit of caffeine rushed through me. 'Was there anything better than that first coffee in the morning?' I wondered, turning back to the stove and the food cooking there.

Breakfast was nearly done by the time I heard Sprite walking down the passage towards the kitchen. Turning slightly to look at her over my shoulder, I couldn't help but smile at what she was wearing. She had on dark green leggings, a Christmas jumper filled with gingerbread men, and fluffy red socks; her hair was in a jaunty

ponytail that swung with every step she took.

She came to a stop when she saw me staring at her, “What?”

The grin that spread over my face had her narrowing her eyes at me, “Nothing, Sprite, you’re cute as fuck, though.”

“Huh,” she uttered with a little sniff and walked to the coffee pot, not saying anything else. Taking a Christmas mug from the cupboard, making me smile at how much she seemed to love Christmas, she filled it up, leaving just enough space for milk. Taking a big sip, she sighed as she closed her eyes, her face relaxed in bliss.

Opening them to catch me watching her, she grinned, “I love that first taste of coffee in the morning. The rush makes me happy.”

Shaking my head at her words, they weren’t much different to what I’d been thinking. Taking plates out of the cupboard that I’d found when I was looking for the mugs, I started plating up our breakfast and took it to the table. Sprite grabbed our coffees and some cutlery before sitting down.

“This looks amazing. Thank you,” she declared, tucking in. We ate in silence for a moment, not that it was awkward. You would have thought it would be, with us not knowing each other, but it was comfortable. I’m not sure what it was about her, but she was the easiest woman I’d ever been around. There was no denying the chemistry between us, and my age didn’t seem to bother her, not that we’d discussed our ages, but I was definitely a lot older than her. Although she seemed to have her life sorted and completely together for someone who seemed so young.

Once she’d finished, she pushed her plate away, pulled a leg up onto her chair, wrapping an arm around it while she continued to sip on her coffee while she waited on me.

“Thanks for cooking breakfast, leave your plate, I’ll clean up once I’ve finished my coffee,” she said with a small smile, stopping me as I went to pick up my plate.

Sitting back down, I picked up my mug and waited for the questions I could see building on her face.

Tilting her head slightly, she continued to peruse me, I waited. I was a patient man, in my previous form of work I’d had to be. “Ask your questions, Sprite.”

“Will you answer them truthfully?”

“If I can and if I can’t, I’ll tell you,” I told her honestly. She seemed satisfied with that answer, sitting back more comfortably in her chair.

“What’s your name?”

“Tommy,” I answered with a smile.

Shaking her head at me, she demanded, “Your full name.”

Sighing, I sat forward, my hands clasped together on the table, I looked at her, “Tommy O’Shea.” She jerked in surprise at the name. I waved a hand around her home. “This is the house I grew up in,” I told her. “Although it looks better now than it did then. It’s certainly more cheerful.”

So far, she’d not said a word at learning my name. I watched as she bit her lip, watching me. My cock hardened as her tongue swiped across her lower lip. This woman was going to kill me at this rate. I seemed to be constantly hard around her.

I was jerked out of my thoughts when she said, “You’re Colm’s nephew. The one he thought was dead. He kept this house for as long as he could, hoping you’d be home.

But when he hadn't heard from you for two years, he decided to sell."

"Yeah, for reasons I can't go into, it was better that they thought I was dead. It wasn't safe for me to come home until I'd tied up a few loose ends. I'm glad he sold it to you. You've made it into a home, which it wasn't when I lived here."

"Do you want to contact Colm? They're all home for Christmas."

I shook my head, "No, I'll wait a few days until I'm moving better." Then the thought hit me that she may want me gone and my head jerked up to look into her chocolate brown eyes. "Unless you want me to go."

Her hands shot forward to grab hold of mine that were still resting on the table and gave them a quick squeeze, replying earnestly, "No, I don't want you to leave. You're welcome here for as long as you want."

"Thanks, Sprite, I won't be a problem. I'm happy to chip in on cleaning and cooking. I'm not a freeloader. Do you need to go into town for groceries?"

"I didn't think you were," she assured me with a small smile, "and no, we're good for the next couple of days for food."

She stood up from the table, picked up our plates and took them to the sink, seemingly done with the conversation. Turning back to me once she'd set them down, she asked, "There is one thing you can clear up for me, though."

Crooking a brow at her in query, she grabbed my hand and pulled me up, taking a pen from the kitchen counter where it had been lying next to a notebook that looked like it was used for making lists. She pulled me along to the pantry. Opening the door and switching on the light, she gestured to the height chart on the door frame. It was the one good memory I had from this house; every year on my birthday, my mum would

measure me and make a mark against the frame. Running a finger down the list from when I was about three years old until she stopped when I went to live next door.

“I’m guessing this was for you,” Sprite grinned up at me. Nodding, I returned her grin with a smile of my own, “Yeah it was. The last one was when I was twelve and I went to live next door.”

She didn’t say anything about my comment, just pushed me until I was standing at the doorframe, pen in hand, looking at me expectantly. With a beleaguered sigh, I pretended to be put out but dutifully stood still while she rose up on her tiptoes, her small, pink tongue peeking out between her teeth as she concentrated at drawing a line above my head. Happy, she settled back down on her heels, pulling me away from the doorjamb. Standing on her toes, she wrote Tommy under the line, the date, then looked at me, eyebrows raised in query, “How old are you?”

“Forty-five,” I told her, wondering what she’d think of my age. Not saying anything, she wrote my age down with a small smile, stepping back looking satisfied.

Taking the pen from her, I pushed her gently back against the doorframe and made a mark above her head, before writing her name and then looking at her, my brow raised in question. She hesitated, then asked, “If I tell you, are you going to freak out?”

“I won’t know unless you tell me,” I replied honestly.

“Twenty-seven.”

I groaned when I did the math, fuck me, there was eighteen years between us. A hard slap on my arm brought me out of my thoughts to find her glaring at me.

“I knew I shouldn’t have told you. It’s just a number,” she grumbled. “It’s not like

you're sixty."

Then she grinned cheekily at me, "I'm not calling you daddy, though, just so you know. Although I won't say no to a spanking if you feel the need."

It took a while for her words to penetrate my lust filled brain, but when they did, I lunged for her as she ran away laughing hysterically. Catching her, I swept her up into my arms ignoring the twinge in my ribs and took her to her bedroom where I dumped her on the bed with a wicked grin as I pushed my pants off and pulled my shirt off at the same time. And then my fingers were gripping the bottom of her jumper. Lifting her arms for me to take it off, her laughter stopped abruptly, her eyes were heated when they met mine. She swiped a tongue over her plump, pink lips. Slipping my fingers into the elastic of her leggings, I pulled them off her, taking her socks with them. Ten seconds later, my head was buried between her legs, and she was calling my name as I licked and sucked at her delicious pussy. Gently, I thrust a finger into her channel, wondering how the fuck I was going to get my dick in there it was that tight. Slowly, I added a second, but I could already feel her orgasm building. I knew it wouldn't be long now, and I was right as she gushed over my fingers, nearly strangling them with the intensity of her orgasm. Humming against her clit, I ignored the way her fingers were pulling at my hair.

"Tommy," she pleaded as she sobbed out my name on a whimper. Lifting my head slightly so that my eyes met hers over her belly as I looked up the length of her body.

"I need you," she whimpered, tugging at my hair. Crawling up her body, I pulled the cups of her bra down as I pressed kisses first to her stomach and then up her body until I got to her breasts, her nipples hard ruby red points just begging for my mouth. Lowering my head, I sucked first one in, then the other into my mouth, releasing them with a pop, loving the cherry redness of them glistening and wet from my mouth.

Wrapping her legs around my hips, she pulled me closer to her, the tip of my cock butting up against her clit, making her writhe and rock her hips against me. Lifting my mouth from her breasts, cupping her head in my hands to get her attention.

“Sprite,” I growled, she turned her hazy lust filled gaze to me. “Protection, do we need it?”

My words finally penetrated her need, and I breathed a sigh of relief as she shook her head. “I’m on the pill and I’m clean. I haven’t been with anyone in two years.”

‘Well, that explained the tightness of her pussy,’ I thought.

“You?” she asked a little hesitantly.

“I’m clean, baby, I’d never put you at risk. But I can go get a condom, if you want.”

She contemplated me for a bit before tightening her legs and tipping her pelvis until my cock was notched in her opening. I closed my eyes in bliss as the tip of my cock met her wet heat and gently thrust against her, slowly inching in a little at a time. Sweat was beading my brow by the time I made it all the way inside her. ‘Fuck me, she was tight. I wasn’t going to last at this rate,’ I thought.

With one last thrust, I planted myself deep inside her, and my eyes rolled to the back of my head at how good it felt to be so deep inside her. Staying still was sweet agony as I waited for her to adjust to my size. Only when I felt her relax did I move, thrusting into her depths, gritting my teeth and getting harder and harder at her every moan. I wasn’t going to last much longer; she needed to come and come now.

Sitting back on my heels, I unwrapped her legs from around my waist and brought them both over my left shoulder. She was gorgeous in the morning light, head thrown back, body arched in bliss as she took all of me. Putting my thumb in my mouth,

wetting it, I then stroked it across her clit.

“Come for me, Sprite,” I commanded, “Come for me now.” And did she come? She came so beautifully, sweat beading her chest that heaved with each breath, her nipples hard and red. Following her not long after, I gasped for breath as her pussy strangled my cock, pulling every bit of cum from my body.

Panting, I lay her legs back on the bed. Bending forward, I take a hard nipple in my mouth, her pussy contracting with every suck, I moved from one to the other, slowly getting hard again. ‘I guess we weren’t done yet,’ I thought as I gently thrust into her. Lifting my mouth from her breast, I find her lips, kissing her long and deep until we come once again. With a sated sigh, I sink into her and relax, my head tucked into the crook of her neck.

“Jesus,” she muttered, “if that’s what you can do at forty-five, I hate to know what you could do at eighteen. I think you broke me.”

My shoulders shook with laughter at her words. Lifting my head, I looked down at her, “Trust me, baby, at eighteen, I would have been done two seconds after I was inside you. Stamina comes with age.”

“Thank Christ you’re older then. Bring it on, I say,” she grinned at me, her eyes sparkling happily, before tapping me on my side to move. “I need to clean up. Do you want to join me in the shower?”

With a groan, I moved off her and stood by the bed, bending to pick her up. I winced a bit as my injuries pulled; I was feeling all the pain now that the painkillers and endorphins were fading away.

“Put me down,” she grumbled at me, slapping me gently on the shoulder, “you’re injured.”

“Bathroom’s not far, Sprite,” I assured her as I put her down on the bathroom mat, reaching in to switch on the shower.

I should have known that I wouldn’t be able to keep my hands off her. By the time we were done in the shower, I was ready for a nap, feeling every one of my forty-five years, but I didn’t feel too bad because my Sprite joined me, falling asleep as soon as her head hit her pillow.

We slept well into the afternoon before waking up starving. The rest of the evening was spent eating, getting to know each other, and watching what she deemed were appropriate Christmas movies. I didn’t complain as most of them were blow-them-up-movies with lots of gratuitous violence and the others were comedies. She told me why she loved Christmas so much, and it made me happy that she’d had a fantastic childhood with parents that loved her. It was what she deserved. We chatted late into the night in between movies and snack runs. I can’t remember the last time I’d enjoyed myself so much.

We finished the evening with another round in bed, and it was the best Christmas Eve I’d had in years. It made me wonder what tomorrow would bring.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:28 am

LANA

Waking up wrapped up in Tommy's arms on Christmas Day was a whole new experience for me. I'd not spent a Christmas Day with anyone for years, preferring to spend it by myself and remembering my parents.

I'd loved spending time with him yesterday, and not just because the man knew his way around a woman's body and could fuck like a machine. He had a great sense of humour, and while he gave off a dangerous, don't fuck with me aura, he'd kept me laughing most of the day. I'd gotten the impression that he hadn't had the happiest of childhoods, not that I'd pried, but I wasn't an idiot, and I could read between the lines. It made me sad for him until he told me that he'd been happy after his Uncle Colm had taken him in. Once I'd put the pieces together, I understood why he'd seemed so familiar. Other than having dark hair to their blonde, he was the spitting image of Colm and Liam.

He'd honestly answered all the questions I'd asked about his life. The only question he hadn't answered was when I'd asked him what he did for work, he'd told me he was retired, and he couldn't talk about what his work had been, so I'd left it and moved on to another subject.

Turning my head on my pillow, I looked at the clock I kept on the bedside and saw it was still early, not even six in the morning. From the hardness pressing against my back, I guessed that Tommy woke up happy every morning, deciding it was my turn to give him something for a change. The man was nothing if not a giving lover, and I'd lost count of the amount of orgasms he'd given me yesterday. It was time to even the playing field a little. 'I mean, who didn't like to wake up on Christmas morning to

a present,' I thought with a wicked grin as I slowly scooted my way down the bed and under the sheets until my head was even with his hips.

My eyes widened a bit at the length and girth of him. I'd known he was big because I'd sure as hell felt him all day yesterday, but he'd not given me a chance to have a good look. I licked my lips in anticipation, wondering how I was going to fit all of him in my mouth. In the end, I decided to just go for it and see how it went. Getting comfortable, I wrapped my hand around his hard cock, smirking a little as it jumped in my hand before lowering my head to run my tongue around the head, lapping gently at the pre-cum that had beaded at the top. He tasted a little salty, and my mouth watered slightly, wanting to take another taste.

Tommy shifted slightly in the bed, and I waited with bated breath to see if he woke up, but when he settled back down, I again ran my tongue around the head before engulfing it and sucking him as far as I could take him. That woke him up in a hurry, one hand threaded through my hair as he let out a hoarse, "Fuck," and threw the blankets off us.

"Sprite," he ground out.

Lifting my eyes, I peered up the length of his body until my eyes met his. The heat in his eyes was nearly my undoing. When he reached for me as if he was going to remove me from his cock, I frowned at him and shook my head before lowering my eyes and concentrating on making him lose control.

"Jesus," he muttered, widening his legs as I sucked him down. He threaded his fingers through my hair, held my head still as he panted slightly.

"Slowly, Sprite, or I'm going to come before I'm ready to," he gritted out as he ran his fingers through my hair. I waited until he'd calmed down some, although I'd not stopped running my tongue around him until I felt he'd calmed enough. Opening my

mouth, I sucked him as deep as I could. He let out a curse as he pumped his hips up, filling my mouth up with his cock at the speed that he wanted. I was happy to let him take over for now. By the sounds he was making, I knew he was about ready to blow, so I doubled down and kept going, ignoring his shouted warning as his cum hit the back of my throat and slid down like silk with every swallow.

“Holy fuck,” Tommy whispered, running his hands over his face before looking down his body at me. Letting go of his now softening cock with a pop, I grinned up at him before crawling up his body and sitting on his stomach, wiping a finger along my bottom lip.

“Merry Christmas,” I beamed a smile at him. His body shook with laughter at my words.

“Sprite! Jesus, woman, I think you sucked my brains out. Best Christmas present I’ve had in years. But never let it be said that I don’t return the favour,” he smirked, blue eyes twinkling wickedly at me. Tapping me on the thigh, he demanded, “Get up here, woman.”

At first, confused at what he meant, I just sat there staring into his blue eyes. It was only when he tugged on my hips that I realised what he wanted, and my eyes widened. I’d never done this; no man had ever wanted me to sit on his face. I was a little worried that I’d suffocate the man, not a worry he seemed to have because when I was too slow at getting to where he wanted me, he picked me up and positioned me over his face.

“Hold on for the ride of your life, baby,” he grinned at me as he pulled me down towards him, disappearing between my thighs, his tongue going to work on my clit, making my eyes roll to the back of my head at how good it felt. Soon, I stopped worrying about everything. I was rocking my hips and grinding down against his face. He was a big boy, and he could move me if he was suffocating.

Once he added his fingers, there was no stopping me. I'd never come so hard, not even in the last two days. I mean, this man knew how to pull an orgasm or three out of a woman, but Jesus, I think I may have died and gone to heaven on this last one. When my knees couldn't hold me up anymore, I toppled to the side, lying down on the bed next to a smiling Tommy, panting hard like I'd run miles.

"Merry Christmas to me, big guy. I think you've ruined me forever," I told him when I got my breath back. He let out a roar of laughter, the bed shaking slightly with how much he was laughing.

I couldn't help but smile at his hilarity; something told me that this man hadn't had a lot to smile about in his life.

TOMMY

Being woken by my Sprite and her hot as fuck mouth would go down in my memory bank as one of my favourite memories. The woman knew what she liked and what she wanted, and she wasn't shy in making it known. I found that I enjoyed it when she got bossy in bed. It's not something I'd ever had. Most of the sex I'd had in my life had been on a mutual understanding that it was once and once only. A way to fill a mutual need and that was it.

There was something to be said about having sex with someone you were starting to feel something for. This feeling in my chest when it came to Lana had taken me by surprise. I never thought I'd ever want to be with someone, and I sure as shit never intended to have kids. I mean, with a father like I'd had, I wasn't sure that I'd be able to be a good one. Although I'd sure as fuck know what not to do. Top of the list would be that I'd definitely not beat my kid until he had to be taken to the hospital.

And now I was lying in her bed thinking that having kids with her wouldn't be half bad. If I had her to keep me on the straight and narrow, I could do it. I'd had more years with Uncle Colm than I'd had with my father. I figured he'd be there to give me advice.

'Jesus,' I thought, wiping a hand down my face, but all that did was remind me of the deliciousness I'd just had perched on top of me. Once my Sprite had got over being embarrassed, she'd enjoyed the fuck out of riding my face.

"Come on," she nudged me. "It's time to get up and get started on the food or we won't be eating today. And after last night and this morning, I'm going to need food."

“Well then, let’s go,” I agreed, getting up and out of the bed, pulling her along with me. Picking her up, I tossed her over my shoulder. Grimacing slightly at the pain in my ribs. On the whole, I was doing better than expected, but I still hurt all the same, the road rash being the worst as it started tightening up as it healed.

Walking to the bathroom, I set her down on the bathmat, holding her steady as the blood that had rushed to her head when I’d had her over my shoulder settled.

“Ugh,” she muttered, slapping at my stomach. “That shit may seem romantic, but the head rush you get from it is crap.”

Chuckling, I started the water for the shower waiting for it to warm up.

I don’t think I’ve laughed so much in years as I’ve laughed in the last few days.

Sticking my hand in the shower to test the water, I found it hot enough and got in, tugging her along behind me. Smiling as she stuck her entire head under and stood there with the water cascading down her body, darkening her red hair.

‘She is so beautiful.’

Wiping the water from her face, she stepped out and caught me watching her.

“What?” she asked.

“Nothing, I was just thinking that you’re beautiful.”

She flushed, dipping her head shyly, smiling, “Thank you.”

“No need to thank me, Sprite, I’m just speaking the truth.”

The smile she sent me was blinding with happiness. Picking up her body wash, I squirted some on her loofah and proceeded to wash her. This was another first for me—I'd never cared enough nor trusted any of my previous my bed partners to even attempt anything like this. The appreciative noises coming from Lana while making my cock stand up and take notice were making me happy. I liked knowing that what I was doing was appreciated.

“Turnabout's fair play,” Lana said, taking the loofah from me and running it over my chest, down my abs towards my legs.

“Jesus,” she muttered, her forehead hitting my chest, before she tilted her head up at me, resting her chin on my chest, “does that thing ever go down? Are you sure you're forty-five because I don't think your cock's got the message.”

Howling with laughter at her words, I wrapped my arms around her in a hug. I had to agree. It had been a long time since I'd been able to get hard so often and I put it all down to the delightful package in my arms, who was watching me laugh with amusement lighting up her eyes.

Bending slightly, I gripped the back of her thighs and lifted her up, her legs automatically went around my waist bringing her hot pussy in alignment with my cock. With a gentle thrust of my hips, I nudged at her opening.

“It's all you, Sprite,” I assured her with amusement.

She grinned at me, gripping the hair at the back of my head, she brought my head down to her.

“Well, then, Mr. O'Shea, let me take care of it for you. Kiss me and fuck me quick because I'm hungry and not just for your cock.”

Who was I to argue with her? An O'Shea man didn't keep his lady waiting.

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LANA

My body was still humming after coming twice this morning, and I'd threatened to make him sleep in the guest room tonight if he didn't let me get the food on, or we'd not be eating today.

Not that he'd taken my threats seriously because he'd just smirked at me, tapped me gently on the arse and left me to get dressed.

He did help me get our Christmas dinner together, though. It was fun working side by side with him; he knew how to cook, so we worked well together. And we chatted about anything and everything, I loved listening to all the places he'd travelled to while he'd been working.

"I'm so jealous," I grumbled as I shovelled another mouthful of the stuffing he'd made into my mouth. I don't know what he'd done to it, but it was amazing. I could have eaten the entire lot by myself.

"What are you jealous of, darling?"

"All the travelling you've done."

Tommy covered my hand with his and squeezed it, bringing my attention back to him.

"You shouldn't feel jealous, Sprite. Look at all you have." He waved his hand around before he continued, "You have a beautiful home you bought yourself. You have a

job you love, and from all that you've told me, you have people that care about you. That is much more than I have. I have a body that's broken from years of abuse, a broken motorcycle and a family that doesn't even know I'm alive. Yes, I've travelled the world, and I've money in the bank, but what you have here, this is far more important."

Tears pricked my eyes at his words. He was right; I had accomplished a lot over the last few years, and I should be proud of myself.

Sitting up straighter in my chair, "You're right," I agreed. "I should be proud and I am. I'd still like to travel, though."

"I tell you what, Sprite, you pick where you want to go, and I'll take you. That way, I won't have to worry about you, and I can play tour guide and show you all the good places not on the tourist maps."

Smiling so hard at his words that my cheeks hurt, I wasn't sure if this happy feeling was because he didn't seem to be sick of me yet and wanted to spend more time with me or if it was that I was growing feelings for the sweet, gruff, dangerous man. Either way, I knew I wanted to spend more time with him. Holding out my hand for him to shake, "Deal," I told him, "You and I'll go travelling this year. I'm guessing this means you'll stick around?"

"Yeah, Sprite, I'll be sticking around. I'd like to get to know my family again and if you're not sick of me, I'd like to spend more time getting to know you too."

"I'm not sick of you," I assured him, squeezing his hand in agreement. I smiled, leaving our clasped hands on the table between us. I went back to eating one-handed, reluctant to let go of his.

I'd heard of instant love but hadn't believed in it even though I'd seen it with the

Crow MC. I wondered what Tommy was feeling. I'd not say anything for now, but I was going to enjoy the next few days with him. We'd have to go and pick up his bike sometime soon as we couldn't just leave it on the side of the road, but for now, there wasn't anything pressing calling other than to stuff our faces and veg out in front of the telly and watch Christmas shows for the rest of the day.

It was definitely turning out to be the best Christmas I'd had in years.

TOMMY

God, this woman was too sweet. Definitely too sweet for a broken-down old fucker like me. But I was a selfish fuck, and I was going to take everything she was willing to give me until she got sick of me. Which I hoped wasn't anytime soon. This definitely was not how I saw my Christmas going, and I wasn't sure what I'd done to deserve it, but I was going to hold on tight to the gift I'd been given.

It was one of the best Christmas Days I'd had since leaving Uncle Colm's house. But even those days had been overshadowed by the constant worry that the police would be knocking on our door because someone had fucked up somewhere and been caught. Then, the years I'd spent doing the man-for-hire jobs. Those type of jobs didn't give you days off. So if I didn't find myself working on Christmas Day, then I'd find a bar and get drunk with the rest of the lonely souls the world seemed to have all over. It didn't matter which country you were in, there were always those who didn't have a family and the big dinner to look forward to. I'd treasure this day in my memories for years to come.

When dinner was finished, we vegged out on the mattress that we'd left on the floor in the lounge as she didn't have any furniture in here yet. Sprite snuggled up against my chest, arm thrown over my waist, one leg over my hips, perfectly comfortable as she told me what she wanted to do over the next few days—sanding floors and painting so that she could move in properly in the new year. All her furniture was in storage just waiting to be picked up and moved in.

"I'll help," I told her, running my fingers through her bright red hair. "It's been a while, but I think I remember how to hold a paintbrush."

Titling her head back to look at me, she smiled, “I won’t say no, because it will go much faster with both of us working on it. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, Sprite. Told you, I’m not a freeloader.”

Sprite patted me gently on my chest, “I know you’re not, Tommy. Under that dangerous, gruff, grumpy aura you have going on is a good man.”

The fact that she thought that had a lump forming in my throat. Not trusting myself to say anything, I pressed a kiss to the top of her head.

That was another thing I loved about her was that she didn’t need to spend the whole time filling the air with useless chatter. She was just as happy to be quiet, especially when she thought it was needed.

Yep, definitely a day for the memory books.

The rest of the day was spent watching movies, napping, eating leftovers or whatever snack Sprite felt like, and making love. Because that’s what it was with her, whether we went hard and fast or soft and gentle, every time with her, it was making love, not just fucking.

I wasn’t sure when this cold, shrivelled heart started to catch feelings for the gorgeous woman, but somewhere between taking a fall off my bike and waking up under her brightly lit Christmas tree with her taking care of me, I’d started to fall for her.

I also knew it would kill me when she decided she’d had enough and kicked me to the kerb, because it would have to be her doing the kicking. I didn’t think there was any way I’d be able to leave her willingly.

But as with most good things, they come to an end.

We'd picked up the lounge late last night and crawled into bed around two in the morning, so this morning we'd been slow to get up and moving.

I'd offered to make the coffee and get breakfast going while she had a shower and got ready for the day. We'd finish off the painting today in the lounge, dining room, and hallway. Sprite only needed one more coat on them all. Then tomorrow, we planned to sand the floors and maybe get a coat of varnish on them. The lounge would have to be done in sections as that was a high traffic area, but I figured we'd get it all done in the next three days, then we'd get the rest of her furniture moved in.

The shower had shut off about ten minutes ago, so I knew Sprite would be out soon. I was just pouring our coffee and could hear Sprite walking down the hallway towards the kitchen when the sound of a vehicle pulling into her yard had me at attention.

Instead of coming towards me, she went to the door, her bright happy voice calling out a bright good morning and Merry Christmas to whoever was out there. My shoulders relaxed slightly at her friendly greeting. But I wouldn't relax completely until I knew who it was and assessed the danger. It was hard to switch off that part of me.

Leaving our coffee on the counter, I quietly walked towards the slightly open front door that was letting out all the heat. Sprite was assuring whoever it was that she was fine. She still sounded happy, and that went a long way to keeping the beast I had coiled in me calm.

"I'm fine, I promise. Thanks for checking on me, though. I appreciate that you thought of me."

"Girl, of course I worried about you. You should have come to us for Christmas

dinner, we had enough. Maya cooked too much, plus the kids would have loved to have seen you.”

Now, that grumbly, grumpy voice I knew and recognised. A smile touched my lips at his grumbling at her. It told me a lot. My Uncle Colm liked Lana. There weren’t many the old man did like, but if he did, there wasn’t much he wouldn’t do for you.

Lana replied, amusement in her voice at my uncle’s grouching, “I promise I’ll pop over in the next few days. I want to get the house finished so that I can get my furniture moved in come the new year.”

“Do you want me to send the boys over to give you a hand? You’d get it done quicker.”

“Oh, don’t worry, I have help and it is one of your boys, just not any of the ones you are thinking of.”

“What?” Colm muttered. “Who do you have in there, girly? I only have four boys left since.....” Colm stops there getting a little choked up before continuing, “I only have four boys left and one is in prison and the other in Ireland.”

Well, shit, she just outed me. I’m not sure why I was reluctant to let my family know that I was home and safe, and Lana had obviously picked up on my reluctance. Nothing like ripping a bandage off. With a deep sigh, straightening my shoulders, I gripped the door and opened it wider so that I was framed in the doorway.

“Merry Christmas, Uncle Colm.”

My uncle staggered back a step as he took me in, his face a little pale.

“Shit,” Lana rushed forward and slipped an arm around his waist. Not that her tiny

arse would hold him up if he went down. I felt like shit—I should have known it would be a shock, but I wasn't sure how else I could have made it easier on him.

“Tommy,” my uncle whispered, and it gutted me to see tears in the old man's eyes. “You're alive.”

Steadier now, he reached for me. There was no way I could have stopped myself, I stepped into my uncle's hard embrace, making no move to stop the tear that trickled down my cheek. I'd missed this old man. Looking over my uncle's shoulder, my Sprite was standing, hands tucked under her chin, lip quivering, tears running down her cheeks at our reunion.

All it took was me beckoning her with my fingers, and she rushed over, settling against me, face pressed to my side. It took her pushing against us for my uncle to let go of me slightly and step back but only so that he could cup my face; his eyes travelled over me, noting the bruises and cuts, before dropping to the woman snuggled against my side. His face instantly softened.

“I've missed you. It's good to have you home, son.”

Wiping at my face I smiled, “It's good to be home, Uncle Colm.”

His eyes again slid to Sprite, and he smiled, “I can see.”

“Coffee's made and breakfast is nearly done. Why don't you come in and catch up,” Sprite invited, then she held up a hand, “I know there will be stuff you can't say in front of me, but once I've eaten, I'll go to the dining room, put my earphones on and start the painting so you two can talk about all that stuff.”

‘Fuck me, if I didn't love her before I certainly did at those words,’ I thought but didn't say anything, just lifted an eyebrow at Uncle Colm to see what he wanted to

do.

“Coffee it is then,” he agreed, clasping my shoulder hard before stepping back. Letting go of Sprite so that she could go into the house before us, we followed her into the kitchen.

As if she knew I needed a minute, she settled Uncle Colm at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee even though I knew he’d have preferred a cup of tea but as she had none in the cupboards, he’d have to make do with coffee. I watched with amusement as he put four sugars in and topped it up with so much milk that there was hardly any colour in it.

Sprite’s eyes met mine with amusement, but she didn’t say anything, just got another plate out and set it on the table before sitting on a chair next to my uncle and tipping her head at the stove with an amused smirk on her face.

“Cheeky bint,” I grinned at her, flicking her gently on the tip of the nose as I walked by. Her laughter brightened the room. Uncle Colm gave us an assessing look but didn’t say anything as I went to the stove and finished off breakfast. Breaking eggs into the pan for scrambled eggs and pressing down on the toaster to get the toast ready. The bacon, tomatoes, and beans were still in the warmer, so it wouldn’t take much longer. I was content to listen to the hum of conversation between two of my favourite people behind me. I knew I had a long explanation to give to Uncle Colm, but he’d let it rest for now until we could talk in private.

A few minutes later, I had everything on the table, and we were digging in. Sprite kept up the chatter and listened with amusement at the stories Uncle Colm was telling us of his grandchildren. I knew that my younger cousin Johnny had married a woman that had children, and Uncle Colm didn’t call them anything but his grandchildren, even if they weren’t his blood. Just like I’d, for all intents and purposes, been treated as his son, not just his nephew.

“Right, I’m going to leave you two to catch-up,” Sprite informed me as she stood up, gathering our plates and put them in the sink.

Then, turning to me, she continued, “Maybe get Colm to help you go and pick up your bike. We can’t leave it where we did. If you can’t remember where it is, I can draw a map.” With that, she walked over to me and pressed her lips to my temple, whispering, “I’ll just be a room away, call out if you need me.”

With those words, she walked away towards the dining room, closing the door behind her. I waited until the door closed before turning back to find Uncle Colm watching me with amusement in his eyes.

“You are so fucked, boy. I was hoping she’d go for one of my boys; never in a million years thought it would be you,” he grinned at me before his face turned serious.

“Talk to me. We got the news that you were dead, blown up. I had a feeling that you weren’t, though. I was so sure I’d have felt it if you weren’t with us any longer. I waited for two years holding onto this place for you but then started to second guess myself, and I thought that maybe I’d been wrong and that you were gone. Just about killed me to get rid of this house, and I held off until Kate Crow brought Lana out to meet me and to have a look. Something told me that she was important, so I sold it to her, then I waited, wondering if I’d made a mistake,” pausing for a breath, he looked at me then smiled a little smugly, “I guess I didn’t.”

Uncle Colm had always been big on trusting his feelings or his gut and to be fair, they’d never let him down before. It was said that my grandmother had had second sight. Doing the jobs I’d done, I had to agree because quite often I’d have a feeling and change what I was originally going to do and it always worked out for the better. Including the time I’d nearly been blown up by my supposed friends.

“You didn’t make a mistake,” I assured him. “She’s making this house into a home and for some reason, she thinks I’m what she wants. I’m going to make sure that she doesn’t regret picking me up off the side of the road when I wrecked my bike.”

Uncle Colm picked up his mug and took a sip of his coffee, making a face at it. Chuckling at him, “I’ll buy some tea for next time you come over.”

“That would be good, son. I don’t know how you drink this swill,” he grumbled with disgust. “Now, fill me in on what you’ve been doing the last few years. I’m assuming whatever threat there was is now gone?”

“It is,” I assured him. “It’s why I’ve come home. I’m finally free.”

For the next two hours, I told my uncle everything that had happened, the why, and who the betrayers were. I didn’t keep anything back. He got it all from the start right up until I’d come off my bike a few days ago. It felt good to offload onto the one man I’d trusted my entire life. He’d never, not once, let me down, and I doubted he’d start now.

When I was finished telling him everything, I was exhausted but lighter than I had been before I started, “That’s everything. You know it all. I’m done living on the edge. I’m getting too old for that shit. I’ve got enough money to live on comfortably. I’ve got a meeting with Avy Crow and Bella Davies about investments in the new year. And Sprite and I have plans to travel as much as we can over the next year.”

“I can’t tell you how relieved I am to have you home, son,” Uncle Colm informed. “It’s been a hard few years with Rhett being put away and you missing. It’s slowly been getting better, and I don’t regret Liam getting us out of the guns, although I do like to give him a hard time about it. The boys have been working hard to get us clean and are now bringing in the type of money we used to with running guns. Who’d have thought,” he shook his head as if in disbelief.

“We lost a lot of men except for Adam’s team; they stayed on and are working for his security company instead. Times are changing and it’s getting hard to do stuff under the radar. Plus, Johnny’s married and a father now and his wife has been through enough. I wouldn’t want her living with the worry that Noni lived with or going through what she is,” he looked sad at the mention of ex-daughter-in-law.

Shaking himself, he stood up, taking his mug to the sink and tipping the left-over coffee down the sink, “Go tell your lady you’re leaving for a bit, and we’ll go pick up your bike. Then we’ll go get the boys to come and help her with the painting. I’m sure Maya will feed us all tonight.”

“Okay,” I agreed, standing up and going to the dining room, opening the door, I smiled as I watched Sprite shaking her arse to whatever she was listening too. She was too fucking cute in her paint-spattered dungarees, long-sleeved T-shirt, and a head scarf that was protecting her hair from paint spatters. Both of these had candy canes all over them because, of course, her painting clothes needed to be Christmas-themed.

She caught sight of my reflection in the window and smiled, taking off her headphones. Walking over to her, I wrapped my arms around her waist, kissing the side of her head. “You’re too fucking cute, Sprite, shaking your arse like that.”

Lana snorted out a laugh at my words, “You need glasses, old man, I’m a mess.”

Turning her in my arms so that I could kiss her, and when I was done, I pulled back slightly, resting my forehead against hers, “Not to me, you’re not, Sprite. To me, you’re gorgeous no matter what you’re wearing.”

Her eyes softened at my words. Leaning over, she put her paint roller on the tray that was on the table next to where she’d been standing. Happy that it was secure, she turned back to me, wrapping her arms tight around me and resting her cheek against

my chest.

“I know it’s too soon because we only met three days ago, but I think I’m falling in love with you, Tommy O’Shea,” she whispered.

Pressing another kiss to the top of her head before taking her chin gently in my fingers so that I could tilt her head up to look at me, “I don’t think I’m falling for you, Sprite, I know I am.”

Her smile was blinding with her happiness. Standing on her tiptoes, she pressed her lips to mine before opening for me. As my tongue stroked against hers, something settled in me. I knew then that I’d found my home; it hadn’t been a place I was looking for, it had been someone, and something told me I’d found it.

Ending the kiss, I pulled back slightly when she sighed happily before asking, “Did everything go okay with Colm?”

“Yeah, Sprite, it did. He’s going to take me to pick up my bike, then we’re going to get the boys to come and help here. Hopefully, we can have you moved in before the New Year.”

Excitement lit her eyes at the thought, “Yeah, that would be great. Well, big man, shoo, the quicker you go, the quicker you get back,” she pushed me towards the door. Laughing, I let her; taking her hand, I tugged her behind me to the front door. Uncle Colm was in his car, the engine running while he waited for me. Taking my leather jacket from the hook by the door, I pulled it on. Kissing Sprite one more time, I opened the door and went to leave, “Make sure you lock up, Sprite.”

Lana rolled her eyes at me, “Okay, old man, it’s not like I’ve been living alone for years.”

“Maybe so, Sprite, but you didn’t have me then and I look after what’s mine.”

“You saying I’m yours, old man?” Lana grinned cheekily at me.

“For as long as you want me, Sprite.”

“Well then, you’d better make plans to bring whatever stuff you have with you when we start moving my stuff in so we can make this your home again.”

Stepping up to her, I kissed her long and hard, not wanting to leave and probably would have continued and taken this to the bedroom if Uncle Colm hadn’t been around and had reminded us of his presence when pressed on the hooter, making us jump and Sprite to laugh out loud.

“Boy, get your arse in the car so we can get started. The quicker we get out of here, the quicker you’re back,” Uncle Colm boomed out of his open window, but his eyes were twinkling with amusement.

“I love the fact that he calls you boy,” Lana snickers at me.

“Woman, carry on and you’ll not be sitting comfortably for a few days,” I stated.

It took her a little while to figure out what I meant, but when her eyes widened and then heated, I groaned as my words worked against me as my cock hardened at the definite interest in her eyes.

“Jesus, Sprite, you’re going to kill me. I’m leaving now before I get any harder,” smiling broadly, I walked away from her, adjusting myself as she laughed at me.

Opening the passenger door of my uncle’s car, I looked at her and motioned with my hand for her to go in, which she did, but not before rolling her eyes at me. I waited

until the front door shut and I heard it lock before getting in the car. My uncle was chuckling, but he didn't say anything as we pulled out of Lana's driveway and onto the main road. It didn't take long for us to find where my bike was lying on the side of the road, but we'd need a trailer before we could pick it up, so turning around, we drove up the road and into the drive for my uncle's property. I had to shake my head at all the signs he had posted warning of private property. When we got to the main gate, he handed me a key to open the lock. This part hadn't changed much, other than the gate, which was much larger and sturdier now, as was the anti-climb fencing. I made a note to get the cost to have Lana's property fenced and gated and a few more cameras set up. She'd hate it, but I also knew that she'd let me do it if it made me feel better, which it would. I didn't live the life I had without knowing a thing or two about security.

Rolling the gate back on its tracks, I waited for Uncle Colm to drive through before closing and locking it behind him, knowing that we'd only be doing the same routine again when we left.

It amused me a little and also made me feel better that not everything had changed. Some things had stayed exactly the same. I can't think how many times I'd done this exact routine as a kid.

With a small smile tugging on my lips, I got back in the car, and we continued to drive along the bumpy dirt road towards the main house.

As with the gate, not much on the property had changed over the years. Soon, we were leaving the tree-lined road and pulling into the wide driveway and up to the front of the house.

It still looked much the same, other than it looked like it had a fresh coat of paint, and a wide veranda had been added on.

There was a grouping of chairs and benches on it with comfortable-looking cushions. On one of the benches sat two men and a woman; the woman was wrapped in a blanket and sitting on the lap of the man with short, dark hair. I couldn't tell from this distance, but I had to assume that it was Johnny and his wife. I wasn't aware of any of my other cousins having a woman.

The man next to him had short blonde hair and if I had to make a guess, I'd say that it was Adam as only Johnny was dark like me—the others had all had blonde hair. That would make the large man with long blonde hair chasing the little boy and girl around the garden my cousin Liam.

I was older than all of them, with Rhett being the closest to me at forty. After Rhett, there had been Liam, who would be around thirty-eight, Adam at thirty-four and Johnny at thirty-two.

"They look good," I said quietly, suddenly feeling nervous. It had been years since I'd seen them.

"They're doing better," Colm agreed. "It's been a tough few years, but having Maya and her children come into our lives has been for the better and having you home now is the icing on the cake. Come on, they'll be happy to see you."

Even though Uncle Colm had invited me to get out, I waited in the car, not wanting to just announce myself by immediately getting out. The children stopped running around as soon as Uncle Colm opened his door and made a beeline for him, the little boy shouting, throwing his arms around Uncle Colm's legs, "Grandpa, you're back!"

Uncle Colm laughed and ran his hand over the boy's dark hair. "I am. Looks like you're running your uncles ragged. What do you think about having another uncle join us?"

At his words, Liam picked up the little girl and settled her on his hip. Johnny gently set his wife on her feet and he and Adam walked down the veranda steps to stand next to Liam, the little girl reaching for Johnny when he came to a stop.

There was no hesitation from him as he took her, and she cuddled into him. The pretty, dark-haired woman walked down the steps behind them and came to a stop next to Johnny. He automatically lifted his arm and wrapped it around her shoulders, pulling her close even as his eyes never left mine through the windscreen. Something in my chest tightened as I watched them. Making me ache a little at all I'd missed out on with the choices I'd made in my life.

"I have more uncles?" the boy asked curiously.

"You do," Uncle Colm told him. "This one has been away for a long time. He's my oldest boy, older even than your Uncle Rhett."

Pushing open the door, I got out and stood up. "Holy fuck," Adam sucked in a breath, "Tommy!"

That seemed to break the tension as they surged forward as one, and I was pulled from one back-breaking hug to another. Questions were asked one after the other. There was no way I would have been able to answer them all, but I answered what I could as I basked in the attention of my family.

"Okay, boys," Colm raised his voice to be heard over everyone, "Tommy's back for good, so we'll have time to find out everything. I found him at Lana's. He came off his bike. We need to get the trailer hooked up and go get it. We'll have to take it to Gunny after the holidays. For today, I promised we'd help Lana with the painting."

He then turned to the pretty, dark-haired woman who was smiling wide as she watched us, her daughter now in her arms and the little boy at her side. "Maya,

sweetheart,” Uncle Colm’s voice softened as he spoke to her, “do you think you can sort supper out for tonight? Lana and Tommy can spend the night here so they don’t have to sleep in a house full of paint fumes, and we can catch up.”

‘Shit, I hope Lana was okay with this plan,’ I thought but didn’t say anything. If she wasn’t, I’d find a way to get us out of it.

“Of course, Da, it’s not a problem; tell Lana not to worry about bringing anything.”

“Thanks, sweetheart,” Colm said to her, then turning to us boys, he started barking orders at us. My cousins just rolled their eyes at their Da but did as he asked. As my name hadn’t been mentioned in those orders, I walked up to the woman and held out my hand.

“I’m Tommy, and I’m guessing you must be Johnny’s wife, Maya. It’s great to meet you.”

Maya smiled as she shook my hand, “Good to meet you too, Tommy. I’ve heard a lot about you. I think you might just have made Colm’s Christmas. This is Emma,” she jiggled the little girl in her arms making her giggle, “and this is Jackson,” she introduced her son, running a hand over his head.

“It’s nice to meet you, Emma,” I said gently, poking her in her side and getting another giggle from her as she shyly hid her face in her mum’s neck. Turning to the little boy, I held out my hand, “It’s good to meet you, Jackson.”

He shook my hand, then tilted his head back, “You’re big. Bigger than my Uncle Liam and he’s huge,” he said, holding his hands out to emphasise how big he thought his uncle was.

Laughing, I ruffled his hair, “Yeah, I am tall. But that’s because of all the good food

my aunt used to make me eat.”

“Vegetables you mean,” Jackson said, wrinkling his nose a little.

“Yep, I’m afraid so,” I grinned at him. I’d felt the same way at his age.

“Tommy,” Uncle Colm called out, turning I saw that the trailer was hitched up.

Lifting my hand up to show I’d heard him, I said goodbye to Maya, Jackson, and Emma before walking away, passing Johnny on the way.

“We’ll be over soon,” he assured me. “Just need to get changed.”

“Okay,” I acknowledged and got back into Uncle Colm’s car. Not long after, we were pulled up next to my bike. I lifted her, grimacing as I saw the damage done to it. Pushing it onto the trailer, I wondered how the hell someone as small as Sprite had managed to push it that far off the road.

“Don’t worry, lad,” Uncle Colm assured me, clapping me on the shoulder, “Gunny and his boy will make her look good as new.”

“I hope so, she’s not that old.”

“We’ll drop her off tomorrow for you. Come on, let’s get to Lana’s and get as much painting done as we can. I want you two at mine tonight, so do what you have to do to persuade her to spend the night.”

Running my hand down my face, I shook my head at his words. Hoping that Lana wouldn’t mind spending the night next door, but I wouldn’t force her. Not long after, we were pulling back into her drive and unhooking the trailer. The front door opened as we walked up the steps, and Lana stood framed in the doorway. I didn’t think

twice about dipping my head and kissing her lips as I walked past.

I wondered how she'd feel about adding a veranda. I liked the one at Uncle Colm's, and it would give me something to do with my time.

It wasn't more than ten minutes later that my cousins pulled up with a cooler full of sandwiches so that we didn't have to stop working throughout the day. Lana obviously knew them well because she was comfortable with them. Comfortable enough to shovel whatever teasing shit they came up with right back at them.

It didn't take long with all of us working for the painting to be done.

Lana hadn't minded us packing up and spending a night at Uncle Colm's; in fact, she asked if we could spend the next two nights if he didn't mind. That way, we could get the sanding and varnishing done without having to breathe it all in.

I knew deep down she was doing it for my uncle's benefit. He'd missed me and was glad I was home. Lana had a big heart and family meant everything to her now that she didn't have any of her own. My uncle had readily agreed and told us to come over when we were ready, but he'd head out now and give Maya a hand, much to the bemusement of his sons.

I didn't have much with me other than what was in my saddlebags. Between my few things and what Lana threw in a bag, we weren't far behind Uncle Colm.

The memories hit me as soon as we walked in the front door, and much like the outside, not much had changed other than the décor. Instead of carpet, the floors were now wood, but everything else was the same, including the bank of family photos along one wall. Stopping in front of the one that held Uncle Colm, my aunt, and all six of us boys, including the baby, Andy. I'd been told he'd been sent to Ireland to get his behaviour under control. It was the one picture that I'd kept and carried around

with me. It seemed like a lifetime ago.

A soft hand slipped into mine and I looked down into Lana's concerned dark eyes.

"Are you okay?" she asked, a wrinkle of concern furrowing her brow.

Rubbing a finger across the furrow, I smiled, "I'm fine, Sprite, just lost in memories, but they're good ones."

"Okay, I'm going to drop my bag in the bedroom Maya's given us and then I'll meet you in the kitchen," she told me.

"Okay," I answered, watching as she walked down the hallway towards where the bedrooms were. She seemed to know where she was going. Turning towards the kitchen, I walked in, and my eyes widened in surprise. This room had had a major overhaul and an extension by the looks of it. It was much bigger than it used to be with a large table and chairs taking up the one side, new kitchen cupboards, cooker and fridge. It also looked like a laundry room had been added.

"Wow," I muttered. "This has changed."

Uncle Colm snorted, "Of course it did, my daughter-in-law needed something bigger to cook in, and I'm hoping that these two will settle soon and give me more grandchildren," he waved his hand at Liam and Adam.

"Hey, what about him? He's older than us," Liam grumbled, throwing me under the bus.

Uncle Colm snorted and looked at Liam from under his brows, "Lad, are you blind? He's been home three days and already has a woman. It's you two I'm worried about."

I couldn't help the laugh that rumbled out of me at his words. I'd missed this so much; I loved my family as dysfunctional as we were.

"You just had to show us up," Liam muttered, but he was smiling at me. "Three days home and you're back in the favourite spot no matter the blood, sweat, and tears we've had to put in while you were gone."

"Oh, cry me a river; I'll get my violin out soon and start playing it if you're not careful," Colm grunted out a laugh, throwing the bottle top from the beer he'd just opened at Liam, who caught it with a grin and threw it in the bin. "I don't have favourites lad; you're all my favourites."

Sitting next to Liam, I took the beer that he offered with a smile and settled back to catch up on close to twenty years of missed family meals. Lana came into the kitchen; my eyes were immediately drawn to her. Catching me watching her, she winked at me and then walked over to Maya, who was busy at the stove. Working in tandem, the two of them soon had two huge pans of lasagna, garlic bread, and salad on the table.

It was a good evening, and that night, I went to sleep in my old room, thankfully, now with a double bed. Holding Lana close and listening to all the familiar creaks of this old house, I was happy.

It had been a long road, but finally, I was back where I belonged, a lot older and more banged up than when I left. Burying my nose in Lana's hair, I breathed her in as I fell asleep with a smile on my face.

LANA

The look of utter relief and love on Colm's face when he saw Tommy standing in the doorway had made my heart happy. But it also made me wonder if now that he was back home with his family, if he'd still want to spend time with me.

I hoped so but also knew that he'd need time to acclimate himself back into the family and find his place with them again. I'd been happy to shut myself up in the dining room so that Tommy could update Colm with everything that he needed to. I wasn't an idiot—I knew that whatever Tommy had been doing wasn't strictly legal. Not that I needed to know what it was, though. It didn't matter to me because, in my soul, I knew he was a good man.

It was only an hour or so later that Tommy walked into the dining room. I caught him watching me in the reflection in the window. If I happened to put a bit of an extra swing into my hips while I was dancing, what did it matter. It got me what I wanted. No! What I needed... his lips on mine.

Deciding not to hold back, I had to tell him how I felt, even if it had only been three days. That he felt the same way was the cherry on top of my already fantastic Christmas break.

The teasing from Colm had made us laugh. Colm had never made it a secret that he'd hoped I'd end up with one of his sons, but there was nothing there with Adam and Liam.

I liked them well enough, and we laughed and teased each other more like siblings

would when I'd been in their company for any length of time. There had never been a spark between any of us, though. I think the fact that Tommy and I'd obviously connected thrilled him no end.

They'd all piled in to help with the painting and when Colm had insisted that we sleep at his home, I'd recognised it for what it was—he wanted all of us under his roof. I think now that he'd seen Tommy, he was worried he'd disappear on them again. I'd made it easier for everyone by asking if we could spend a couple of nights so that we could get the flooring done.

Colm hadn't said anything, but I'd read the relief in his gaze. It was no hardship for me to spend time with his family, especially as I hoped they'd be mine one day. Packing hadn't taken any time; I'd emptied the fridge of perishables to take with us. I'm sure between Maya and me we'd use them up.

I liked Maya and we'd always got on well. We'd met when she'd started cleaning for the Crows and then the O'Sheas, although she didn't clean anymore as Johnny had her working in the office at The Lounge, and I know that she helped Liam and Adam out with the administrative side of their businesses too.

We'd made short work of getting dinner on the table. We'd been amused listening to the teasing at the table from the guys. As the day had gone on, they'd slowly fallen into a more relaxed rhythm, more than likely similar to what they'd been like growing up. I'd sat down next to Tommy and his hand had settled on my thigh and stayed there all evening while plans had been made for the coming week.

Resting my head against Tommy's shoulder, I'd let it all flow over me. It seemed that I'd have help at the house for the next few days and by the looks of it, I'd be all moved in before the new year.

I was happy with that. New year, new beginnings as it should be.

TOMMY

Our house was bustling with family, and Christmas music was being piped through the house. From my recliner in the lounge, I watched the goings on. More than comfortable with not moving as nobody would be happy if I woke the baby that was fast asleep on my chest. This was not the first time I'd found myself in this position over the years. There always seemed to be one of us that ended up sitting holding one of the many babies that had been born into our family over the years.

I marvelled at how much my life had changed over the years and how much had stayed the same. My wife was still as gorgeous as ever at forty-seven, just as she'd been at twenty-seven. She was still Christmas-mad, and we started decorating the first week in November to ensure all the outside lights were up by the first week of December. We were lit up like a beacon the entire month of December into the first week of the new year when we had to take them all down again.

We'd accumulated so many outdoor decorations over the years that I'd built a shed specifically just for them. Our house was a little different to the one I'd grown up in as we'd had to add on as our brood got larger. I'd also added the veranda just as I'd wanted, and much to my surprise, we used it all year round.

The only dark spot on this otherwise happy day was that this was the first year that we wouldn't have Uncle Colm sitting at our table, and I'd found it harder than expected when he'd passed.

But like he'd told me a few days before he died, he'd lived a good life, seen his children, his grandchildren and some of his great-grandchildren grown. He was tired

and ready to go now, which he'd done a few days later when he'd passed away quietly in his sleep. It had hit us all hard, but in the end, we'd made it through as a family, our women pulling us together and getting us through it until we came out the other side.

As if she'd known where my thoughts had taken me, my Sprite appeared next to me with a smile on her face. As always come Christmas, her hair was dyed its usual bright red for the season. Her Christmas clothing came out on the first of December and didn't get packed away again until the new year. Tonight, she was in one of my favourites, a pair of leggings and a dress that hugged her figure that was a little fuller than when I'd met her but still as sexy as ever. Her brown eyes still sparkling with happiness.

Resting a hand on the back of the baby on my chest. Our great-niece was only a few weeks old and hadn't been happy at the change in her routine.

Lana smiled before walking around to the other side of my recliner and sitting down on my thigh, leaning against my chest, she rested her head on my shoulder.

"How are you doing?" she asked softly.

"A little sad he's not here this year, Sprite, but also happy and thankful for all that we have. He may not be here anymore, but he left us with an amazing family. And I have you. You've always made my life so much better."

"And you, my biker man. And guess what?" she smiled cheekily at me.

"What?"

"We have the house to ourselves tonight, so your night is bound to get even better," she grinned wickedly, wiggling her arse against me, making me groan under my breath. Aware that I had a sleeping baby on my chest and the last thing we needed

was for her to wake up and go back to screaming the house down.

“Behave, Sprite, at least until Jackson comes and gets his sprog. How soon can we kick them all out?”

Throwing her head back in a wild, happy laugh. I grinned at the delight on her face.

“We haven’t even eaten yet,” she chortled, her voice full of joy.

“Damn, you’re such a tease, woman.”

“And you love it,” she smiled at me, settling back down against me. She wasn’t wrong. I did love it when she teased me. You’d have thought that our sex life would have tapered off over the years; instead, it had gotten better. And I, for one, wasn’t complaining that my wife still found me sexy and wanted me.

Settling back, we were content to watch the festive goings on in our house.

Over the years, we’d each taken turns to host big holidays. This year, Christmas was at ours, and it had been decided that Easter would be at Liam’s. I had no idea how the women decided it; all I knew was that we turned up at whichever house was hosting and helped out if needed. I guess it helped that we all lived close to each other. Johnny and Maya had taken over the big house with their brood. Uncle Colm had built himself a small granny cottage close to them. It was sitting empty for now as none of us had the heart to go in there yet and clean it out.

Liam, Adam, and their ladies had each built their own houses on Uncle Colm’s property. We’d taken down the fence between our property and theirs the first year I’d been home. Instead, we’d fenced both our properties to make one big plot with only one gate to enter. It meant we’d had to move our entryway. We’d also added a road from our house to the rest of the houses so that we never had to open gates between us. It made it easier when the children were growing up, and they’d all ran

around like a feral pack. You never knew whose child you'd find in your house, not that it mattered—all we cared about was that we knew they were safe.

For me, that was a big thing. I needed for our children to know they were safe, no matter whose house they were in. Lucky for me, Johnny, Adam, and Liam had felt the same way.

I'd never gone back to work; instead, I'd enjoyed my retirement by staying home. I'd been a hands-on dad. I'd loved spending time with our children while Lana worked, not that she'd needed to, but as she loved her job she'd wanted to continue. When the children were older and at school, I'd sometimes give Adam a hand at the security company as a consultant, but other than that, we managed to live off the money I'd made doing the work I'd done and off the investments that Bella, still to this day, looked after for me.

My entire life had changed the night Lana had picked me up from the side of the road. I'd never been more grateful for a deer running across the road than I was at that moment in time.

We said the words often, but as I looked out over our family, I had to tell her again. "I love you, Sprite," I whispered against her hair.

Lana tilted her head back to look at me, her brown eyes shimmering. "And I love you, Tommy. I loved you when I picked you up off the side of the road, wondering what the hell I was thinking bringing a strange man into my house.

"I loved you when you told me that this was your house growing up and what you endured here.

"I loved you when you let me measure you against our pantry door.

"I loved you the first time we made love and every time since.

“I’ve loved you more with every baby you gave me. I’ll always love you from now until the end of time.

“You’re my man, my husband, the father of my children, and my biker man. You’re the best Christmas present that I ever received, and you always will be.”

When she’s finished, my chest is tight with emotion, and I’m not ashamed to say that I had a tear on my cheek.

This woman!

Bending my head so she could give me what I wanted, just like she always has whenever I needed her to, her lips met mine, and it was like it was the first time all over again.

“Thank you for an amazing life, Sprite,” I whispered against her lips.

The End