

# "Merry and Mr. Frost"

A Seasons Readings Holiday Story

Author: D. Sanders



Adam Jack Frost, winter elf and twenty-seventh son of the legendary Jack Frost sat watching the funeral procession next to his father. At four hundred and three, Adam was considered still wet behind the ears. In human years that was in the neighborhood of his late teens or early twenties. It was hard to estimate elven years, they matured so differently than humans, and Adam was and had always been a little on the wild side. Even if, out of all of his sons, Jack thought Adam had the largest heart. He truly cared about the humans they watched, and one young boy in particular that cold autumn day as they waited to send the freezing rain that was scheduled until the funeral services were over. The poor woman, dead so young, deserved to have her funeral uninterrupted and her grieving eight year old son was frail enough in his thin little coat.

"Poor boy. He's not in for an easy time of it." Jack sighed as he leaned against a tree next to his son.

"He's so sad. His eyes, they're haunted. What do you know dad?" Adam asked watching the youth sob with no one to comfort him. The woman's husband and his son stood cold beside the boy who cried as if his world had been shattered.

"His step-father and step-brother will make his life hell. The father thinks he's been shackled with a sissy burden from his bitch wife and his son feeds off the father. They will leave him here at the grave all alone this afternoon and by the time he walks two miles home he will have caught the flu. He'll find when he gets home, he's already been moved out of his bedroom and into the basement. All his toys taken away and he'll have just a single mattress and blanket to use. He'll think Cinderella had it made as the years go by. Between the

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beatings and the verbal abuse, he'll be nothing but a shell without hope. The worst part being, November Twenty-fifth, ten years from tomorrow. He'll turn eighteen, and I am sad to say, he'll be taken in the cold that year. They will throw him out on his birthday, and there is a huge blizzard scheduled for that day. He'll die in the storm." Jack said with a sigh and Adam's face whipped around.

"No! That's cruel!"

"That's humans son. Most are all right, but there are those who are cruel and those that do not deserve the fate they've been given. Your mother was one, you know that."

"But you saved her. She didn't die." Adam said eying his father who grinned.

"No, I loved her. Love makes a difference. Because she loved me too, I was able to change fate. Love is the only thing that will bend the rules. You know that." Jack said and Adam smiled.

"Or lust in your case Dad." Adam grinned and Jack laughed.

"Well, she was awfully beautiful too and I had been single for about three hundred years at that point. It helped she was as beautiful on the inside as she was on the outside." Jack said and Adam smirked.

"That's not how Mom puts it. You Randy Dog." Adam replied and Jack flipped his son's pointed ear.

"That's not how you should speak to your father." Jack said and Adam just chuckled and turned back to watch the funeral. His heart broke for the boy.

"What's his name?" Adam asked as he watched the youth cling to the coffin as the preacher spoke.

"A horrible name for a human. That too will be a source of Misery for him. His mother thought it was cute, for a girl perhaps, not for a boy. His name is Merry, Merry Kris Massey." Jack said and Adam's eyes rounded.

"You've got to be kidding, who names a baby that?"

"His mother did. It was the day after Thanksgiving and she was in the Christmas spirit."

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"That name alone probably gets him beat up at school by bullies." Adam said and Jack nodded.

"It does. It doesn't help that his step brother instigates it most of the time and that Merry is rather fey to begin with. He doesn't like confrontation, would rather read than play sports and is and will remain thin and shorter than most other boys. He'll top out at about five foot seven inches at sixteen and stay there. He was also born, different. Thank goodness no one but his mother and the doctors know the truth. He was born hermaphroditic, and even before his mother knew the doctor's took it upon themselves to, correct what they saw as a fault. His female anatomy was surgically sealed, and that will cause a host of problems later. They should not have tried to alter him, his testicles will never drop, they are internal and will remain that way. That will also be a cross for him to bear silently. The older he gets, the harder that will be to conceal for him, he'll have body issues as he grows older, he's both male and female and they should have left him that way. His feminine side is more dominant and when you alter a baby, you can't know that or how they will mature into puberty. His sexual maturity will be painful to endure, and he'll endure it alone in fear and utterly confused as to his own identity. All he sees is a penis and a large scar where they sewed his labia shut. Humans, they must always define each other as male or female, they just cannot accept a third balanced and mixed gender, even if it is more common than they want to admit. He was perfectly fine as he was born." Jack said and Adam ran his hand down his face.

"Damn it, that's not fucking fair dad! I can't just sit by and watch this. Doesn't he have anyone to stand up for him? What about grandparents, aunts or uncles?" Adam asked as the coffin began to be lowered and Adam shivered as Merry let out a soul devouring sob of purest agony. Only the preacher offered him a shoulder as his mother was laid to rest.

"None. Look, there goes His father and brother. Already leaving. No one will notice." Jack said and Adam stood.

"Well damn it, I'm not going to let him walk home alone at the very least." Adam said and Jack just smiled as his son transformed into a human dressed in warm coat and crunch across the snow with a purpose.

"Why do you think I brought you here today idiot? I know you Adam my boy and Merry is perfect for you. Or will be when he grows up." Jack said softly under his breath and smiling as a new fate began to be written on the page of one Merry Massey. One that involved a winter elf named Adam taking a personal interest in his well being.

Merry was shivering as we watched the men begin filling his mother's grave when he felt a cold hand touch his shoulder and a scarf was wrapped around his neck. "You're going

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to get sick Merry if you stay here in the cold much longer. You're step-father and brother are already gone." Adam said wrapping the scarf tightly around the beautiful little boy's shoulders.

He was angelic up close. Huge blue eyes, the color of a winter sky. Black hair dark as night and skin like snow. His cheeks rosy from the cold. He was a fairy tale come to life, heck, there were some real fairies not as pretty as the youth standing before him in the now.

Those blue eyes widened with shock as Adam squatted down to be eye level with the youth and cold small fingers went straight to Adam's ears and pinched. "Oh my gosh, those are real!" Merry said and it was Adam's turn to look shocked.

"You can see my ears?" Adam asked, not expecting the child to have the gift of true sight that could see right through his illusion of being human.

"You're blue and your hair is all white too! Are you a fairy? I have a book about fairies." Merry said and Adam chuckled.

"Nope, I'm an elf. No wings." Adam said with a wink holding his finger to his lips for quiet. "They can't see me like you can. I look human to them." Adam said pointing to the men by the grave and Merry nodded, sniffing. Adam handed him a handkerchief.

"Thank you." Merry said blowing his nose and wiping his eyes.

"You're welcome Merry. Since you can see me, there is no point in trying to fool you. My name is Adam, Adam Frost. My father is Jack Frost and he's waiting for you to get somewhere warm before he sends in the storm. Let me take you home so you don't get sick. It's time to go Merry." Adam said standing and offering his hand to the boy.

"Your hands are cold." Merry said and Adam chuckled.

"I'm a winter elf, I am cold. Not as cold as my Father. I'm half human." Adam said using magic to warm his hands a little as he walked Merry home.

"Really? Is your Mommy pretty? I thought my mommy was pretty but my Step-dad told her she was ugly a lot. He's a big fat liar. I don't like him. My step-brother beats me up a lot like my step-dad hit mommy." Merry said and Adam's heart broke further.

"I'm sorry Merry, Yes, my mom is very pretty. So was yours. She was a nice lady and is in heaven now as one of God's angels. She'll watch over you." Adam said trying to comfort Merry as they walked and the skies darkened.

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"Will she?" Merry asked pathetically.

"Yes, she will Sprite. I know it." Adam said giving the waif of a child holding his hand an unconscious nickname as they walked.

"Good. Mike can't hit her no more then. I'd rather he hit me anyway. You shouldn't hit girls." Merry said and Adam sighed.

"Hitting anyone isn't nice. You're a good boy Merry." Adam felt like his stomach was in knots, taking Merry back to a place he knew that was abusive. Trouble was, he couldn't interfere more than he was already doing. He couldn't pick up a phone and call Child protective services, he wasn't human and that was against the rules. He had to personally intervene if he was going to help. Adam vowed to stay close to Merry, keep watch over him and if things got too bad he could step in and help. Merry was too innocent, too pure and damn it too adorable to leave as food for the vultures.

As they got closer to Merry's house Adam paused. "Look Merry, things are going to be pretty bad for you for a while. Will you make me a promise? If you ever feel you need help, just look in a mirror and say my name. Say 'Adam, I need you.' and I'll come to you, I promise." Adam said and Merry nodded.

"Okay. Thank you for being my friend. I don't have any friends." Merry said and Adam squatted and hugged him tightly.

"You're welcome Merry. I'll always be your friend. Always and always." Adam said giving the youth a final hug before Merry turned and slowly walked up the sidewalk to his front door.

Adam stood at the end of the path, watching and fuming. It took them forever to open the door and Adam winced as the first thing Mike Walker did was cuff Merry as he walked inside.

"Stupid boy! Go to bed!" Mike shouted and slammed the door.

"Fucker, one of these days I'm going to punch you, hard. Sometimes it is right to hit someone, people like you asshole." Adam muttered to himself as the sleet started falling.

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Over the years Adam often watched Merry in his mirror, any reflective surface would show Adam the boy. He sat waiting for Merry to call for him. He never did. Not that he didn't say other things into the mirror, it wasn't that Merry had forgotten, he just never asked for help.

Once when he was ten, he looked into the mirror and told Adam a poem he'd written about him. Adam smiled as he listened. Merry was so very sweet.

When he was fourteen he sang in the school Christmas concert and held a small compact mirror in his hand so Adam could enjoy the show. Merry sang sweeter than any bird, Merry was beautiful.

When he was sixteen, he cried into the mirror, telling Adam he missed him, he sported a black eye as he cried into the glass. Adam was furious, but still Merry didn't ask for help, just talked into the mirror. Adam wanted desperately to reach out and comfort him. He'd watched Merry grow up in that mirror and with every year that passed, Adam grew fonder and fonder until Adam knew beyond a doubt he could never go another day without seeing Merry. He lived, hovering over his mirror for just the tiniest glimpse of Merry. To hear his heavenly voice, to look into bluer than blue eyes, to long to hold that warm body close to ease the longing in his heart.

Merry was almost eighteen, just less than a week to go before he died and Adam was pacing in front of his mirror. "Merry, oh please My Sprite call to me! I can't help you if you don't love!" Adam begged his mirror, pleaded and yelled and then a face appeared.

"Adam? Hello?" Merry woke up, swearing he heard a voice calling to him.

"Merry! Can you hear me?" Adam shocked, yelled back.

"Yes, yes I can. Where are you?" Merry said sitting up and rummaging for his small mirror. He opened it and smiled.

"I can see you. I've never seen you looking back before. I thought I'd dreamed you for so long, but never really gave up hope you were real. I thought it was my grief and my imagination but you are real." Merry said and Adam smiled.

"Very real. Sprite, why haven't you called me? Love I can't come to you if you don't."

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Adam said and Merry blushed hotly as he heard Adam call him "love".

"I, I guess, well I didn't want them to know about you I guess. I was afraid they'd take my mirror. It doesn't matter now, I got to see you again. You haven't changed." Merry said and Adam smiled.

"No, but you have. You're beautiful Merry. I long to see you every day, I particularly like it when you talk to me after you've gotten out of the bath." Adam said and Merry blushed even redder.

"You didn't spy on me did you?" Merry asked and Adam laughed.

"Not my fault you talked to me naked. I wish you did that more often." Adam said and Merry face was flushed redder than a tomato.

"Adam!" Merry gasped and Adam just laughed.

"Don't sound so shocked. Surely by now someone has told you how lovely you are." Adam said and Merry just shook his head.

"No. But thank you. You're handsome too, I never forgot how you looked. Thank you again for walking me home and comforting me, I really needed you that day." Merry said and Adam smiled fondly.

"And I need you to need me again Merry. Please, call me, say the words Merry. Please my love." Adam said and Merry lowered his eyes and almost whispered his response.

"Adam, I need you." Merry said and the room grew very cold and a bright light shimmered and from the light stepped Adam who crushed Merry in his frigid embrace.

"Merry!" Adam cried, holding Merry tightly.

"Adam, oh Adam you're freezing." Merry shivered and Adam chuckled and let go.

"Sorry, you stay warm living at the North Pole in a cave of ice. Warm me?" Adam asked and Merry cocked an eyebrow, sitting on his little mattress in the basement in the dead of night.

"How? I'm not magical." Merry asked and Adam grinned and leaned in close.

"Humans have more magic than they realize. Kiss me with your warmth Merry." Adam

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said and Merry's eyes rounded and he blushed again.

"Don't be shy my Love." Adam crawled closer and Merry felt trapped, but in a very nice way. Adam was sinfully handsome, even if he was blue from head to toe.

"Why do you keep calling me that?" Merry asked, not daring to hope that someone actually loved him, especially someone as young and handsome as Adam was, or at least seemed. He seemed so much younger than Merry remembered. But eight year olds think anyone over fifteen is a 'grown-up'.

"Because I love you Merry. I want to marry you." Adam said bluntly and Merry's eyes widened.

"WHAT?!" Merry was stunned as Adam inched closer and over Merry, making him lie down as Adam hovered over him, making the room as cold as a meat locker.

"I want you to marry me. I love you. I can take care of you forever Merry if you can love me back. The rules are simple. If I can win your love, I can gift to you magic Merry. I can make you an elf too. I can save you Merry, Love breaks the rules and I love you, I truly do." Adam said hovering over Merry, straddling him on the mattress.

"Oh Adam. You don't need to win my love. I have always loved you. You've been my hope all my life. I'm dreaming all of this, I know I am." Merry replied, lost in Adam's dark blue eyes, like great sapphires looking deeply into his own. There was naked truth in those eyes and a desperation unmasked. Adam needed Merry to say the words, the plea was evident in his eyes.

"You're not dreaming Merry. Although I may be, do you truly love me too?" Adam asked and Merry smiled.

"Yes, I love you and you're freezing me to death." Merry said, his jaw beginning to quiver from the cold.

"Then kiss me Merry. Give me your human fire and let me give you my magic. Kiss me." Adam said leaning close and Merry closed his eyes as Adam's cold lips pressed against his own.

Merry violently shivered for just a moment, as lips slowly warmed and icy breath grew warm as lips parted and the kiss deepened.

Soon the room was warm and as the kiss ended and Merry opened his eyes, Adam



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was smiling down upon him, no longer blue but a warm pale cream and his white hair was kissed with a subtle golden hue. He was even more handsome than before. "I have been given such glorious fire, your soul is like drinking in pure sunshine, my love." Adam said wrapping around Merry and holding him as they lay on the mattress.

"I feel strange. Everything seems so much brighter in here. I can see in the dark and I could never see well in the dark before."

"You have elven sight now my Sprite. The transformation however is only just beginning. We won't be completely one together until we mate." Adam said and Merry shivered.

Adam chuckled. "Not tonight my love. That is not how it is done. I would not take you here anyway. No, I will not take my mate until I give you a home to live in with me. Which I must find quickly, we have less than a week." Adam said and Merry looked up into Adam's eyes.

"What do you mean?" Merry asked and Adam sighed.

"You turn eighteen this Thursday. I must have us a house by then. I will save my Merry." Adam said and Merry was still clueless.

"Save me? From what Adam?" Merry asked and Adam let out a long breath.

"I feared you would not call to me in time. I have always known since the day we met your fate and I will not see it come to pass. I refuse to let you die Merry. I love you too much to let that happen and now that we have begun to become one, I can now interfere with your fate and stop it from happening. Your step-father is planning on throwing you out on Thursday and there is a blizzard of astronomical proportions coming. You would have died in that storm from cold. You will not now, I will have you warm by a fire and being made love to instead. I vow it as your betrothed, I will forever protect you now." Adam said smiling.

"Oh Adam, I feared he'd do that when I turned eighteen, he's threatened it for years. D-did you just say Making love?" Merry said blushing all over again and Adam chuckled.

"Mates tend to do that Sprite. Are you virginal?" Adam asked bluntly and Merry gasped.

"Adam!" Merry was once again red as a beet.

"I see you still are. But why are you so embarrassed? Do you not want me making

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love to you?" Adam asked and Merry shook his head.

"No... I mean it's not that I don't want, it's just I've never, I mean I know how and all but well, it's not something I've ever done before so, I'm scared I guess. No one has ever told me they loved me before, let alone confess and propose to me all in the span of fifteen minutes." Merry said and Adam grinned.

"I have loved you a long time, I am an impatient person and you made me wait to the point I was scared you'd never call me. I vow I will never hurt you Merry." Adam said running his fingers through Merry's sleep disheveled hair.

"I have never feared you hurting me Adam. You're the only person in my life who ever did anything kind for me, but you'd better not be caught down here with me, Mike would hurt you." Merry said and Adam snorted.

"He couldn't hurt me Sprite. He won't hurt you again either. I want you to make sure you have all you want to take with you packed and ready to go. Keep your mirror with you always. I want to be within a moment's breath of you at all times. I do have to go and find us a house, you, I don't think, would like living in ice much and I have always wanted to live like a human for a while. Every time I come here, I like the things humans have. Television for one, I like that." Adam said and Merry laughed.

"That somehow does not surprise me. How are you going to buy a house Adam? Do you have money even?" Merry asked and Adam winked.

"There are more elves and fairies among humans than you realize. We have our ways, it will be easy enough to secure us a home. I will come back as soon as I have it. I will find it close if you would like to finish going to this school thing you attend every day. I have learned much from your pocket, I like your music class very much." Adam said and Merry chuckled.

"I hope you learned more in math than I have." Merry said and Adam snorted.

"No, I tried writing down the things as your teacher said them and I am afraid I am as confused as you are. I did alright in your earlier classes when you were ten, but now this calculus thing you take, has me more than confused. Much simpler to add and subtract." Adam said and Merry nodded.

"True and yes I do want to finish school. I would love to go to college but I could never afford that." Merry said and Adam quirked an eyebrow.

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"If you want it, you will have it. Is college more school?" Adam asked and Merry nodded.

"You take classes in your favorite subject. I love books, I'd love to take English and literature." Merry said and Adam brightened.

"Oh, your class where you go over stories. That is my favorite class you take too. Could I go to college too with you? It sounds like fun, learning new things is always fun. I read a lot of human books." Adam said and Merry smiled.

"That would be nice, going together. You think we could?"

"We will make it happen." Adam said as the sun started to creep up over the horizon.

"You get some sleep, the night is almost over my Sprite. I must get started, we have a short time. I will come back tonight. I love you." Adam said leaning over to kiss Merry again.

"I love you too Adam. You're a dream come true." Merry replied and Adam smiled.

"And I have waited over four hundred years for you, I won't lose you." Adam said vanishing and Merry sat bolt upright.

"Four Hundred?! Oh my God!" Merry gasped flopping back down in shock and giddy joy. Hoping that if he was dreaming, he wasn't going to wake up any time soon.

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Merry somehow managed to go back to sleep and was lost in a wonderful dream when he was awakened with a foot in the stomach. "Christ you lazy good for nothing piece of shit! Didn't you hear dad calling you? Get the fuck up already!" Brad Walker, Merry's step-brother kicked him awake and Merry groaned.

"I really wish you'd stop kicking me. What did I ever do to you?" Merry growled and Brad quirked an eyebrow. Not accustomed to Merry being bold enough to talk back.

"You're a whoreson my dad has to support. You take food out of my mouth." Brad said and Merry snorted.

"You eat more than enough for twelve people Brad, that's hardly an issue." Merry said and regretted it when Brad backhanded him.

"You'll pay later faggot. After school your ass is grass." Brad said marching up the stairs. Merry just sighed and stood up and picked up his compact mirror which was quivering, he flipped it open and the voice damn near screamed into the room.

"I'll fucking tear you apart you son of a bitch! You touch my Merry again you scoundrel and I'll feed you your own testicles!" Adam was shouting and Merry shook his head.

"I'm okay Adam." Merry said and Adam looked furious.

"He won't do that again! Call me to your school later, I can come right to it if you call.

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I want to be there before he tries anything! Promise me Merry, I don't know the way, I have to use the mirror as a guide for now." Adam said and Merry nodded.

"I promise. I love you Adam." Merry said and Adam went from rage to joy.

"I love you too Sprite. You are most beautiful in the mornings. I cannot wait until I am given the honor of waking beside you." Adam said shimmering into the room effortlessly and gathering Merry into his arms.

"A kiss good morning?" Adam asked and Merry smiled and stood on his toes to kiss a very tall elf good morning.

"Good morning to you. Now shoo Adam, you can't get caught in here." Merry said as a bellow from Mike could be heard upstairs.

Adam made a very human gesture involving a middle finger in the direction of the ceiling and frowned. "Fuck you Asshole." Adam grumbled and Merry chuckled.

"You certainly don't sound or talk like an elf." Merry said pulling on a sweater.

"Humans have colorful language, and it is most appropriate for the likes of him. I like spending time among humans, I enjoy it very much. I think I've found us a house in today's morning newspaper. Would you like to come look at it with me?" Adam asked and Merry smiled.

"I would, but I have school Adam." Merry said as another bellow came from upstairs.

"I'm Coming! I'm almost dressed!" Merry shouted back and Adam grinned.

"Can you skip a day of school? You have never missed one before. What do humans call it? Ditching?" Adam said grinning quite evilly, like a young man would.

"You're quite rebellious and I am suddenly feeling it myself. We're off Thursday and Friday anyway. There won't be doing much this week before the holiday. I can miss." Merry said zipping up his jeans.

"Then meet me around the corner in a few minutes." Adam winked and vanished and Merry raced upstairs to fix his step-father and brother breakfast.

"You slacker! I can't believe your fucking whore of a mother up and died and left me to take care of her queer ass brat. You'd better be grateful boy!" Mike snarled as Merry

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scrambled eggs.

"I can't believe my mother ever married you and I'm not stupid. Despite what you think. When I was eight I didn't understand, I do now however. You beat her to death and you know it and if I can ever prove it, I'll see you in jail." Merry said throwing the eggs on a plate and tossing it on the table.

Mike stood up and grabbed him by the shirt front. "Try it you little faggot and you'll join her! Smart off to me again and I'll send you to school with a broken fucking arm!" Mike growled and shoved Merry away.

"It wouldn't be the first time. I hope you choke on your eggs." Merry said grabbing his backpack and flimsy coat and slamming out the front door. It felt good to stand up for himself for a change. Adam was leaning against the fence, looking remarkably human even with his pointed ears that apparently only Merry could see. He looked like a very bad, boy. Black leather jacket, jeans, black harness boots and a bright red scarf around his neck. His hair was long and hung over his shoulders in messy waves and he grinned brightly as Merry met him at the sidewalk.

"That was bold. I like it Sprite. Fight back love." Adam said taking Merry's hand in his.

"I don't know what came over me this morning! I'm surprised he didn't kill me." Merry said and Adam grinned.

"I came over you. You have a little of my magic in you this morning, it's given you a little more confidence. That is a good thing to see. He did kill your mother, you are right." Adam said and Merry nodded.

"I know, she didn't fall down those stairs he pushed her. I can't prove it though." Merry said with a sigh.

"No, and you won't be able to either sadly. All you can do is let it pass I'm afraid. He will get his own though. In five years, he'll be in a bar fight and the man he fights with will shoot him. Justice will be served in the long run." Adam said leading Merry down the street and where others their age, or respective ages were meeting to catch a school bus.

One of the girls turned, spotted Merry holding hands with a strange and handsome youth and her jaw dropped. "Merry? What the hell?" She said and Merry smiled.

"Sharon, will you cover for me today please? I'm sort of ditching school today. Take notes for me?" Merry asked and Sharon just eyed Adam up and down.

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"Wow, I'd ditch school too. Who's your new friend?" Sharon asked and Merry smiled but before he could answer Adam did.

"Adam Frost and I am Merry's Betrothed." Adam said and Merry coughed.

"What?" Sharon exclaimed and Merry stammered.

"Adam likes to talk Medieval. We're engaged. He proposed to me last night." Merry said and Sharon's jaw dropped.

"I didn't even know you had a boyfriend! Oh my God Merry. How did you manage to even get one with Brad and your Dad around?" Sharon asked and Adam leaned over and winked.

"It's a secret. I have loved him a very long time. Will you make sure he does not get in trouble? I am stealing him today." Adam said and Sharon nodded.

"Alright. No problem. Wow, too cool. Does Brad know cause he's coming now." Sharon said pointing down the street and Merry frantically shook his head.

"No, damn. We gotta fly before he sees us!" Merry said grabbing Adam's hand, too late to bolt, they'd been spotted.

"MERRY! YOU ASSHOLE GET OVER HERE!" Brad yelled and ran over, Adam stood up taller and stood in-between Brad and Merry.

"You can stop right there. I've been waiting for this for years." Adam said, hauling back and laying Brad out with a fist straight in the nose. "That is for all the times you hit Merry. I'll not put up with it any longer. Touch him again and you'll be dealing with more than my fist. I will make you wish you'd never been born and I am not in jest." Adam growled and Merry grabbed his arm.

"Adam, don't he's not worth it. Didn't you tell me once it's never a good thing to hit?" Merry asked and Adam nodded.

"I did, but there are also those who should have a taste of their own medicine once in a while too. A reminder that no matter how big you are, there is ever someone else bigger. Remember that Brad Walker." Adam said and Brad stood wiping his bloody nose.

"Who the fuck are you ass wipe?" Brad snarled and Adam's eyes narrowed.

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"I am your worst nightmare should you fail to heed my words. There is your bus, I suggest you get on it." Adam said and Brad scowled.

"Merry you'll pay bastard. He can't be with you on the bus." Brad said and Merry flinched as Adam grabbed the front of Brad's coat and shook.

"Do you think I'm daft enough to let him on that thing with you again? Hardly. I know you, I know everything about you. I know things you wish I did not know. I know you are the one who stole Miss Sharon's purse last week. I know you masturbate and don't wash your hands afterward. I know you sell drugs at school, I know you are failing all your classes and I know that you tried to rape a twelve year old girl and damn near got caught and just perhaps one of these good people here will turn you in today at school for what you did to Miss Jane Farley." Adam said and Tom Farley, another boy standing waiting for the bus screamed.

"You son of a bitch! That was my little sister!" Tom attacked and began pummeling Brad without mercy.

Sharon was shouting about her purse and Jane in a rage and was already on her cell phone dialing the police. Adam took Merry's stunned hand.

"Attention is no longer on us, let us move." Adam said and they slipped around the corner.

"Did he really try? On a little girl?" Merry asked horrified and Adam nodded.

"Yes. You actually stopped him and you didn't even realize it. Because you came home from school, he stopped. You didn't see him in the living room on top of her. Because you distracted him, she was able to run away. All you remember is he came downstairs and beat you up. That was the reason." Adam said and Merry's jaw dropped.

"Oh god, I didn't know. That poor girl. He didn't go all the way did he? Please tell me he didn't!" Merry said and Adam smiled.

"No love he didn't. And that is why I love you so very much. You got severely beaten and just now your thoughts were only on the girl not what you suffered in her stead. You have such a beautiful soul my love." Adam said stopping and leaning over to kiss Merry deeply. Merry let out a soft happy sigh as their lips parted.

"Every time you kiss me, I feel like I'm being filled with liquid fire. I love you Adam." Merry said as his eyes opened from the kiss lazily.



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"Just as every time you kiss me, I look more human. Look, my hair is now blond and my skin almost tan. The only thing I will never lose are my ears, I will ever have to hide them with magic. But my transformation is nearly complete." Adam said looking at his hands and the new skin tone he wore.

"Will my looks change?" Merry asked and Adam draped an arm over his shoulders as they began walking again.

"Yes, but only a little. After I make love to you, your ears will change, You will become an elf and no longer be human apart from your soul. Like my mother. You will age as I age, live as I live. We will have a long life together my Sprite. I will have to teach you magic, you will need to learn how to hide your ears from humans." Adam said and Merry stopped.

"How come I have always seen you as an elf then?" Merry asked and Adam chuckled.

"You have a rare gift that very few humans possess. True Sight, you see through illusionary magic. You've seen other elves and fairies in your life. You've done many a double take only to see they've fled your sight. They can sense when you can see them and hide in the more mundane sense of the word. However, that being said, keep your eyes open today. You have already begun changing yourself, they will no longer hide from you. You'll see that there are more of us in the world than you think. Living right along side humans in every day life unnoticed for the most part." Adam said as they crossed the street and headed down main street and toward a small coffee shop.

"First before we do anything else, you must eat and I am hungry myself. I can show you what I found in the newspaper and we can call and go look. The house sounds very nice." Adam said pushing open the door. Inside were just a few patrons, two of which looked up and smiled and nodded their heads as Adam and Merry walked in.

Two very green elves. "Wood Elves." Adam said as one stood.

"Lord Frost, I hardly recognized you now that you've got a little warmth in you. Care to join us?" The man asked and Adam nodded.

"Certainly. Wizard Tarn correct?" Adam asked as they joined the couple at the table.

"Good memory, it's been two hundred years lad. This is my daughter Sally. Who is your lovely mate?" Tarn asked and Merry just knew he'd be a walking blush for the rest of his life.

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"My betrothed, Merry. I am looking for a dwelling for us immediately. Before the blizzard comes, I want him safe. I was looking in the newspaper but if you know of anything to recommend I'd appreciate it very much. Something elf friendly and without trolls or pixies. I'd really not like to have to move a troll. They can be nasty bedfellows." Adam said as a waitress came over with menus.

Merry just sat listening to a conversation he never thought he'd ever sit through in his life and noticing strangely that elves seemed to like a lot of sugar in their tea and coffee. All three of them were spooning large amounts into their cups.

Merry felt it a very strange observation to make, but he did anyway. He was engaged to not only an elf, but a seemingly high ranking one if the use of the word "lord" before his name was any indication. The other two elves were green like grass with woody brown hair and he could see such warm auras around them both. He kept blinking thinking his eyes were going funny.

"What's wrong Love?" Adam asked noticing Merry blinking.

"They're both glowing, it's making my eyes water. Sorry." Merry said and Tarn chuckled.

"Shame on you Adam, not teaching him how to adjust his sight. He's seeing auras already. You've been doing quite a bit of kissing." Tarn chuckled reaching over and placing a hand over Merry's eyes.

"Alright Mr. Merry. Just think that you wish to see things as you normally would. You should not use mage sight all the time, it will give you a headache. When you want to see auras just will it in reverse." Tarn said and Merry opened his eyes with a sigh.

"Oh that is so much better. Thank you." Merry said and Adam just grinned over his coffee cup.

"Can I take your orders now?" The waitress asked, not at all phased by three elves sitting at a table. It was true, she couldn't see them as they were, just what they wanted her to see.

"I would like the pancakes and bacon. Merry?" Adam said and Merry again made note that elves seemed to really like sweet food. Both Tarn and Sally also ordered sweet foods. Waffles and French Toast.

"I'd just like ham and eggs please, if that's okay." Merry said and Adam's heart

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twinged.

"Of course it is Okay. You have whatever you wish." Adam replied, realizing Merry never had what he wanted, he'd never been in a restaurant before and actually got to eat. Adam had forgotten.

"How do you want your eggs and what kind of toast sweet cheeks?" The waitress asked, recognizing the boy who came in with Mike and Brad Walker and just sat at the table drinking water and eating the packs of saltine crackers while they ate like pigs. She'd always felt bad for the boy, it was nice to see him with her nice regulars Tarn and Sally and a handsome new fellow who seemed to care about Merry if you looked at his eyes.

"Scrambled and white please." Merry said and the waitress winked and went to put in their order.

"Merry, I forgot you have never eaten before like this. Forgive me for not telling you everything is alright first. You will always have what you wish from now on. I will provide for you with all my heart." Adam said kissing the back of Merry's hand.

"Now I know where I have seen you before Merry! You're the boy with the True sight we always hid from. I don't know how many times I sat here fuming while those two brutes ate like pigs while you had naught. Always pissed me off, but we're bound by rules, we can't interfere unless asked or in Adam's case, bonded to a human. He no longer has to wait to help you. I bet waiting killed you lad." Tarn said and Adam nodded.

"Enough I destroyed quite a few things I wish I hadn't later. A few broken vases and furniture wishing it were those two I was destroying, Aye. Watching the person you love most in the world suffer is maddening when you are able to help and cannot unless they ask. I will not see my Merry suffer again." Adam said as their food came and discussion turned back to housing.

"If you want a good house Adam in this area, you want to be on Rainbow Avenue. We're all elves up and down that block and it's troll free." Tarn said and Sally nodded.

"Oh, and the big blue house on the corner just went up for sale. The last of the humans on that block moved day before yesterday. You'll notice Merry, most humans feel odd when magic is being worked around them, they don't like to live close to us even if they cannot say why. Only humans like yourself, who are attuned to magic and can see through it don't feel odd around us. In old days they called humans like you witches. Those were sad times, all those wonderful people burned for sensing magic." Sally said as she drowned her waffle in syrup.

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"How do I secure this home? I want it." Adam asked and Tarn smiled.

"Go see Ellen Weatherby at Wood Glen Real Estate. She's a Fae and she'll only show that house to fair folk. We've been buying up that block for decades. I'm sure you'll have no worries." Tarn said as the check came and Adam collected it.

"My thanks for your help. Your meal is on me." Adam said standing and going to pay the check.

"You're very lucky Merry. The Frosts are the best of families to marry into. Old lineage, and Adam's father is one of the immortals. You've heard of Jack Frost right?" Tarn asked and Merry smiled.

"Yes, Adam told me that was his father when we first met when I was little." Merry said still rather shy around strangers without Adam sitting next to him.

"No doubt. Adam and his father are close and Jack himself has wed quite a few humans in his lifetime. Like father like son there. Never you fear, when Adam says he'll provide and protect you, he means it. I've known him since he was a babe in arms and that boy may be a bit on the wild side, but he has never lied and he's damn strong too. Winter wizards have brutal power to wield. You'll always be safe with him to protect you." Tarn said as Adam returned all smiles and looking just like any youth would, he wore power well if he was indeed as strong as Tarn implied. To Merry, Adam just looked like a young man, full of good humor and zest for life.

"Ready to go love?" Adam asked and Merry nodded.

"I am." Merry said taking Adam's hand as he stood. "It was lovely to meet you both. Thank you." Merry said and both Sally and Tarn smiled.

"We'll meet again my boy. If you get that house, we'll be neighbors." Tarn quipped as Adam lead Merry back outside and toward a phone booth where he looked up the number to the real estate office and dialed the phone.

"May I speak with an Ellen Weatherby please?" He asked.

"Speaking."

"Hello Ms. Ellen. My name is Adam Frost, I hear you have a dwelling on Rainbow Avenue I am interested in securing for me and my betrothed." He said and Merry could hear

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the woman squeal on the other end of the line.

"Lord Frost! What an honor sir. Yes, it just came on the market. Shall I meet you there my lord?" She asked and Adam smiled into the receiver.

"Yes, can you give me directions? I have no steed and am on foot. I am on Main and third at a pay phone." Adam said looking at the street signs.

"You're not far from me. I'll pick you up there. Are you in front of the coffee shop?" She asked.

"I am thank you, we'll be waiting." Adam said turning to Merry. "She will come get us. I need to get us a car eventually too. Walking will get tedious and a horse conspicuous but not as much as transporting by magic. Can you drive?" Adam asked and Merry shook his head.

"I never learned sorry." Merry said and Adam frowned.

"I haven't driven in twenty years and then I didn't do so hot myself. I hit a deer, poor beast. I felt awful about it. But I must be able to get around so it looks like I practice and get a new license. Mine expired a decade ago." Adam said and Merry laughed a little maniacally.

"You really are four hundred." Merry said and Adam laughed.

"Four Hundred and fourteen to be precise. That would be about twenty or twenty-one in human years. I am considered extremely young for an elf. The general life span is about two to three thousand years. Unless you're my father, he is immortal. My eldest brother is already four thousand and still looks about the age of a human in his late forties. My brother is very handsome." Adam said and Merry's eyes boggled.

"Four THOUSAND?" Merry gasped and Adam chuckled.

"Yes, but again my father is immortal and my brother's mother was full elf. I will not live that long. I will live a normal life span for my race, my mother was human turned elf, that makes a difference, my father's immortality does not get passed on, just gives us good strength. You will get that magic from me as I said when we mate. You will live as long as I do. I am sad to say we will die together You will fade when I do." Adam said and Merry got misty eyed and hugged Adam's waist.

"Adam, I wouldn't want to go on after. Not if I'm going to live that long, it scares me, but living longer without you would scare me more. I love you." Merry said getting weepy

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and Adam just wiped his tears away with the pads of his thumbs.

"As I love you and would not want to live now without you either. Here comes Ellen." Adam said as a nice Lincoln Town Car pulled up and the window rolled down.

"My word, Lord Frost and the True Sighted boy. You picked a good Human mate my Lord, he's pure as snow. Such a beautiful aura." She said and Merry marveled at her rainbow butterfly wings carefully folded against the leather drivers seat.

"Wow. Your wings are beautiful." Merry breathed and Ellen smiled.

"Thank you, and hard to hide from you young one. Come get in out of the cold, it's freezing out there today. Well at least to you and I. Lord Frost must feel like he's in the middle of high summer out there." Ellen said gaily as Adam opened the door and let Merry into the back first.

"It is balmy yes. But I am feeling cold now more than I did. As you can see, I've chosen a human, and I'm not quite as frosty any more." Adam joked as he shut the door.

"Liar, you only look it." Ellen laughed as she pulled out and drove them to their destination. Merry was lost in a daze and it wasn't even ten in the morning yet.

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Rainbow Avenue was on what Merry knew was the 'nice side of town'. All two and three story homes, large manicured front yards and as they drove down the street Merry gaped. Most homes that had little gnome statues in the yards had them made from ceramic, the gnomes in little red hats on Rainbow Avenue were moving about, raking leaves and giving merry waves to Ellen as she drove by.

"Gnomes love gardening. I will have gnomes living in our garden too. Give them a warm hearth, food and industrious professions and you have a most loyal servant." Adam said as Merry tried to adjust to all he was seeing.

"Here we are! 7769 Rainbow Avenue. Fully furnished too. The humans swore the place was haunted and didn't want to take anything with them. Tarn lives next door, they kept sensing his spells is all. They moved to an entirely different State fearing ghosts." Ellen chuckled parking in the driveway.

The house was stunning. The large front yard had a giant oak tree complete with a rope swing right in the center and a beautiful stone bench built around it's base. A low stone fence ran around the perimeter of the yard with built in benches every few feet.

The drive was cobbled and lead up to a three story stone facade mansion in Merry's opinion. All gray and blue slate with beautiful leaded glass windows and a wrap around covered porch, also with a swing, met them at the front double doors in rich Mahogany.

"This place is beautiful!" Merry gasped as they walked up the front steps and Adam

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shrugged.

"It's a little small, but the stone work is very nice." Adam said and Merry just shook his head. To him the size of the house was palatial in comparison to what he was used to living in. Ellen took the keys from her coat pocket and opened the door.

"Considering your palace up north, this is small for you Lord Frost. But for humans this is a grand estate. It even has a coach house in back, big enough for four cars." She said as they walked into a foyer that took Merry's breath away.

All marble tiles lead up to a grand sweeping staircase in deep red and polished cherry wood. The landing was a gallery space that had two hallways to choose from before the staircase continued up to the third floor.

However, Ellen led them off to the right of the foyer first. "Here is the Parlor. The door to the right leads into an office library and the door over there leads into the main living area." Ellen said showing them first the library, even the books remained behind with a large writing desk and big cozy chairs dominating the middle of the room. The living room was huge and a big screen television was built into a large entertainment center. An inviting sectional sofa and matching chairs faced the television and in the corner was a brick fireplace that Adam went over to inspect.

"Good solid hearth, I like that very much." He commented as they continued on and into the totally remodeled kitchen. Merry was in heaven.

"Oh god, what I could cook in here! Wow! All commercial grade appliances! Oh my gosh two ovens! Holy smokes this is posh!" Merry said inspecting everything right down to inside the massive double refrigerator and freezer and he was giddy over the dishwasher.

"Are you a cook Mr. Merry?" Ellen asked and Adam answered.

"I have watched him make feasts that have gone too long unappreciated. I am looking forward to eating something Merry makes." Adam said and Merry smiled over the counter.

"Adam, I will cook you whatever you like. I love to cook. Since you seem to have spied on me my whole life, do you have a particular request?" Merry asked and Adam chuckled.

"I do actually. You made something once that had me drooling so bad I came to the human areas to find what you made and taste it. I believe they were called 'Snickerdoodles', sugar cookies with cinnamon on top. Lovely, lovely things." Adam said and Merry laughed.



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"You have a sweet tooth Adam. I promise the first thing I cook for you will be Snickerdoodles. Anything else?" Merry asked and Adam grinned.

"Anything sweet and I shall be your eternal slave." Adam said and it was Ellen's turn to laugh.

"All elves thrive on sugar Merry. You'll learn that quickly enough with fair folk. Fairies love fruit and vegetables, we rarely eat meat. Gnomes will only eat what they grow or what they brew. Elves are our meat eaters and gluttons, anything sweet, rich and or greasy. Pour syrup on Bacon and you have an Elf pissing himself with joy." Ellen said and Merry laughed.

"I did notice he put syrup on his bacon this morning." Merry quipped and Adam was unapologetic.

"It's wonderful." He said as they continued on from the kitchen into the dining room. Large enough for twelve guests around the large carved teak wood table.

They passed out of the dining room and through the foyer again to the left side of the house.

"A ballroom! Oh my gosh how beautiful!" Merry said marveling at the luxury in this home and they had two more stories to go.

There was a half bath and a large storage closet under the stairs as they began their ascent.

Down the left hall above the ballroom was the master suite bedroom. A king size four poster bed in knotty pine with emerald green bedding with white throw pillows looked divine. The walls were painted in a mural of a winter forest setting. It was like they'd stepped into an aspen ski lodge. The en suite bathroom came complete with a separate shower stall and a large jetted garden tub.

"The basement is completely finished as two separate apartments, servant quarters a hundred years ago, the last owners intended on renting out the space and converted the basement and then as you know moved." Ellen added and Merry's mind reeled from luxury overload.

Merry lost track of all the wonders this house held behind every door. Five guest bedrooms, all with private baths rounded out the second floor. The third floor was half unfinished attic space for storage and the rest a massive game room with a tournament sized pool table with rich red felt and gold tasseled pockets.

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Here Adam beamed. "Billiards! Oh I love billiards. Do you play Merry?" Adam asked and Merry shook his head.

"No, you'll have to teach me." Merry said and Adam grinned.

"I most certainly will. This is perfect for us Ms. Ellen. It is small, but will do if my brothers and their families and my parents don't all decide to show up all at once. I will take it immediately." Adam said and Ellen smiled.

"I thought you might, I have all the paperwork with me. All I need is your signature and I'll take care of everything else. The power and water are already on and I'll get them transferred into your name. Shall I send over gnomes? There are a few looking for work here, they love that oak out front." Ellen said and Adam nodded as they all went back down stairs and sat at the dining room table to fill out the papers.

"Yes, please. Also, if there is anyone looking for housekeeping work live in, send them over. There is you said two apartments in the basement. Room and board plus spending wages for a butler and housekeeper." Adam said and Ellen smiled.

"I can clean house." Merry said and Adam just laughed.

"Nay, you will not. You've done more than enough of that in your life Merry. I will not have my spouse doing housework. I told you I intend on providing and taking care of you Merry. I mean that. You will do nothing but what you wish to do." Adam said with a smile and Ellen nodded.

"It would be scandal! Lord Frost's mate doing housework? You'd have tongues wagging a mile a minute. Just two servants will be enough to cause gossip." Ellen said and Merry just laid his head on the table.

"Adam, please enlighten me. I'm feeling overwhelmed. Who and what are you really?" Merry asked and Adam leaned over and kissed his cheek.

"I am just Adam to you love. Forgive me for overwhelming you. There is an order to our world, we are bound by rules that keep us in harmony with humans. I am a winter wizard, we make sure the winter weather does what it is supposed to do and that no one dies who should not die. If they are not on the death list, we make sure they survive until help arrives. There are wizards for every season, every flower, every tree, every element. Those of our kind without those stronger magics help us in our every day lives. Cooking, cleaning, running mundane errands and we protect and provide for them in payment. My

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father is one of the immortals, those that have existed since the dawn of time to regulate the seasons of our world. He works with Mother Nature and Death and then issues orders to the rest of the winter wizards. For instance. I monitor the winter in São Tomé and Príncipe. Islands on the equator. I can tell you that is a very boring job, winter there is not so much a change in temperature but in the amount of rain falling. I don't have much to do really but make it rain on time and make sure I'm present if some fool decides to take his boat out in a storm when he's not supposed to die. And that usually involves me making sure I have a mermaid or two to help bring him back up to the surface for me." Adam said and Merry just giggled a little on the mad side.

"It will get easier Mr. Merry. My husband is human, he had a hard time getting used to fair folk too in the beginning." Ellen said and Adam nodded.

"Same with my mother. I'll have her come see you soon, if anyone can help explain it best, she can. I'm so very sorry you're troubled." Adam said and Merry just smiled at him.

"Not troubled Adam. Shocked, feeling like I'm dreaming and all around having major culture shock yes, but not troubled. I am more overwhelmed by happiness than anything. Thank you so much for choosing me Adam. I can't understand why you'd want some nobody like me." Merry said and Adam got up and crushed Merry in a hug.

"Oh love, you have no idea how much I love you. You are not a nobody and you never have been. When you were little and I watched you as they buried your mother, my heart ached for you. There you were, just a beautiful little boy who had lost everything and no hand came to comfort you. Yet, your heart still cared for others. I watched you suffer time and again without complaint, without asking for help and striving to survive on your own. I admired your courage and sense of self. You never let the abuse shatter your soul and you, even in your pain, found time to remember me with kindness. I could not help falling in love with you. You inspire me. So never let me hear you say you are no one again. You are my Merry, you are to me, what it means to be strong and brave and compassionate. I love you." Adam said and Merry broke down in tears and held Adam back.

"Thank you, so much." Merry whispered and Adam just kissed his cheek.

"There is no need to thank me Merry. I should thank you for the joy you fill me with." Adam said and Ellen wiped her eyes.

"Humans, very rarely can see their own worth when others blind them with pain. Rejoice Merry, you are now ever among friends." Ellen said as Merry wiped his eyes and Adam turned to finish signing the papers.

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"I'll get these sent off now Lord Frost or rather Mr. Frost of Rainbow Avenue. Our office holds the deed to the house, we bought it from the owners to ensure it went to a fair race. So there is no regular escrow to deal with, it's handled all through our office. You can move in immediately, I'll leave you the keys. How do you wish to pay? Gold, Human money, or trade services?" She asked and Adam smiled.

"Whichever you prefer Ms. Ellen. I can have gold sent to you through our fair currency exchange, I have a human bank account in Switzerland I can wire money from, or I can offer services. It makes no matter to me." Adam said and Ellen smiled.

"Human currency is easiest since were all living in it. The house is worth one million in this country's currency." Ellen said and Adam just nodded and Merry felt faint.

"I thought it would be more, how nice. I will have the money wired to your account. Can you have a phone installed for me here too please while you transfer the utilities?" Adam asked and Ellen nodded.

"I'll also have your cable turned on. Have a wonderful day Lord Frost, Mr. Merry. Welcome to the neighborhood. If you need me after hours, I live seven houses down on the right, the yellow house with the white fence." Ellen said shaking Adam's hand and leaving.

"One million? You can pay that much without blinking?" Merry gasped finally as Ellen left and Adam quirked an eyebrow.

"Is that a lot?" Adam asked and Merry was giggling again near hysteria.

"Yes that's a lot! Dear God Adam how much do you have in the bank?" Merry asked and Adam scratched his chin.

"I have quite a bit in human money. I checked it this morning knowing I'd probably need it right away, the balance was seven-hundred and fifty three million, eight hundred thousand, seven hundred and forty dollars and fifteen cents." Adam said reading a piece of paper from his pocket.

Merry did faint, literally. Adam had to catch him before his head connected with the floor. "I'm glad I didn't tell you how much gold I have." Adam chuckled as he carried Merry over to the couch and laid him down.

Merry woke up to see Adam smiling at him sitting on the floor beside him. "Welcome Home beloved, are you sufficiently recovered from your fainting spell?" Adam asked and Merry sat up rubbing his head.

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"No more shocking me senseless today Adam, I can't take it." Merry said and Adam smiled and leaned forward.

"Is kissing you senseless allowed?" He asked and Merry smiled in return.

"That you can always do." Merry said accepting Adam's kiss as he tried to comprehend the sheer magnitude of it all.

As the kiss ended Adam stood and offered his hand. "Come, we now must go and get supplies. The cupboards are bare here, I want wood for the fire and I want you with a warm coat and new garments that are not so thin I can see through them. I also know your house is empty now, we can get your belongings without fuss and bring them here. That will be the last time you enter that house again. Thank the maker above." Adam said grabbing Merry's hand and heading out the door.

It wasn't even noon yet. It had been the busiest and most earth shattering morning of Merry's life.



They went first to Merry's little corner of the basement and Adam was dismayed that all of Merry's earthly possessions fit into a small cardboard box. A photograph of his mother, his brush and toothbrush and an ancient looking book of fairy tales. Adam learned that had been his mother's as a child. They left his clothes and he certainly didn't need his mattress anymore and they were about to head back up the stairs when they heard the door slam upstairs and Brad swearing up a storm.

"That mother fucker! I'll kill him when he gets home!" Brad said and Adam held his finger up to his lips.

"We leave by magic." He whispered and handed Merry his box. Adam wrapped his arms around Merry and his box and then all Merry saw was blinding light for a moment and a feeling of falling and then they were standing in the foyer of their house.

"That was close." Adam said as Merry stumbled to catch his footing.

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"Oh god, I think I left my stomach behind." Merry said and Adam chuckled.

"You will not feel so once you are fully elf my love. Had I done that with you before you started changing you would have been sick." Adam said taking the box and setting it on the stairs.

"Now then, let us find a food market and stock up. Is it not tradition on Thursday you have what is called Thanksgiving? I have seen you cook that feast before and I must beg you to do that for me my love. Even on your birthday if I may be so ungracious to ask you to toil on your birthday." Adam said and Merry laughed and hugged Adam tightly.

"Adam, I would love to cook you Thanksgiving dinner with all the fixings. I want to do that for you. You've given me so very much already. I can just make a birthday cake too to go along with the pumpkin and apple pie." Merry said and a happy gleam appeared in Adam's eye.

"Oh, pie! Oh please make lots of pie." Adam said and Merry laughed.

"Sweet potatoes and marshmallows too?" Merry asked and Adam laughed.

"I will be a most content husband I can see it now." Adam said as once again they were heading out the door.

The first stop was to buy Merry new clothes. Main street was just a few blocks walk from Rainbow Avenue, very convenient for the fair folk to walk to attend to their needs. There was trendy clothing chain outlet on the corner and Adam produced a credit card from a wallet and ordered Merry to abuse it. From shirts to sweaters to jeans, to socks and underwear and a brand new and warm fleece lined navy blue suede coat and new boots.

Merry was totally re-outfitted before they left the store and he was wearing one of his new sweaters, boots and coats as they continued to the supermarket on the next block.

"I think it was a bad idea to let you come in here Adam." Merry joked as the cart rapidly filled. Adam was a junk food junkie. All the Thanksgiving fixings were buried under mounds of hostess Twinkies, cupcakes, Cheetos, Snickers bars and whatever else caught Adam's eye in the store.

"I love human food!" Adam said whistling as a box of powdered donuts landed in the cart beside the chocolate chip cookies.

"How do you stay so fit looking and slender if you eat all that sugar?" Merry asked and

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Adam grinned.

"Magic use burns it off. It burns calories like logs burn in a hearth. Speaking of logs..." Adam said going over to the stack of duraflame logs and adding a box of them to the bottom of the shopping cart. "...We don't technically need them since the house has the central heating but I love a good fire. It's romantic." Adam winked and chuckled at Merry's blush as they headed down the toiletries aisle. A bundle of toilet paper, toothpaste and toothbrush for Adam went into the cart, as well as shampoo, soap and conditioner. The final item had Merry bright red again as Adam waggled his eyebrows as he placed it in the cart.

"Cannot forget this." Adam said as the bottle of KY personal lubricant found its way into the cart.

"Adam, just.. oh my yes, I suppose we do need that. Oh god." Merry stammered and Adam laughed all the way to the check out counter.

Once outside, two carts full of bags Adam had Merry discreetly follow him around the corner of the building. "We are transporting again, hold tight." Adam said and once more, Merry was blinded and dizzy and found himself surrounded by bags in the kitchen.

They went to work putting away the groceries and Merry's clothes and then Merry went back to the kitchen whistling happily as he fixed them both a late lunch of grilled cheese and tomato soup.

The clock was only a quarter till three in the afternoon. School hadn't even let out yet and Merry was happily being domestic and loving every moment of his new life and giving adoring looks to an elf who was in the living room, having fun playing with his new television.

"Oh! I saw this movie in London. Good movie." Adam said and Merry looked up to see an old black and white Charles Laughton movie "Hobson's Choice" was playing on the TV. Merry suspected Adam had seen that during its initial release some sixty years earlier.

It was still hard to comprehend that a man that looked hardly older than himself was well over four hundred years old.

Especially dressed like a rebel without a cause and grinning like a young fool. Merry fell in love all over again and brought over the sandwiches and soup and they ate at the coffee table and watched the movie and then cuddled on the couch.

"I feel wonderful." Merry sighed and Adam turned to kiss him.

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"So do I beloved. You are safe. That is all the matters to me most. I will at last sleep well tonight. Knowing you will be there beside me secure and no longer threatened. I have not slept well in years, always afraid I'd miss your call for help and be delayed in reaching you. It has been a very long time since I slept peacefully, I am more relieved than I can possibly state adequately. To know that you are safe and secure and that fate has changed is a very large weight off my heart. Let the storm come now, I will have you in my arms." Adam said and Merry's eyes misted.

"You say the most romantic things Adam. You're going to make me cry." Merry said and Adam smiled.

"Tears of Joy are always welcome. Tears of sadness I will not let you shed again if it is within my power." Adam said and Merry did cry and just held onto Adam for all he was worth, so in love he could barely breathe, but it felt so indescribably right.

Merry had at last found a place to call home and a man to love and who loved him in return. Life could not have been any grander than it was right at that moment.

The rest of the movie played in the background, but neither youth noticed, too lost in each other and kissing each other senseless to care.



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## ★ IV ★

Merry was drowning in bliss and utterly lost in Adam's kiss when a gentle cough in the room sent Merry flying out of Adam's arms with shock and a mortified expression on his face. Adam for his part looked more than a little annoyed.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you honey. Adam, you can stop glowering at me at any time now." A beautiful woman said standing in the room next to a rather tall elven man trying hard to hide his amusement behind his hand.

"You are interrupting. I have a reason to be annoyed Mother." Adam said turning to Merry. "Merry, meet my uninvited parents. Jack and Anne Frost. Mom, Dad, you know Merry." Adam said and Merry recovered quickly as he was encased in a warm embrace from Adam's mother.

"We'll we know of you, but this is the first time we've met properly. Oh my, you are just so adorable in person. How are you adjusting sweetheart? I remember well feeling out of my mind for a long time in the beginning." Anne asked patting Merry's hand as she made herself comfortable beside him on the couch.

"I'm still in a state of, I know I'm asleep and am going to wake up in fifteen minutes so I might as well enjoy every second I can before it all goes away again." Merry said and Anne chuckled.

"That's precisely the feeling poppet. Welcome to eternal dreaming then. Frost men know how to treat their mates right they do. Never a day goes by I don't want to sing for joy

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over my Jack." Anne said and Jack grinned.

"Likewise Annie-girl." Jack said flopping down on a chair and kicking his feet up on the coffee table.

"Dad, do you mind taking your boots off first? New furniture, thank you very much." Adam said slapping his father's feet off the table.

"Then go get your mom and I some tea so we can socialize properly rude boy." Jack said pulling off his boots and Adam went to go fix tea. Merry stood to follow and Anne pulled him back down.

"Oh no you don't deary. We came to see you pet. Adam was just beside himself with worry these past weeks, we're so happy you finally called to him, we were afraid it would not be in time and Adam loves you so. Have you had time to decide a date for the wedding yet? I think Christmas Eve would be so very romantic, especially considering your name pet. We could have it in your lovely back yard here, all in the snow with poinsettias all around. Just lovely it would be. Jack could even make it snow." Anne gushed and Merry smiled. She was so lovely and he could see Adam, the more human attributes he took on in his appearance, the more he looked like his mother.

He had his father's face and build, but he had Anne's eyes and features. A perfect blending of his parents. "No ma'am, we haven't talked about that yet. That does sound so nice though, if cold." Merry replied and Anne chuckled.

"Oh, no. Call me Mom dear, and once you're an elf, you won't feel the cold like you do now. I cannot wait to see you fully transformed, you're already so pretty, I daresay you'll be breathtaking afterward. Adam honey what is taking the tea dear?" Anne called and Adam snorted.

"Boiling water mom. Hold your horses and how on earth did you find us already?" Adam asked from the kitchen and Jack laughed.

"Word travels fast kiddo." Jack said winking at Merry. "Adam isn't the only one who spies in mirrors either." Jack added with a wink and Merry laughed.

"Like father, like son?" Merry asked and Jack nodded.

"Exactly." Jack said as Adam came in with the tea service.

Anne went straight to serving tea and handed Merry a cup first. "Goodness, this takes

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me back to the first time I met your father. Let me tell you Merry love, you really are not alone in feeling like a fish out of water. It was, the fifteenth century, Queen Elizabeth I was on the throne and I was the youngest of seventh daughters. My father blamed my mother for having so many girls and he simply refused to provide dowries for so many. It made our prospects in life bleak indeed. I was fifteen, and my father decided it would be a good idea to give his last 'burden' to a bishop. I was horrified. First because I was being given to a man three times my age, second marriage was not offered. I would have been little more than a paramour slave to a corrupt and abusive man of the cloth." Anne said and Jack shuddered.

"Your father was a pig and that so called bishop is burning in hell now. Do not remind me of the fate you almost endured Annie-girl. Like Adam I was shitting myself in fear waiting for you to call for help." Jack said and Anne smiled.

"I'd almost forgotten you Jack. You see Merry, like you I was a little girl when I first met Jack. I had been playing with my sisters near the pond in our back garden. I fell through the ice and the next thing I knew, Jack was holding me in blankets warming me up. I was seven then, a slip of a girl and to me Jack was a wonder. I had True Sight too. He made me promise if I ever needed help again to call out his name and he'd come for me." Anne said and Merry turned to smile at Adam.

"That sounds familiar." He said and Adam grinned.

"It should Sprite. Those are the rules." Adam said as Anne continued.

"Well, I decided the night my father planned to ship me off to the bishop to run away. It was the middle of January and freezing cold and I had on little more than silk slippers and my gown. Father sent out the dogs to track me down and then I suddenly remembered Jack and called his name, running on sheer hope. He was there in a breath, crushing me in his arms and the next thing I knew I was in a palace of ice, under mountains of furs drinking hot spiced wine and being wooed until I was swooning in bliss. I have never looked back, you'll see Merry. The future is what you make of it now." Anne said and Merry looked to Adam.

"So long as my future is beside him, I'll be happy. My head hasn't come down from the clouds since he swept me off my feet." Merry said leaning over to kiss Adam who sat at his feet.

"It's your fault for being perfect Merry." Adam replied and Jack laughed.

"Now where have I heard that line before?" Jack asked and Anne smiled.

"He heard it from you enough as a child, it's no wonder. Both of you could romance

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blood from stones." Anne chuckled sipping from her tea cup daintily.

"Adam dear do you have any cakes to go with the tea?" Anne asked and this time Merry did stand.

"We do, but let me make cookies. I promised Adam I'd make him snickerdoodles earlier and those go wonderful with tea. I won't be long." Merry said dashing off to the kitchen, Anne followed.

"Oh let me help poppet! I just love making cookies." Anne said and both Anne and Merry chatted away as they make cookies and Jack looked at his son.

"You look happy at last." Jack said and Adam smiled.

"I am Dad. I was really worried." Adam said and Jack nodded.

"So was I, your little Merry is quite as stubborn as your mother was in asking for aide. Believe me son, I know exactly the type of hell you've been living in these past weeks. You haven't slept in three months." Jack said and Adam nodded.

"No more than cat naps when I knew for sure he was safe at school, no. I know tonight I will sleep well indeed. This house has quite lovely amenities and the bed upstairs looked infinitely comfortable. Knowing Merry will be beside me is a weight off my heart and mind." Adam said and Jack pulled a pipe out of his pocket and nodded as he lit it.

"Why don't you show me around son? It's a small quaint little house you've chosen and I can feel the entire street here is teeming with fair folk." Jack said and Adam chuckled.

"It is, the area is very nice. Wizard Tarn I believe lives next door." Adam said getting up to give his father a tour of the house.

"Oh my word, Tarn! What a delightful pisser he is. Ask him for his recipe for mulled wine, he has the best spices." Jack said as Adam showed his father into one of the guest rooms.

"I thought you'd like to stay in this room when you visit. Mother will love the decor in here, very old English renaissance." Adam said and Jack nodded.

"Aye, we'll be staying for the storm, this one will be nasty and I'd like a nice local place to direct it from comfortably. Besides, Merry is right now inviting your mother to stay for Thanksgiving and you know your mother and feasting preparation. She's going to be in

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heaven the next two days helping Merry cook." Jack said and Adam laughed.

"Dad, we're going to eat like kings on Thursday." Adam chuckled and Jack was rubbing his stomach.

"I cannot wait." Jack said as they went back downstairs and toward the smell of baking cookies.

Anne and Merry were laughing together like old friends as they set cookies on a rack to cool.

Jack and Adam were burning their fingers immediately. "They're too hot idiot! Leave them five minutes at least silly!" Merry said as Adam juggled the hot cookie and burned his tongue.

"No, I love hot cookies! Oh Sprite, these are delicious!" Adam said around a mouthful.

"Yes, they are. Do you have milk? You have to have milk with cookies." Jack asked going over to the fridge and grabbing glasses and the jug of milk and poured the staple to go along with the sweet treats.

"Both of you, sweet tooth to the extreme even for elves!" Anne laughed as she set the next baking sheet into the oven.

"Can you blame us when these are so nice?" Adam chuckled as the first batch of cookies were decimated before they had a chance to cool at all.

Merry was thrilled and didn't care in the slightest as he mixed up more ingredients for a second run. He loved making cookies so it wasn't exactly a chore and the appreciative audience even better. It was a wonderful family atmosphere as they all sat around the kitchen making cookies and talking and just enjoying each other's company.



For Dinner Anne and Merry whipped up a thick beef stew and Merry made fresh biscuits to go along with the main fair. The first signs of the winter storm falling as light flakes outside the window as they sat around the dinner table as a family. "Well, technically

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we still have tomorrow with calm weather before the storm rolls in on Thursday morning. What do you want to do tomorrow Merry?" Adam asked buttering his third biscuit.

"I should call my school and let them know I moved and that was the reason for my absence today. I should let them know I won't be back in until Monday morning. After that, your mom and I are going to get started cooking. You have to promise not to eat all the pies we plan on making before the holiday. Will you be a good boy?" Merry asked grinning and Adam laughed.

"Maybe, it depends on how tempting the pies are. I make no promises." Adam said and Jack laughed.

"Me either. Pumpkin pie is my favorite part of this season." Jack added and Anne leveled him a glare.

"Jack, you keep your hands off those pies! There will be one you both can have tomorrow, the rest do not get eaten until Thursday!" Anne laid down the law and Jack nodded.

"Aye, Annie-girl. Aye. I know." Jack chuckled as a knock came to the front door. Adam went to answer it, not expecting company.

A bright and cheerful Summer elf, with golden hair and tanned skin stood bundled up at the front door. "How do my Lord Frost. My name is Grantham Brook, I'm Merry's guidance counselor at school. Well, when I'm not hiding from him. Tarn tells me, he's here. Is that true?" Grantham asked and Adam smiled.

"Yes, come in from the cold sir." Adam said stepping aside and letting the elf inside.

"Thank you." Grantham said dusting off fallen snow and following Adam into the dining room.

"Please join us for dinner Mr. Brook." Adam said and Merry's eyes widened.

"I knew it! No wonder I could never catch you in your office. I saw you once, thought my eyes were playing tricks on me and then you were gone. Adam was right, fair folk are everywhere." Merry said as Grantham sat at the table.

"And thankfully Humans with True Sight are rare. You're hard to avoid, but thankfully I will no longer have to. Are you alright Merry? I heard about Brad this morning, and then your step-father called the school demanding you be sent home, we realized you ditched school

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then. I can see it was for good reasons. It does my heart good to know you are out of that horrid environment. I just wanted to check on you myself so the principal doesn't send out search parties." Grantham said and Merry smiled.

"Well you'll save me a call in the morning, thank you. Yes, I am perfectly fine and happy. It was a rush to get out of the house this morning and well, it's not everyday you get proposed to and swept off your feet." Merry said and Grantham smiled.

"Well, keep the marriage information under your hat lad. Humans will certainly not understand. However, that's what I came about too. School. Normally I advise kids to stay in it, there is absolutely no need for you to finish traditionally now. Your grades are insanely good, you could pass out now if you take the early graduation test in January. The only reason I never brought it up to you earlier was naturally because I was avoiding you seeing me. That's a moot point now. Your teachers have been pressing me to bring it up with you since term started. We can get you the test materials to home study and then you just have to come in to take the test in January to get your diploma. I don't see why you need to trudge to school everyday when you're more than capable of passing out with flying colors and getting on with your new life." Grantham said and Merry's eyes widened.

"Really? What about college SATs? I'd like to take those too." Merry asked and Grantham grinned.

"Again, we can give you the materials and you can come in just for the testing at the end of April." Grantham said and Merry looked ecstatic.

"Oh yes! I'd love that. I'd already taken all my credits by my first semester my Junior year and I was taking boring filler classes to fill up my day since. I'd much rather test out and focus on things I do like. I've taken every English course you offer and the last one available I'm taking now is boring. Mass Media is nothing but reviewing movies, what kind of a class is that anyway?" Merry asked and Grantham chuckled.

"One for seniors like yourself who've already busted their asses, it's a break before college. Most of them like it." Grantham said and Merry rolled his eyes.

"I probably would if they showed decent movies. I was expecting to watch things like "Twelve Angry Men" or "To Kill a Mockingbird" not "Kill Bill". My goodness that was a bloody and violent movie." Merry said and Grantham laughed.

"Ah Merry, we need more students like you, we really do. This stew is wonderful." Grantham said and Merry smiled.

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"Thank you Mr. Brook. For everything." Merry said and Grantham just smiled.

"Don't mention it Merry, just doing my job. Have you considered colleges? I know, what with your previous home situation you probably haven't. Would you like me to get you some brochures?" Grantham asked and Merry nodded.

"Yes please. Literature, I would really love to be a writer someday." Merry said and Grantham nodded.

"Good, you'd be wasted in other professions. I'm glad you said that, I'll get right on it after the holiday." Grantham said as conversation turned to things of a more elvish nature and Merry basked in the warmth of his new life and felt lighter and free for the first time in his life. Let the storm come, he wasn't moving from Adam's side nor out of this wonderful world he'd been given acceptance into.



That night however, as Merry got ready for bed in the bathroom, his nerves began getting the better of him. He was more than nervous, especially considering he'd never told Adam of his differences. In fact, no one had ever seen him naked. He had never understood as a child what had been done to him, but with age came wisdom, especially when he did research on himself and found his old birth records. He'd wondered why he had no testicles like other boys and why he seemed to be growing breasts as he hit puberty and what that scar under his penis was, what he found out made him sick and ashamed of his own body. Now Adam was going to see it, and Merry wasn't so sure he wanted him to.

"Sprite? Are you alright?" Adam asked from outside the door.

"Fine, I'll be out in a minute." Merry said pulling on a long t-shirt and sweat pants before heading out again.

Adam, already in bed raised an eyebrow as Merry crawled into bed and quickly rolled away from Adam. "Goodnight." Merry said and Adam was not having that as a goodnight.

"There is something bothering you Sprite. What sort of a goodnight is that? Have I done something to upset you beloved?" Adam asked and Merry rolled to face him.



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"Oh no, no Adam you've done nothing." Merry said afraid he'd hurt Adam.

"Then tell me what ails you love. You've gone so distant suddenly." Adam said moving to pull Merry into his arms. He was naked under the covers and Merry shivered.

"I'm, I. Adam I'm different." Merry said not daring to look Adam in the eyes.

"Yes, you are. You are special. But that is not what is bothering you. Tell me Merry." Adam said tilting Merry's chin up with his finger so Merry would meet his concerned eyes.

"I'm, my body is... ugly. I'm afraid." Merry said, tears forming and Adam looked aghast.

"You most certainly are not ugly Merry. Who told you that?" Adam said and Merry sighed.

"No one, but I can see Adam. I was born wrong so they tried to fix me and I'm all scarred and ugly. I'm not a boy and I'm not a girl, I'm a freak." Merry said, blurting it out in sobs. Adam crushed him in a hug.

"Oh Merry, you are not a freak. Beloved I know how you were born, I know that you were born perfectly balanced as both genders. You are not a freak. The freaks are the ones who cannot accept you as you are dearest. That is also something I can fix. Human alterations can be undone easily. I can restore you to as you should be, as you were born. There are many, many humans like you and many more fair folk like you too. It is not as uncommon as you think." Adam said holding Merry as he cried.

"Can you? I hate my scars, I hate that they forced me to be what I am. I had no choice. I can't stand to look at myself in the mirror, afraid every day someone will see me." Merry said and Adam smiled and dipped his head to kiss Merry.

"No one had better see you, you are mine and you are the most beautiful thing in the world to me Merry. You are my betrothed, my bride and Merry you haven't looked at yourself, the moment you kissed me the first time, you began to change into what you should be. The scar is already gone. See?" Adam said claiming Merry's lips as a warmth spread through Merry's body as Adam's hand ran down his body and into his sweatpants.

Fingers first brushed his penis and then stroked a part of his anatomy that up until that morning had been nothing but a scar. It was no longer a scar, but a very definite labia under his penis. Merry flinched, no one had ever touched him so intimately.

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"Love, I will never hurt you. I'd rather die than cause you pain. I love you, all of you. I always have. There is nothing to fear, I of all people, love you most. You are Merry. Just Merry. Boy and Girl, man and woman, and my heart and soul." Adam said and Merry melted and sobbed into Adam's chest.

All his fears, all his self-loathing, all the pent up desire and years of abuse came crashing down around him and he clung to Adam for all he was worth.

All his life he'd been confused, constrained, forced to conform to a society that could not accept him as he was born. Now he was free, he was loved, he was whole.

Almost. He was still human, but if Adam's hands were any indication, he wasn't going to be human much longer. Merry moaned into the kiss as Adam's fingers toyed with his skin and then slowly and purposefully removed Merry's clothes.

"No more barriers, no more pain. Just love, my Merry. Just love." Adam whispered as Merry was bared to the skin.

"Oh Merry, you're so very beautiful." Adam sighed, kissing every patch of skin as he bared it, making Merry's skin burn and tingle with desire.

Adam paid loving attention to every part of his anatomy and loved him first as a male, brining him pleasure with lips and tongue until he shuddered in release and then he was loved as a woman. Adam joined his body with his own and his virginity swiftly became nothing but a sweet memory as Adam took his own pleasure on Merry's body.

Merry felt his body rapidly changing, he felt electrified in every pore, everything snapped into brilliant clarity as he arched his back into the pleasure as Adam loved him. Bodies joined and merged and when Adam came, Merry's world shook on it's axis. Adam's final gift of transformation. They were now a complete entity, their very lives tied together like the ends of a delicate string and Adam was sobbing into Merry's neck for sheer joy.

"Merry, my Merry is mine!" He cried sitting up and then his face changed into a look of complete and utter shock.

"Oh Merry, I never thought you could be more beautiful. Come look, not only have you changed beloved. You've changed in ways I never thought you could. You've been chosen beloved. By the maker the most sacred of changes. I should have known, with your compassionate nature, you could have been nothing but an elf of Peace and Charity, a Christmas Elf." Adam said dragging Merry on shaky knees to the bathroom mirror.

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Gone was his human form entirely. There in the mirror stood a perfectly formed androgynous wonder. Long, lean, graceful and elegant. Merry's already pale skin was now a glowing milky cream with rosy cheeks. His once short black hair was now long enough to brush his waist and was purest snow white. His ears delicate and pointed in a graceful arc. His chest had reformed properly and now sported larger than before but still very small mounded breasts and his testicles had dropped now that there was no scar to stop them. He was fully both genders in every way. The only thing that had not changed was his facial features and the soft wintry sky-blue of his large round eyes.

Adam was weeping and holding Merry tightly. Merry just gasped as he looked at himself in the mirror. "Is that me?"

"Aye Merry. The most pure of all the elven races you are. Only those with souls without taint become as you have become. You embody Peace, Love and Charity of spirit. I am so very blessed to have you as my betrothed. Every Christmas Elf is like you, all gendered and breathtaking." Adam said still with tears of joy on his face.

Merry just stood staring at himself in the mirror, his transformation was unlike anything he had expected and for the first time in his life, he felt complete and beautiful. "I can't believe it, I really can't." Merry said not able to tear his eyes away from his reflection. Adam rested his chin on Merry's shoulder and met his eyes in the mirror and smiled.

"I can be loved. This is just proof you are perfect clear down to your soul. Oh will I be jealous of anyone who so much looks at you for too long." Adam said and Merry laughed.

"There's no need for that Adam. I love you and would never even think of straying on you. Especially after what you just did to me, I'd be crazy. You're not only the sweetest most kind and gentle man I've ever met, you're a fabulous lover too." Merry grinned at Adam in the mirror and waggled his eyebrows. Adam laughed.

"As are you and I am nowhere near finished with you yet. Come here!" Adam said lifting Merry up and physically carrying him back to bed. Merry laughed all the way back to the bedroom where Adam proved a second time he was a candidate for the 'best lover of the year' award. By the time he was finished, the only option left to either of them was sleep, it was a very late night for them both before Adam decided he was finished and they fell asleep blissfully sated and happy.

Wednesday morning came and was almost over by the time Merry awoke. Adam was still curled around him fast asleep, possessive arms wrapped around Merry's waist. Merry just smiled, it felt so good to be loved and so desperately wanted. He rolled carefully to face Adam and his arms tightened unconsciously. "You jealous sap. I love you." Merry whispered

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and kissed the end of Adam's nose.

"Mmm-Merry?" Came Adam's groggy voice.

"Who else would you have in your bed? Good Morning, sleepy head." Merry said as Adam's deep blue eyes opened still full of sleep.

"I earned my sleep last night if you remember. It's also been months since I slept so well. How are you this morning beautiful?" Adam asked and Merry sighed and smiled and sank deeper into Adam's warm embrace.

"Wonderful, I haven't slept in a bed in a decade and I'm hungry. You?" Merry asked and Adam yawned.

"The same. I'll bet my mother is already up abusing our kitchen, shall we raid it?" Adam asked sitting up and stretching.

"Yes." Merry said getting up and heading to the bathroom first to run a comb through his long and bed mangled hair. "I am going to have to get used to this. I look so different." Merry said and Adam smiled.

"Just your coloring. Your face is still the same." Adam said joining Merry at the sink and taking the brush from Merry's hands brushed his hair for him.

"Oh that's nice." Merry purred, drinking in the affection Adam radiated like a drug.

"Yes, it is. So are these, your ears are stunning." Adam said running his finger over them and Merry shivered.

"And sensitive, oh don't do that unless you intend on doing more." Merry said and Adam laughed.

"Our ears are erogenous zones. Just testing to see if yours were too." Adam said with a wink as he set down the brush and then vanished for a moment. He was back before Merry had a chance to register his mate had left and when Adam returned he held a large bundle.

"Elven garments. I'd love to see you in them." Adam said holding up what was obviously a morning dressing gown and robe. Merry slipped on the sky blue silks and Adam groaned.

"Too beautiful for words you are. Shall we?" Adam asked offering his arm. Merry

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smiled and took it and let Adam lead him downstairs.

Adam's mother's squeal of delight was probably heard all up and down Rainbow Avenue that morning. Jack, sitting at the table smoking his pipe and reading a local newspaper just smiled. "I knew it. I suspect you' better put more tea on, we'll more than likely be having a visitor later." Jack said and Adam nodded as he joined his father at the table and poured himself tea.

"Who?" Merry asked going over to the cabinets to pull out ingredients for pancakes, he wanted something sweet for breakfast.

"Your boss. The head of all the Christmas Elves. The immortal of Peace, Love and Charity himself. He has many names, Babbo Natale, Sinterklaas, Babadimri, Papai Noel, Saint Nicolas, Kris Kringle, Father Christmas..." Jack began and Merry interrupted.

"Santa Claus?" Merry asked and Adam and Jack just grinned.

"That would be him." Adam said just as the doorbell rang. "Speak of the Devilish Saint himself..." Adam added going to the door.

Outside the door stood a tall Christmas elf. Hair and eyes the same shade as Merry's. Long white hair pulled up in poinsettias and a long red mantle trimmed in white ermine and a large, kind and loving smile on his lips. "Should I say Ho, Ho, Ho? Will that make it easier my Merry?" He asked as Adam brought the guest into the dining room.

"My goodness, I was expecting..." Merry began and Santa laughed.

"You were expecting what I show humans, or rather how humans wish to see me. Big and round like a bowl fully of jelly, I am nothing of the sort and like you, couldn't grow a beard even if I wished to, please call me Kris." Kris said sitting down at the table and accepting a cup of tea.

"Oh thank you Adam love. It is cold out there and your father's storm is gaining speed. I had to race it here. Jack this one is nasty." Kris said and Jack shrugged.

"It's supposed to be Krissy." Jack winked just sipping from his tea as Merry came in to sit down. Anne continued to fix breakfast wordlessly where he left off stunned.

"I was very worried these past weeks you'd not ever come to me Merry. You were always meant to become one of my chosen ones. You left it with just a day to spare I daresay. I can see you're confused, so let me get right to the crux of matters and give you

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the condensed version sweetheart. We are the guardians of Peace, Love and Charity. We call ourselves Christmas Elves because it is during this time of year that we are strongest. It's more of a nickname that stuck." Here Kris winked and chuckled.

"We're only strongest this time of year simply because humans tend to find those virtues in themselves easiest during this holiday. We work all year long, but find our jobs so much easier during this season. We are here to inspire love and kindness and giving in whatever way we can. We each have gifts and we must use them to keep love in this world strong." Kris began sipping from his tea cup gracefully before continuing.

"The stories of my flying around giving children toys is rather simplified. A long time ago I used to give toys to needy children I'd made, and after a while parents caught on and did those little acts of kindness in my name. I liked that idea so much, I let them and pushed others to do the same. Now I am helped by other elves like myself, like you Merry. We are out there standing on street corners ringing bells for the needy. Running soup kitchens and charities, inspiring toy makers and writing children's books. Our magic is the kind that warms from within. It is so much easier to influence children, set into them the joy of spirit that love and peace brings and hope that they pass those qualities onto their children as adults. We try to make them feel it year round and not just during the holiday season. We whisper in ears, lend helping hands and give hope to those that have none. You know well that feeling of lost hope." Kris said and Merry nodded.

"Oh I do. But then I just thought of my mother. When I was little, I remember this time of year as a happy time. The cookies she'd make, the stories she'd tell me, trimming her tiny little Christmas tree in our apartment. Whenever I felt like giving up and crying, I'd remember those times." Merry said getting misty eyed as he remembered again and Kris smiled.

"Exactly, because your mother should have been like you. One of my chosen who sadly did not escape her sad fate, but not for lack of trying on our part. She never called for her help and to this day he blames himself. He loved your mother so very much. Your father, Merry. He would like very much to meet you, like Adam he has watched over you your whole life, bound by rules and guilt." Kris said and Merry's hands shook.

"My father! You know my father? Yes, oh yes I want to meet him. Mother told me such wonderful things about him, she thought he died!" Merry gasped and Kris sighed.

"He was punished. He broke the rules, he sired a child before his chosen called to him properly. He mated her without giving all of himself and transforming her, his error in judgment sent her fate in the wrong direction and he blames himself. He needs your forgiveness to be free of the prison of his own making." Kris said and Merry stood.

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"Of course I forgive him! Everyone makes mistakes, he cannot blame himself for something Mike did to her! If he loved my mother, and he loves me, that's all that matters. He's my father!" Merry said and Kris smiled.

"And that is why you are My Chosen Merry. Such warmth of love and spirit overflows in you." Kris said going over to the fireplace. A Portal to what looked like a prison of ice opened. A man, hardly older than Adam sat there looking lost, his head bent in sorrow. His face, was Merry's face. His back hair hung lank, shrouding his sorrowful body language. He looked up from the shard of mirror in his lap and his eyes, the same color as Merry's were shining with tears.

"All is forgiven Night Elf Uriel Aurora Borealis. Come shed your light on your child." Kris said and the shard in Uriel's lap fell to the ground as he raced into the arms of his son sobbing.

"Merry, forgive me please." Uriel sobbed and Merry sobbed in return, lost in the arms of his father.

"There is nothing to forgive. You're exactly as she described you. I always thought her fairy tales of you coming to her from the northern lights in Alaska were just stories. I know better now." Merry laughed through his tears as Uriel stood back to cup his son's face in his hands and his eyes searched Merry's in desperation.

"No, she stood gazing at the lights and my heart was lost. I broke the rules and showed myself to her too soon. But I loved her, please believe me, I never meant to cause your mother shame. Oh my son-daughter, I have ever watched you and ever loved you. Every time you were struck was a blow to my soul not being able to protect you as a father should. I was so angry when the doctors changed you on your birthing day! How dare they take away half of your whole without consent! Then the man your mother married, foul beast of a man! He killed my Sarah and I had to watch him do it piece by piece." Uriel wept openly and Merry held him close.

"I know. It's over now though... Daddy." Merry said, whispering the last word, tasting it and thrilling in it as he felt Uriel's joy manifest in lights that danced all across the living room.

"Oh Merry, thank you my dearest love. Daddy does love you, so very much." Uriel whispered back into Merry's hair, stroking it as a father would his most beloved child.

Anne was weeping in Jack's embrace as Adam held out his hand to Uriel. "I suppose I

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have usurped your authority unwittingly. Father Borealis, might I have the hand of your son-daughter in marriage?" Adam asked and Uriel grabbed Adam's hand and then pulled him into a tight embrace.

"You saved my son, protected him in my stead all his life. Nay, you usurp nothing Lord Adam Frost. I am overjoyed to see him so happy in your arms and as he should have been since his birth. He should have been born elf. I would be so honored Merry if you would allow me to escort you down the aisle on your wedding day." Uriel said and Merry smiled.

"Nothing would make me happier, Daddy." Merry replied, kissing his father's cheek. There was not a dry eye in the room.

"Oh I love happy reunions!" Kris cried with a cheer, wiping his eyes.

"Now come, everyone let's eat, food is getting cold!" Anne said leading everyone back to the table where talk was light over the sweet meal.

"Now, before I rush off and try to beat the storm back home. Merry, your job assignments. Your talents are telling stories dear and I want you to tell them. Perhaps starting with the story of a little boy turned Christmas elf. Think you can do that in a children's book?" Kris winked, people didn't have to know it was an autobiography. Not that they'd ever believe it was true in the first place. Merry smiled and laughed gaily.

"I think I can, that actually sounds so much fun. I'd love to write children's books." Merry said and Kris winked.

"I'd never give a job to one of my Chosen they weren't suited for perfectly. Now go spread love and cheer in tales that parents will read to their little ones for years to come. I am off to work myself and I'll leave the nasty weather to Jack. I'll be back for the wedding however Christmas Eve!" Kris said vanishing and leaving the rest to visit and reunite as Anne and Merry went into a delightful and cheerful flurry of activity as they began preparing for a joyful family feast for Thanksgiving the following day.



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There were visitors arriving all day. News traveled fast, especially considering not one but two of the immortals had been at 7769 Rainbow Avenue that morning. People were coming to see Jack about the storm rolling in and marvel at "The True Sighted" boy's transformation.

Grantham stopped by after school and stood in shock as he took in the sight of Merry. "I never knew you were an all gendered! They had you listed just as a boy in the records. How did you manage gym class?" Grantham asked and Merry chuckled.

"I always changed in the bathroom stalls and abused an ace bandage around my chest the last four years. No one except Adam has ever seen me naked." Merry said and Adam, eating his third slice of pumpkin pie laughed.

"I'd better be the only one seeing you naked too!" He quipped and Merry tossed a napkin at him.

"Jealous! And stop eating all the pie or there will be none left for tomorrow Adam!" Merry scolded and Grantham laughed.

"You're acting married already! I should be upset you being so young, but different rules apply to us I'm afraid. Have a happy holiday!" Grantham said leaving again as Tarn and Sally arrived bringing over mulled wine spices and chatting happily with everyone as Tarn heated wine and spices over the hearth to toast the happy tidings.

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All the preparations were done and Anne and Merry were planning on getting up early to get the turkey and stuffing in the oven so they could sit down for the meal in the very early afternoon. All the pies and cookies and finger foods were already prepared and covered and sitting on the kitchen counters and Jack, Adam and Uriel were under orders not to be sneaking treats. Merry was humming to himself as he got ready for bed that night. It had been a spectacular day of familial events and outside the wind howled and rattled windows as the blizzard hit with a fury.

Adam came over to stand behind Merry sitting at his dressing table brushing his hair. Adam took the brush and set it aside and pulled Merry into his arms. "To think that this storm would have taken you from me. Forgive me for wanting to hold you right now Merry. This is my biggest fear here at last and I need to feel you safe with me right now." Adam said softly, leading Merry over to their bed.

Merry felt so loved he wanted to weep for joy again, but instead followed his betrothed to their bed and let Adam hold him tightly. Adam shivered as the downstairs clock struck midnight. "The hour he would have thrown you into this fury." Adam whispered, clutching tighter.

"But he didn't, I'm with you now Adam love, safe and sound and very, very happy." Merry said softly, leaning up to kiss Adam. "How can I distract you from your worries?" Merry asked and a devilish smile spread across Adam's features.

"I can think of a few things Sprite." Adam purred, rolling to pin Merry into the mattress. The clock struck two before Adam was finished loving his mate and a second shiver ran down his spine.

"The hour you would have perished." Adam breathed and Merry, disheveled and flushed from loving and having been loved ran his hand up Adam's spine.

"And as you can see, have not Adam. I am warm and happy and thoroughly traversed by a vigorous young elf whom I love dearly. Come here and hold me." Merry said as Adam laid his head down on Merry's chest and let Merry run delicate fingers through his hair. Merry waited until Adam fell asleep that way before he let himself find rest that night. Adam was the one most in need of comfort that night and comfort Adam he would for the rest of his days. A love like this, was once in a lifetime and Merry was holding on with both hands and heart.

Merry was up early, Adam was still asleep breathing deeply beside him as Merry turned to look at the alarm clock on his nightstand. Half passed seven, time to get up and start cooking. So Merry carefully crawled out of bed, made sure the covers were tucked in

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around his still sleeping fiancée before carefully heading into the bathroom to get ready and dressed.

He planned to surprise Adam that morning. Anne had commented the day before how Adam loved elven women in traditional dress, in embroidered gowns and mantles. So Merry was going to take advantage of his dual gender and relish dressing as such occasionally. He had borrowed one of Anne's gowns, a soft sky blue with snowflakes embroidered into the brocade fabric. He pulled it on and marveled at himself in the mirror.

"Anne was right, I do look better dressed as a girl." Merry commented to himself as he sat down with a brush to try and do something with all his new hair. Wearing it down had just got in the way yesterday and after brushing it, Merry realized he had no idea how to do anything with it. He couldn't even braid it by himself so he took his brush downstairs with him and met Anne in the living room. They were the only ones up yet that morning.

"Jack will sleep late, he'll be tired after that blizzard last night. Your father is in love with the bed upstairs and doubt he'll fall out of it anytime soon, and I know my son is lazy in the mornings. It's just you and me poppet and my word don't you look pretty this morning, I knew blue was your color, it matches your eyes. Tea love?" she asked bringing over the kettle.

"Please and mom, would you help me do something with this mane I seem to have acquired overnight? I'm hopeless, I can't even braid it." Merry said and Anne chuckled.

"Oh certainly, I know just the thing too. Adam will faint when he sees how pretty you are this morning." Anne said having Merry sit in front of her as she braided and piled hair on top of Merry's head. Tucking in silver and white snowflake shaped hair clips to hold it all in place.

"Now you look like a proper Christmas elf my dear. Happy Birthday poppet." Anne said leaning over to kiss Merry's cheek.

"Oh gosh, I forgot. It is my birthday. I got so wrapped up in everything else and Thanksgiving I totally spaced my birthday." Merry chuckled standing up to go look at himself in the mirror by the front door. "Wow, I look like a girl. You'd never tell the difference." Merry said turning back and forth to get a good look at himself as he heard a gasp at the top of the stairs. He turned to see Adam, only in his robe clutching the railing to keep himself from tumbling down them it seemed.

"Oh Merry..." Adam breathed walking down the stairs slowly, drinking in the sight of his betrothed standing at the foot of the stairs smiling up at him.

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"Do you like it?" Merry asked holding out his arms so Adam could inspect the transformation.

"More than like. Merry, you're breathtaking! Turn around and let me see you properly." Adam said stopping on the last stair and Merry smiled and twirled.

"Perfect. I will be buying you more gowns immediately! You look incredible! You simply must have bright red velvet and rich emeralds and more blue and perhaps violet and pink too. And for our wedding, oh you must have silver and gold. Oh yes, I'll have a maker get started immediately!" Adam said nearly giddy as his eyes ravaged Merry's form.

"So I take it you like me dressed up then?" Merry laughed and Adam grinned and nodded a look of unmistakable lust in his eyes.

"Sprite you have no idea, and I am glad I'm covered or else everyone would know what the sight of you is doing to me right now." Adam said stepping off the last stair to gather Merry in his arms to kiss him good morning.

"Happy Birthday Sprite." Adam said stepping back and from his robe pocket came a small wrapped box.

"What's this?" Merry asked taking the box and just holding it a moment.

"A gift of course for my mate. Open it." Adam grinned leading Merry to the couch and kneeling before Merry as he sat and opened his present.

It was unmistakably a ring box and Merry gasped as he opened the lid. Inside was a beautiful delicate ring, the myriad of diamonds laid out in a snowflake motif and surrounding what was easily a full carat diamond solitaire in the center. Merry was stunned as Adam took the box from his shaking fingers and removed the ring from the box to slip it on Merry's left ring finger.

"I never asked you properly Merry. May I have your hand in marriage?" Adam asked as the ring settled perfectly on Merry's finger.

"Oh Adam, yes, yes a million times yes! It's so beautiful it must have cost you a small kings ransom!" Merry said fighting tears as he watched the lights dance and sparkle on his ring. The most stunning engagement ring he'd ever seen in his life.

"I'd spend every dime I have on you without blinking twice Merry my love. I'm so

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happy it pleases you." Adam said and Merry just leaned forward and kissed the man at his feet.

"You please me Adam. You big, soft, romantic and adorable fool you. Thank you so much, it's beautiful. I won't ever take it off. Well unless I need to shove my hands in a turkey here, that wouldn't be so nice. It would get all gooey." Merry said carefully putting his ring back in the box.

"Hold that for twenty minutes while I stuff the bird then put it back on me?" Merry asked and Adam laughed.

"Aye Sprite." Adam chuckled with a wink as Merry, in a flourish of skirts joined Anne in the kitchen to start fixing Thanksgiving dinner.

Adam cheerfully ate more pie and tea for breakfast watching his mother and bride prepare enough food to feed a small army. "Adam, leave the pie alone! That's for after dinner!" Merry scolded and Adam grinned as the last bite was devoured.

"Too late beloved, far too late." Adam chuckled as Uriel joined them and hit the cookies with a relish for his own breakfast and making appreciative comments on Merry's look that morning.

"Far better than those sweats you were wearing yesterday. You always did favor your female side, you're far too pretty not to shine Merry love." Uriel said and Jack added his agreement as he shuffled down the stairs looking exhausted and Anne shoved a mug of tea under his nose and a plate full of brownies.

He perked up quite nicely at that.

After the food went into the oven, Merry held his hand back out to Adam to have his ring put back on. Adam grinned and kissed Merry's hand as he replaced the ring. "Well, since Mom and Merry are looking so resplendent this morning, I will go clean myself up too." Adam said and Uriel and Jack agreed that was a good idea and went back upstairs themselves.

All three men came back downstairs dressed in their best traditional attire. Uriel was all in black with silver accents to his tunic and shoes. Jack matched Anne and was wearing midnight blue and white and Adam chose to match Merry. His light blue and silver with white fur complimented Merry's gown.

It looked like a Courier and Ives postcard that afternoon as everyone gathered around the table to give thanks for each other and their family as they ate and made merry well into

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the night while the winter blizzard faded to a simple snow fall outside.

Friday morning saw Anne and Jack heading home, Uriel had nowhere to go and no other family so Adam and Merry insisted he move in with them while he got his own life back on track again. Not to mention spending quality time with a son and future son-in-law that he'd been denied for so long.

"Let's start by Christmas shopping! I want a big tree in the living room!" Merry said gaily pointing to the spot by the window.

"You are indeed my Christmas Sprite, already into the season. Then let's go. Oh and here." Adam said digging into his wallet and handing Merry a credit card that had his name on it.

"Where did this come from?" Merry asked and Adam grinned.

"I've had that ready for months just in case. That's a debit card to my human accounts, I don't want you to be anywhere without access to human money if you need it or just happen to see something you want. What is mine is yours Merry." Adam said grabbing their coats off out of the closet.

"Thank you Adam, for everything." Merry said tucking the precious piece of plastic into his own wallet.

"I told you before Love, thanks are never necessary." Adam said holding up Merry's coat for him to slip into.

"I should see about getting myself some decent and warm human clothes too. Using magic all the time to hide our own looks gets tiring." Uriel said joining them both at the front door.

"Oh gosh! My looks! Am I going to stick out like a sore thumb now?" Merry asked and Adam laughed.

"No love, people will see you, as they've always seen you and how they expect you to look. You will always look entirely human to other humans, unless they have true sight and you'll feel that when they do, it's like your skin is itching and then just look for the human staring a hole in you and hide." Adam laughed shutting and locking their front door.

"Oh look at all the snow! How beautiful!" Merry said gaily slipping down the icy front steps and then flopping into the yard to make a snow angel.

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Adam laughed. "You're always so full of joy. Maybe we'll make a snow man later?" Adam asked and Merry grinned.

"Oh absolutely! I wish we had a hill to slide down. I always loved playing in the snow when I was little." Merry said as Adam offered him a hand up and they walked the few blocks in the cold to downtown.

It was alive with Christmas shoppers everywhere. Not even three feet of overnight snow stopped the intrepid shoppers for the day after Thanksgiving sales. "How about a little magic? It won't seem too out of place during this season!" Adam said clapping his hands and a sleigh with bells and drawn by two white horses appeared including a cheerful driver who tipped his hat and smiled.

"Morning Lord Frost! Chittenham Livery at your service. Two gold coins for the whole day My lord." The man said and Adam tossed him three.

"We don't have a car, so I called and Elven cab, we'll just look festive." Adam laughed hopping up into the cart and offering his hand down to Merry. He laughed as he climbed in followed by Uriel.

"I'm not saying a word, you know best Adam." Merry said settling down beside Adam in the cart and Adam pulled the blanket over their legs.

"Take us down to the end of the street, there's a tree lot there." Adam said and with a click of the reigns, the horses jingled their way down main street. People pointed and waved and laughed at the festive picture they made. It didn't take long to reach the tree lot and then after inspecting all the trees, they picked a beautiful twelve foot spruce and had that tied to the sleigh.

"I'll drop it off at your house and come back to get you Lord Frost." The sleigh driver said heading off and leaving the three shoppers in the middle of Main street.

"I'm heading over there to the clothier, I'll meet you both back at that coffee shop there say in an hour?" Uriel asked and Adam nodded.

"Sounds good to me. There's a department store around the next block, Merry and I can go get trimmings for the tree. We'll meet for lunch then." Adam said as the company parted ways and went shopping.

Merry and Adam were pushing a laden cart around the Christmas aisles picking out

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decorations for their house when they ran into Sharon shopping with her friends.

"Merry! Oh my gosh are you alright? We all thought the worst when Brad left school and then we didn't see you since Tuesday morning!" Sharon asked and Merry smiled.

"I'm more than fine, thank you. Just getting settled really with Adam and then we had a big family feast yesterday. We'll be eating leftovers for weeks. I plan on never seeing Brad or Mike again." Merry said and Sharon cocked her head.

"Something is different about you, I can't put my finger on it, but it's like you're glowing. You look so happy." Sharon said and Adam coughed and scratched his neck like he had a bad itch.

"Probably because I am happy, for the first time since my mother died. We're getting married on Christmas Eve and everything is a whirl right now getting ready and of course Christmas shopping." Merry said and Sharon's eyes widened.

"You're getting married on Christmas Eve? That's awfully fast Merry. Besides, you're both boys how on earth can you get married? It's not legal in this state. Not that I'm against it, I'm just asking how?" Sharon asked and Merry smiled.

"It's a very long story Sharon, and without going into details let's just say Adam and I won't have trouble there. I'm not exactly what I seem." Merry said and Sharon cocked an eyebrow.

"Are you telling me you're a girl?" Sharon said and Merry shrugged.

"Yes and no. It's complicated what I am Sharon." Merry said and Sharon's eyes widened.

"Wait, I know, I have a second cousin like that, who was born both but they cut off her... you know, when she was a baby, now she's got a full beard and the doctors admit to goofing. Hermaphrodite, right?" Sharon said and it was Merry's turn to look stunned.

"Yes, only I'm thankfully in-tact. Your poor cousin!" Merry said relating intimately, seeing as up until yesterday his female anatomy had been surgically sealed. He knew quite well the difficulties her cousin was going through.

"Tell me about it, mom is furious. They list her as a female on her birth certificate, and made her sterile by cutting up a newborn without waiting to see how she would mature. My mom's her lawyer and is fighting to get that sort of "Doctor's playing God" stopped. My



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cousin is more male now than female and it causes her all sorts of problems. She's not alone either, there are tons of people like you Merry. Only it's kept under the carpet or in my cousin's case they tried to make her a girl. Mom says society is so messed up they can't accept you without a label. You have to be boy or girl and no one will accept a natural third gender. If they can't label you one or the other they freak out and start cutting up babies! Mom is fighting for basic human rights here. Only you should be able to decide what to do with your own body, not to mention what happens during puberty and like my cousin when they cut off the wrong parts! I'm so glad you're okay and I guess you can get married, you are technically also a girl too." Sharon said and Merry nodded.

"That's true, and oh gosh we're running out of time, we're meeting my Dad for lunch." Merry said and Sharon did another double take.

"Your DAD! I thought he died!" Sharon said and Merry smiled.

"I thought so too. But he's not dead and he's wonderful. Life is very good for me right now Sharon, don't worry about me, Have a Merry Christmas!" Merry said as he pushed the cart and Adam followed.

"Nice save, she could almost see you. Not true sighted, but she can see your new aura." Adam said and Merry nodded.

"She also knows more than I want her too. No sense lying when she figured it out so easily. But then again, I'm not going back to school so I guess it doesn't matter if everyone finds out I have a penis AND a vagina. It's not like they can push me up against lockers to feel me up to see. That was always my biggest fear, being humiliated and stripped naked so people could ogle the freak. People can be cruel." Merry said as they got in line to check out. Cart filled to overflowing with Christmas decorations.

"They can, it was very wise of you to hide it growing up, but you're right, they won't do that to you now, I'll be there. No one will dare lay fingers on you, I'll rip their heads off if they try." Adam said and Merry shook his head.

"You would too, Mr. Possessive." Merry said and Adam grinned.

"You're mine, of course." Adam said with a jovial wink as they paid their bill and headed over to the coffee shop buried in bags. Thankfully the sleigh driver was back and took all of their packages and Uriel's bags home for a second run while they went inside to get a table and eat lunch.

They were seated in the window booth, looking at menus and drinking hot chocolate

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when a large fist in the glass startled them and Brad and Mike were standing there yelling at Merry through the glass.

"You little FAGGOT! Where the fuck have you been? Get out here right now you little ingrate!" Mike yelled and Adam stood scowling. Merry grabbed his arm.

"Ignore them." Merry said and Adam shook his head and both he and Uriel stood.

"No, not this time." Came Uriel's very real anger as he and Adam went outside.

"You will cease insulting my child! If you do not leave his presence immediately you will be very sorry and pay for every bruise you ever gave him." Uriel said and Mike crossed his arms.

"Your kid? Mind paying me back for all the money I spent on your brat? I got to admit, he looks as sissy as you do. What about back child support?" Mike hissed and Uriel nodded.

"It is true, I was incarcerated and incapable of providing for him as a child. That I do not deny and had you been kind I would have gladly recompensed you for your burden. However, you beat him, worked him as a slave and kept him in a cold basement. I think sir, your burden was minimal enough and he's more than paid the price. Leave or this will get ugly." Uriel said and Merry came racing outside.

"Adam, Dad stop, please no fighting." Merry begged and Brad grabbed his arm.

"You got me in trouble asshole! I should break your fucking arm!" Brad said bending Merry's arm around his back and pulling his sweater taught.

"Jesus! You got boobs! What the fuck?" Brad said and went to reach around to feel Merry's chest when the next thing he knew he was flat on his back with Adam's fist ready to strike again. One arm protectively around Merry's shoulders where he held Merry against his side away from Brad.

"Touch Merry again and I'll feed you your own dick for lunch! No one, NO ONE touches My WIFE!" Adam growled and the crowd began to gather from inside the coffee shop.

"You're WHAT?" Mike demanded and Adam turned fury blazed eyes at Mike and he physically flinched from the glare.

"You heard me. Merry is my fiancée and I will be damned if I let you touch her! Get out of my sight before I thrash you senseless!" Adam said, still clutching Merry tightly to his

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side, his rage was icy cold and building.

"Enough Adam, please." Merry said quietly and Adam loosed his death grip on her. "They are nothing, they can't hurt me anymore. I have you and Dad now. They aren't worth the trouble. Come let's go back inside now, please." Merry said taking Adam's hand.

"Alright Sprite. I won't fight if it hurts you so much." Adam said following Merry back inside.

"Be glad my Merry has such a forgiving heart, I have half a mind to still kill you. Like you killed my beloved Sarah." Uriel growled and then leaned in close.

"Better not go anywhere alone Mr. Walker. They won't find the body." Uriel whispered and Mike shivered, grabbed his son and fled. The bullies had met their matches and fled with their tails between their legs.

People were laughing, glad to see that the Walker Boys wouldn't be giving Merry anymore grief.

Back in their booth, Merry turned to Adam. "You realize you called me a girl in public?" Merry whispered and Adam shrugged.

"It was either that or tell everyone details Merry. Tight sweaters leave nothing to the imagination love. You had breasts before, you forgot they're a little bigger now, everyone got a good look. Besides you didn't mind, I know better." Adam said and Merry smiled.

"No, I didn't, It's actually easier to let them think I'm a girl, I won't have to wear clothes three sizes too big and wrap an ace bandage around me until I cannot breathe anymore to hide my chest bumps." Merry said laughing and Adam smiled.

"Well, they are on the small side, but a little bigger than just bumps Merry. You don't hear me complaining do you?" Adam said wagging his eyebrows. "I get the best of both worlds for a bi-sexual. I get to play with all the nice bits both genders have to offer, all in one gorgeous package." Adam winked taking Merry's hand and then pulling up short.

"Merry, where is your ring?" Adam gasped and suddenly Merry went into hysterical tears.

"Oh God no! He had my left hand behind my back Adam! Brad must have stolen my ring! I'm sorry, oh so sorry." Merry was frantic running outside to look in the snow for it.

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"Merry! Merry get out of the snow love. Uriel, watch her, I'll get it back!" Adam said running off after Brad and Mike and stopping at a nice reflective window display paused.

"Show me those scumbags." He asked the reflection and he saw Brad showing Mike the ring he held and they were heading right to a pawn shop laughing.

"You won't be laughing long." Adam growled vanishing and reappearing in the alley beside the pawn shop. He stepped out as Brad and Mike approached and held up his hand. "In the alley, both of you!" Adam demanded and before either man could speak, their feet began moving against their will and they marched clear to the back of the alley. Adam turned and faced the entrance and held his back to two terrified men. "Seal and silence in ice!" Adam demanded and a wall of ice sealed them in the alley. He turned and let his illusion fall so they could see precisely who they were dealing with.

"Do you think I am some fool? You have no idea who you are messing with. Let me enlighten you both. My name is Adam Frost, I am a guardian of Winter, a Seasonal Elf. You have stolen a ring I gave to my chosen bride, I will have it back. That belongs only on Merry's hand. Crafted by the finest of ice goblins at the north pole specifically for her hand alone." Adam said reaching into Brad's coat pocket and extracting the ring.

"Vile human, if it would not make Merry sad I'd be done with you both! She may be an Elf of Peace, Love and Charity, but I certainly am not. I do not forgive as easily and readily as she does. My soul is carved from stone and ice and cold. The only thing that warms it, is Merry. Do not forget that. Ever. You will not have another warning." Adam said and the stupid human father snorted.

"She? She has a dick! That little faggot is no girl and an elf? Who the fuck do you think you're kidding?" Mike hissed and a wall of ice, clear as glass rose from the ground like a mirror.

"Behold Merry's true form." Adam said and an image of Merry appeared sitting in the booth at the coffee shop still flustered and being comforted by his father.

The image shifted, and two very definite elves sat there. Merry's white hair braided down her back in pristine white and her father's midnight beauty beside her. "Merry is my mate and as such has become her true self. Neither male or female but a blend of them both. She was born of a human mother and an elven father before they could seal their love and transform Sarah into an Elf herself. Merry was trapped in a human body he should have never worn and what humans tried to alter at his birth. He was born dual gendered and humans tried to seal half of him away from other humans like you who would have exploited him! Merry is whole, and has always been female dominant, even with human meddling! You

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called him vile names when he was just being Merry. Half female, half male with a dominant female nature. As he grew older and breasts formed he bound them to hide them from you! He made sure neither of you ever saw him as he was, in fear of what you'd do to him! Believe me I shared that fear! No more, I will not tolerate it. You will never, never show yourselves in our presence again or Uriel's threat will hold true. They will never find your bodies!" Adam spat and then vanished, leaving Mike and Brad stunned and soaking wet as the ice melted and came crashing down on top of them.

"Holy shit dad! Was that real?" Brad asked and Mike shook his head.

"No, couldn't be. Fancy tricks, but let's just forget Merry and this whole thing." Mike said leading his son back home, terrified and too cowardly to admit it.

Adam raced back to the coffee shop and back to their booth. "It's alright Merry, no one was hurt and I got it back with little fuss love." Adam said putting Merry's ring back on his finger.

"Adam, I'm so sorry, I was careless. It's all my fault." Merry said and Adam shook his head.

"No love, it was not. Don't take someone else's blame here. He took that off your finger. It was not your fault." Adam said laying his hand over the ring on Merry's finger.

"I bind you to Merry's hand. You will not be removed without Merry's will." Adam said and then Smiled up at Merry. "No one can take it from you now love. Unless you remove it yourself." Adam said and Merry sighed.

"Thank you Adam. I'm sorry for all the trouble today." Merry said and Adam just shook his head.

"It won't happen again love. Now let's eat, I'm now starving!" Adam said finally ordering and eating and all the waitresses had to come over and look at Merry's ring and marvel at its unique beauty.

Patrons came over to offer well wishes and happy holidays and the mood settled once again into happy times.

After lunch, more shopping ensued, Adam insisted on getting Merry more clothes that would show off his body better. "I like being able to see your breasts. Sue me, I'm your betrothed and I like how you look You're beautiful!" Adam said and Merry just rolled his eyes but did have fun getting clothes for his female side.

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The soft blue cashmere sweater left nothing to the imagination but was soft and warm and complemented his eyes. "God, I love you in blue." Adam purred as Merry came out of the dressing room to model it for Uriel and Adam.

"I must agree, blue is Merry's color." Uriel said sorting through a bin of handbags. "These are all lovely. If men didn't get strange looks carrying these, I'd have a collection. So handy to carry your things in a bag rather than shoved into pockets making it hard to sit." Uriel said as Merry came over.

"I know. I hate sitting on a wallet. I always kept mine in my school bag. Because you're right, everyone thought I was a 'femmy-boy' to start with, a purse would have just been a source for more teasing." Merry said and Adam grinned.

"Not now however, the cat is out of the bag. So shall we get you one?" Adam asked and Merry grinned.

"I might as well, no sense in pretending to be something I'm not now. I like that slate blue one, it matches the coat you got me." Merry said pointing to the small suede bag that Adam picked up and added to the growing pile of purchases. "Dad they do make mens bags too. I saw some in the mens department." Merry said and Uriel made a dash over to find what he wanted. He came back all smiles with a sharp little leather zip up bag around his middle.

"Why do they call it a fanny pack? It's more like a cock pack. I certainly wouldn't wear it over my fanny to let people steal out of it." Uriel commented and Merry laughed.

"You know you're right Dad. I wouldn't wear it in the back either." Merry said as they took their purchases to the counter and headed out again.

There was one more stop, and this was an impulse buy for Adam who saw the gadget in the window of the electronics store. "I always, ALWAYS wanted one of these. Every time I came to human cities, I'd find an arcade to play." Adam said going inside and buying a PlayStation for himself and a slew of games to go with it.

"Are you sure you're an elf?" Merry asked and Adam grinned.

"I'm just a big kid at heart." Adam winked as they loaded up the sleigh and headed home again.

They ate leftovers for dinner as they put on Christmas movies and decorated the

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house and tree. After dinner a phone call came from Ellen, she wanted to know if she could send over someone for the job application for a butler and housemaid. A father and daughter pair looking for live in work new in town. Adam had them come right over. The old man was kindly and apparently had a long list of credentials. The only reason he was out of work was the even older couple he had worked for had recently passed, he had worked for them for five hundred years. Adam hired him immediately. Same with the daughter, she'd worked so long with her father they came as a matched and loyal set.

Adam got them installed in the apartments downstairs just as the doorbell rang again. It was a group of gnomes all bright and cheery. "Miss Ellen says you're looking for gardeners Lord Frost. Are we too late for that nice big oak?" The head of the family unit asked and Adam smiled.

"No sir. You're the first. You can move in and start immediately if you'd like." Adam said and the gnomes cheered.

Their fat little wives went right to the tree and the smell of cooking food soon filled the yard as the men took up shovels and cleared the walk of snow and then started making ice topiaries in the yard. Merry marveled for a little while then went out to join them. Adam and Uriel grabbing their coats too along with several bags of Christmas lights.

The gnomes scrambled up eaves and trees to help string the lights and soon the house was bright and merry and twinkling with small multi-colored lights. Every tree and bush and every window was ablaze with merriment. From the porch the butler Jarvis called, he held a tray of steaming hot chocolate.

"Come warms your souls too!" He said and Merry was living in a fantasy and never wanted to wake again.

Janna, the housekeeper was plump and cheerful and made the best cup of hot chocolate Merry had ever tasted in his life. A life that was so overflowing with happiness he wanted to cry.

She was inspecting the kitchen, much as Merry had. "My word you must have had a feast yesterday! Are you the fine cook Lady Frost?" She asked and Merry smiled.

"Not a Frost yet. But yes. Adam's mother and I cooked yesterday. Help yourself to the leftovers we made so much." Merry said bringing in his cup and going to set it in the dishwasher, Janna took it.

"It's my pleasure to do that for you Missus. You must show me your recipe for the

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yams. I tasted those and they were lovely! I think I'll turn those leftovers into pie." She said and Merry laughed.

"Adam will love you for that, he loves pie." Merry said hopping up on a stool and writing down his recipe for the yams.

"Lord Frost is notorious for his love of pie." Janna winked and they chatted happily as the men finished up decorating outside.



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The next four weeks were a blur of activity. Jarvis knew how to drive and drive well so Adam bought a car to have Jarvis chauffeur them around town and teach Adam how to drive again. Janna knew how to drive too, and Adam bought a second car, a larger mini-van for her to use for shopping and her own transport. Adam had dressmakers and tailors in and out of the house for measurements for their wedding clothes and fittings. Extra gnomes were hired to prepare the backyard for the ceremony. Ice goblins were making matching wedding bands and Fairy confectioners were making the cakes and pastries, Spring Elves were forcing flowers in greenhouses to grow to decorate the house and in-between all the preparations, Merry had Jarvis take him Christmas shopping. Going out alone for the first time since he'd called to Adam that night.

Adam was a nervous wreck letting Merry out of his sight, and Merry had to promise to carry his little mirror and use it to call Adam should trouble arise. "I'll be fine Adam, I'll call if I need you, and no spying on me in the bathroom mirror! I don't want you to see your Christmas Presents! Same goes for you Daddy!" Merry said and both men held up their hands.

"We promise, just go and come back before I go crazy." Adam said and Merry just smiled and kissed him.

"You're wonderful, I love you too!" Merry said grabbing his purse and coat and heading to town with Jarvis.

"Oh Jarvis, look at this! Daddy will love this chess set." Merry showed Jarvis and Jarvis

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nodded.

"Aye he will, he's the only man that can beat me. He's a natural at chess." Jarvis said agreeing that the set was beautiful. He knew he'd be playing with Uriel on it come Christmas Night.

Merry and Jarvis were loaded with bags as they hit the Mall with a purpose. Adam had the newest Xbox and games to go with it, a new leather jacket to replace his worn one, and some matching leather pants simply because Merry thought his future husband would look hot in tight leather pants.

Merry sent Jarvis to the car with the purchases so he could shop for Jarvis and Janna and he ran into Sharon again outside the massive Bed, Bath and Beyond super store.

"Merry! Where's your man?" Sharon asked and Merry grinned.

"I made him stay home so I could buy him presents." Merry said happily as he went into the superstore to get Janna and Jarvis things for their apartments downstairs.

"Where are you living now Merry and how come you're not in school?" Sharon asked as they walked.

"We have a lovely house over on Rainbow Avenue. The big blue stone house. As for school, I'm testing out early. Mr. Brook suggested it, what with me getting married and all, it's just easier right now." Merry said getting Janna a lovely new bedding set.

"Whoa, Rainbow Avenue? Posh a hell but I hear the whole damn street is haunted!" Sharon said and Merry chuckled.

"Not a bit haunted. I have quirky neighbors but I love them all." Merry said getting Jarvis toasty heated slippers and a glass whiskey decanter set. The old man had horrible joints in his toes and loved to be warm with a little nip and tuck before bed.

"Is Adam nice? He seems it." Sharon asked and Merry paused and smiled.

"He's perfect Sharon, I couldn't be happier. He's so sickeningly romantic and protective and all around probably pissing himself and pacing a hole in our living room floor because I'm out alone. Just this morning he woke me up with breakfast in bed and a bouquet of flowers for no reason at all other than he loved me. Isn't he sweet?" Merry said almost giggling and Sharon sighed.

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"Dreamy, sweet, rich, romantic and the hottest thing on two legs in town. You're so lucky Merry, I'm jealous, does he have a brother?" Sharon asked and Merry laughed.

"Twenty-six brothers and two sisters. No joke. His father had a lot of wives before Adam's mom. She's darling too. His whole family is great and my Dad is wonderful. I can see why my mother fell in love with him. Life is wonderful for me right now." Merry said heading to check out before Jarvis returned.

"I'll say! Damn Merry, I'm so happy for you, you deserve it after the shit you went through with the Walkers. They suspended Brad from School and I hear Mike got in a fist fight at work and they fired him. Be on the lookout, they are cranky as hell and blaming you for it." Sharon said and Merry sighed.

"I know, but I have Adam and Dad looking out for me, I have a wedding to get through and testing to complete and then I start college. I don't have time to worry about them anymore. I'm just going to be happy." Merry said running his credit card and grabbing his purchases just as Jarvis arrived.

"All ready Miss Merry?" Jarvis asked and Merry smiled.

"Yes. If I don't see you again before, Merry Christmas Sharon!" Merry said following Jarvis out of the store.

"Merry Christmas to you too Merry!" Sharon said and then sighed. "I wish I had your luck." Sharon said turning and running into a young man dressed as one of the Elves working the Santa display, his ears looked very real.

"Oh gosh, I'm so sorry Miss." He said offering her a hand up.

"Wow, nice make up job this year." Sharon said and the youth just grinned.

"You have no idea. Can I buy you a coffee for running you over?" He asked and Sharon smiled.

"Sure." She said and followed the 'elf' to the food court for coffee.



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The night before Christmas Eve, Anne absolutely refused to let Adam sleep in his own bed. "It's bad luck to see your bride the night before the wedding. You go sleep in a guest room!" Anne said and Adam grumbled.

"I have none left Mom! You brought the whole damn extended family!" Adam said and Merry giggled from the couch, sandwiched between Adam's brothers.

"Sleep with your father, I'll sleep with Merry. I'll make sure you're a good boy." Anne said effectively ending the argument.

Adam sighed, swore and trudged off to bed grumbling. "It's pretty damn obvious I've already slept with her mom! For crying out loud." Adam said as he stomped up the stairs.

"More than he knows yet too." Merry said softly and Anne raised an eyebrow.

"Oh do tell pet." Anne said and Merry shook his head.

"Not yet, it's a surprise for everyone on Christmas." Merry said and Anne held her suspicions and her tongue.

The wedding was spectacular. Merry was dressed in a pure white gown with gold and silver snowflakes embroidered into the fabric. Her hair was long and loose and a crown of white poinsettias dusted in gold and silver glitter crowned her head. She carried Red poinsettias as Uriel, all tears, walked his son-daughter up the aisle to meet Adam, dressed in a matching tunic in the same motif. Kris Kringle officiated the ceremony.

"To all those we love and cherish present, We gather here together to make official the joining of two hearts and two souls in marriage. Let us all in the future look upon these two as one. Adam and Merry Frost. They will exchange rings to symbolize their union of souls and may we all wish them great and profound joy with each other." Kris said and everyone cheered and sang as Adam and Merry exchanged rings.

Elven ceremonies were simple and to the point and it was just an excuse to throw a massive party with enough sweets to send world diabetics into blissful comas. Adam curled Merry's toes with the kiss he gave him after they exchanged rings and then the feasting and dancing began in earnest.

It was midnight before they managed to escape the party in the backyard and disappear into their bedroom. "My wife at last." Adam purred as he helped Merry out of his intricate gown.

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"My husband." Merry replied letting Adam carry him to bed. Where they loved and slept peacefully as Husband and Wife/Husband officially.



Christmas morning was a blur of happy gift giving with just the immediate family taking up the living room around the tree. Most of the presents were all unwrapped and Merry saved a very special gift for last.

Adam opened it, it was a little blue stick with the word "Yes" on it. "What's this love?" Adam asked and Merry grinned.

"It's an answer to a question I asked." Merry said and Adam cocked his eyebrow.

"What question is that?" He asked and Merry smiled brightly.

"I asked it if I was going to have a baby." Merry said and Adam's face froze in shock and then a drunken gleam filled his eyes.

"Adam, what does it say?" Anne asked bouncing on her chair.

"Yes." Adam said, dropping the stick with a whoop of joy and grabbing Merry to pull him into his lap. "YES! Oh Merry really?" Adam asked and Merry nodded.

"Yes really, I just bought the test on the off chance, I didn't expect it to come out positive. I took it last week and I wanted to make sure before I told you so I went to Sally next door, she is a doctor and I had her check. She confirmed it. I'm about three weeks along, just a blip on the radar really. We're going to have a summer baby." Merry said and Adam was sobbing with joy. Anne was crying, Jack was all smiles and Uriel looked stunned.

"A grandpa! I'm only five hundred!" Uriel said and Anne laughed.

"I'm only eighteen! I didn't think Adam would knock me up right away either! I never even had a cycle." Merry laughed and Adam looked far too smug.

"Fertile Frosts strike again." Jack chuckled.

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"The baby is due in August, right before college starts. Thankfully I'm taking learn at home courses on the internet. I don't want to leave my baby now. Thank goodness for computers." Merry said and Adam was still crying.

"Oh Merry, that's the best gift you could have given me Sprite. I want a girl, all ribbons and bows and looking like her mother." Adam said with a chuckle and Merry grinned. "Or a boy all full of dirt and mud pies." Merry said and Anne grinned.

"Or one that really takes after mother and you'll get muddy bows and frills writing their name in the snow with pee." Anne added and Adam smiled.

"That too!" He cheered and everyone laughed happily, It was the best Christmas ever, and it would only be better next year with a new baby to spoil.



August came and with it Adam's wish. They had a girl, all white and perfect, a new little winter elf born in the dead of a summer heat wave. They named her Sarah Noel, after Merry's mother and she was beautiful. Adam was crowing all up and down main street handing out cigars to total strangers and laughing as he hit the toy store for a new teddy bear for his new little girl. Merry was sleeping at home, Sally had come over to help deliver the baby and Anne was baby sitting her new granddaughter as Adam went out to gloat and celebrate and buy his daughter her very first birthday present.

"Hey Adam!" Sharon called and when Adam turned he stopped up short, her ears were elven and a young elf beside her was smiling.

"Well, well, well. What have we here?" Adam asked and Sharon grinned.

"I just got married." Sharon said showing off her wedding ring and her husband.

"I see that. That's not all you got." Adam winked and Sharon laughed.

"Nope, I got an Autumn Elf who told me all about you! Ha! I should have known! How is Merry? I haven't seen him or her in ages." Sharon asked and Adam beamed.

"At home sleeping. She just spent the last twelve hours in labor. We just had a little

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girl." Adam said proudly and then expounding on his daughter's unparalleled beauty.

"Oh! How wonderful! No wonder Merry was hiding. Most people don't know he's a she and a he." Sharon said and Adam nodded.

"And she was uncomfortable in the heat. Sarah was a big baby and Merry was having terrible hot flashes these past two months, she's been living at home and having me keep it frosty." Adam said before inviting them both over to meet the baby later.

It had been the best year of his life. A new bride a new baby and a new life on Rainbow Avenue. Adam Frost couldn't have been happier as he waltzed home, teddy bear under his arm.

He first checked on Merry who was still sleeping and then on his Mother who was holding a sleeping baby in her lap in the rocker downstairs.

She handed her to Adam and he sat down to rock his daughter and tell her a story about her mother and how much her parent's already loved her.

Yes, life was peaceful and joyful and this was Christmas in summer all over again for Adam. He had everything he could have wished for.

Later as Merry sat feeding their daughter and leaning on Adam as they watched their daughter nurse he sighed. "Oh Adam, I never thought I could be this happy. Thank you for her, for loving me and giving us such joy. I love you." Merry said and Adam leaned over and kissed his wife.

"As I love you both. Thank you for giving me her Merry. She's perfect, you're perfect. I'm so very lucky." Adam replied and Merry smiled.

"We both are Adam, we both are." Merry said as he settled back against Adam with his daughter in his arms. This was what life was all about, unconditional love and happiness.

It was it's own magic and number 7769 Rainbow Avenue was overflowing with it.

END