

“Home for the Holidays”

November and December are entirely too stressful as clients rush to get year-end projects completed before the new fiscal year begins. So here I sit on Solstice Eve putting together the index of drawings. The last sheet I need to complete and plot out so I can send it to the printers.

The joke around the office is that during the last two months of every year, the whole office only works half days. But as wry as that joke is, it's all too painfully true. I've been putting in at least a 12-hour day during the week since Halloween, and another twelve hours over the weekend. Even today, though the management gives us a half-day for the holiday, I'm still pushing ten hours.

“There, that's got it.” I mutter to myself in the empty office. “Prrrint!”

Standing up, I stretch the stiff muscles of my sleek, slender body. Running my claws over the shirt that covers my short, dark brown fur I sigh, “Ahh. That feels sooo good.” On the way to the plotter I step into the kitchen and warm up my coffee in an effort to stave off the exhaustion that's been threatening to overtake me these last three weeks. By the time I reach the print room, the last sheet is waiting for me to whisk it away and put it in its place on top of the set.

I put my mug down on the flat file and begin to roll up the set of 114 drawings, the culmination of 10 weeks worth of stress and struggles. I feel a slight pang of remorse for the poor souls at the print shop. They will have to stay late to print up 12 sets of these drawings and get them in the overnight UPS package so they'll be on the contractor's doorstep day after Winter's Solstice.

For my efforts, on the other hand, I get to look forward to a week off. The office always shuts down the week between Yuletide and New Years. It gives the boss a chance to take his kids down to Disney. For the rest of us it's the chance to unwind from the last sixty days of hell.

With the roll of drawings secure I gather my things together to leave. It's dark and the weather has been bitterly cold. A brisk wind is blowing across a cloudy sky and I think I remember the weatherman predicting snow for Yule this year. A brisk walk out to the truck for the ride to the printers then the usual fight through traffic to go home.

Traffic was heavy with last minute shoppers and the ride home took longer than normal. But my excitement was building and I barely noticed or cared about the day before Solstice traffic. When I finally arrived home, I was greeted at the door with a hug and a kiss from my mate; a lithe and luxurious female river otter. Unlike some, I was glad to continue the practice of mating within my own

species. Her chestnut brown fur shone in the twinkling lights of the Yuletide tree in the corner.

She escorted me over to my just re-warmed dinner and a glass of wine. For one of us, this will be their last normal meal for the next seven days, and we each savor it as we savor the suspense of the evening's special gift. You see, every year something special happens at Yule: something truly magical that begs you to believe in Santa Claws even at our age. It is because of this gift that we each make doubly sure we have vacation time between the holidays. We never know who will get which part of the gift, but to completely enjoy our parts, we each need to be there for the other.

My mate and I have had no pups yet. It's just the two of us as it's been for the last few years we've been mated. We're both professionals who live mainly for our jobs and children just haven't found a place in the equation yet. Not that we haven't tried mind you.

We never do much shopping for the holidays. We just pick up a couple things for each other and leave the rest of the Yuletide gifts to Santa. This year, I thank my lucky stars that I didn't have to touch a department store or mall. All the gifts I got my mate were bought on-line, over the Internet. Pups and kittens, that is the way to shop.

So after we exchanged our gifts we sat and watched some Solstice specials and finished off the bottle of zinfandel before we sauntered off to bed. The bed was all prepared. A queen sized vinyl bed cover to protect the mattress and a pair of fold up bed rails to prevent either one of us from falling out in the middle of the night. A menagerie of plush animals is always in abundance on our bed. Yawning, we each undress and pull on our pajamas. Switching off the light we crawl into bed and pull the quilt up to ward off the cold. I hold my teddy bear close and she snuggles her unicorn as we kiss and wish each other a good night.

Like a pair of cubs before Yule, we both know what to expect, and neither one of us find sleep to be easy to attain. But eventually the wine and the hour catch up with us and we enter the fantasy world of dreams.

"Wake up honey." a gentle voice murred, gently rocking me back and forth. I shivered. Something was cold, clammy. I bolted upright in bed and was overwhelmed with a feeling of sheer exuberance.

"It's Solstice!!" I cried out in a small voice.

"Yes it's Solstice." My mate conceded, "But not for you my little otter. Not until we get you cleaned up and into some proper clothes."

I looked up at her and pouted. She wagged a clawed, webbed finger at me and let out a little laugh, "Now let's not start out the week like that. Remember, 'You better not pout. You better not cry.'" She sang, adding, "He can still come back y'know."

Nothing can change a child's demeanor like the fear of Santa Claws on Yuletide morning. I held my paws out to her and she picked me up and carried me out of the room, past the mirror on her dressing table.

It was my turn again this year. That makes two years in a row. Looking in the mirror I could see that I was about two feet tall and looked to be around 3 cycles old. My fur was a light brown as were my bright, youthful eyes. My furry body was naked from the waist down and I was obviously not potty trained by the look of the bed sheets. Must have wriggled out of my pajama bottoms during the early morning hours.

She carried me into our spare room. Her parents sank a ton of money into this room at the beginning of my mate's first pregnancy. It was all decked out with light oak stained baby furniture. There was a dresser/wardrobe/changing table, a full crib, a toy box and a matching rocking chair, the whole ensemble big enough to see the new bundle of joy through toddler-hood. The walls were decorated in soft pastel colors and themed in a Classic Pooh motif, perfect for a little he-otter, or a little she-otter.

But due to complications late in the pregnancy, the child had died in the womb. We didn't have the courage to try again that whole next year, and the room and all it's marvelous contents remained locked behind closed doors. With it our hopes for what would have been our first son. Our next Solstice changed all that when she awoke to find me, changed into a one-year-old baby otter pup, lying beside her on a soaked mattress.

My lovely mate laid me carefully on the changing table and removed the wet and oversized t-shirt I was swimming in. She strapped me down at the waist and stepped into the adjoining master bathroom to run some bath water. The sound of running water had an automatic affect on me and a stream of urine flowed uncontrollably from my penis.

When she came back in I was giggling and kicking my little webbed paws while lying in my newly created little pool. She rolled her eyes and said laughing, "You little creep! You know it's been over a year since I've done this and you're just taking advantage of me." She walked over and tickled my tummy and we both burst out in giggles.

"No ticklies!" I laughed, rolling and squirming and trying to push her hands away.

“Well let’s get you down and cleaned up.” She said as she pulled the Velcro strap apart and lifted me down from the table, “I’ve got it nice and bubbly for you.” We walked into the bathroom hand in hand and at the tub she bent down to lift me up and into the water. But I had already pulled myself up and slid deftly into the bath with hardly a splash.

It was a little cool but not too bad. When I broke the surface I sat up. The bubbles were almost as high as my head. I grabbed a handful and spread it on my chin and over my whiskers. I turned to my mate and squeaked, “Wook! I’s Santa Cwaws!”



“That you are my little otter.” She agreed and immediately began to wash me down with a washcloth and Johnson & Johnson’s Baby Wash. I endured it all while playing with the bubbles until she had me stand up to clean my bottom, tail and legs. The water was just becoming uncomfortably cool when she helped me out of the tub. She held the towel around me so it looked like I was standing in a terry cloth tube.

“Shake off!” She said and I obediently twisted my body back and forth, throwing the water out of my fur.

“Done?” My mate asked.

I looked up and nodded and she proceeded to finish drying me off.

“Mamma, I wanna open my presents.” I lamented as the towel shook my head. One of the endearing things she loved about her role was being called ‘Mamma’ or ‘Mommy.’ The concept of mate was as foreign to my brain right now as calculus was. It was only natural to call her that.

“But you’re not ready to open presents yet.” She cooed in response as she finished the last bit of drying. She took up the washcloth and the towel and opened the drain to let the dirty water out. “C’mon little monster lets get your mess cleaned up and then get you diapered and dressed. How’s that sound?”

“Yay!” I shouted with elation as I ran back into the nursery my tail wagging out behind me.

She walked up and wiped the changing pad down with the washcloth then dried it with the towel. “Up you go.” She said while lifting me up and sat me back down again on my bottom with a playful, “Boom.” I laughed as she laid me back onto my back and re-secured the strap.

From the cabinet below she produced a tube of zinc oxide ointment, a bottle of baby lotion and a bottle of baby powder. Bending back down she pulled out a Pampers Size 6 diaper, opened it up and laid it across my pee-pee, absorbent size down. She turned and opened the attached wardrobe and pulled out a frilly, mint green dress with matching panties and white stockings.

She held them up for me to see and asked as seriously as she could, “How ‘bout this for my little she-otter?”

My response was exactly what she was fishing for. “NOOO!” I screamed, “No dwesses!” Even though my mind regresses, I still retain the memories of some of the more ‘memorable’ events each week holds. I don’t think I’ll ever forget the entire day last year when she thought it would be nice to have a little daughter to take care of.

My mate laughed all the way back to the wardrobe. I had put her in that exact outfit three years ago when it had been her turn. She loved that outfit. “No, no dresses for you my little pup.” She confirmed then under her breath muttered with a motherly smile, “Least not today.” She replaced the dress and instead took out a green flannel footed sleeper with a fire truck appliqué on the left breast. This, she knew, was my favorite and we had one specially made a few sizes larger in the event I got bigger.

“Yes Mamma!” I cried out happily, “I wove my fire twuck sweeper.” I grabbed one of the footed legs and snuggled it to my face, “Mmmmm.”

“Okay you rascal let’s get that diaper on and you in your sleeper” She said. Picking up the tube of ointment she squeezed a little onto her fingers and then lifted my legs back and over my head. Her hand met my bottom with a slight ‘smack’ then proceeded to rub the cream across my bum in gentle, circular motions. She let my legs down and finished up by rubbing the remainder across my scrotum and finally along the shaft of my penis.

Next came the sweet scented lotion. It came out of the bottle with a wet farting sound, which made me giggle. My legs went up again and with another gentle love tap, Mamma made small circles across my butt with the smooth baby lotion. Legs back down; she made sure she moisturized my mid-section, but left my penis and ball sack un-anointed. You see we found out last year that my pee-pee was sensitive to the lotion when mixed with the rash cream. Of all things, I'm glad she remembered this, as I don't care to experience that burning sensation again.

Finally she laid the diaper out flat and sprinkled baby powder over the absorbent panel. "Ready." She said and I nodded. She lifted my hips up by my back paws and slid the diaper deftly under my bum and around my tail. She guided my stubby little legs back down and spread them a little before reaching down and pulling the front of the diaper up and between them, stopping just shy of my belly button. "One tape." She said as she secured the first tape into place. "Two tape." She said, as the second was secure.

"Ready for the snow?" She teased as she took the container of powder and began to sprinkle it down on my chest and legs from about two foot above the table. I laughed and kicked a little as the talc drifted down and formed a baby-scented cloud around my body. Mamma then rubbed it all in and across my body.

"Now that's what my baby boy's supposed to smell like." She cooed, "Now, let's roll you over and fix the tail tape and then get that sleeper on you."

The Velcro strap was released and I rolled over onto my tummy. My tail, free of the vinyl pad, began to wag and sway happily.

"Hold that tail still." She scolded, giving it a slight pull to reinforce her request. I stopped it's wagging just long enough for the third tape to adhere to the back taping panel. She gave the bottom of my diaper a light love tap, "Roll over carefully while I get your sleeper ready."

I complied while she unzipped the zipper from the neck to foot. She folded it open and began by sliding my back paw and leg into the un-zipped side. Then she rolled me onto my side and arranged the sleeper under me, so that when I rolled back, my other leg was right where it needed to be. That paw in she started the zipper up to my crotch then helped me to sit up. First one arm, then the other and with a few minor adjustments, 'Zzzzip' up came the zipper to finish packing the baby otter up. A small flannel tab was snapped into place to cover the zipper and that was that.

"Present's now?" I asked hopefully.

“Nope.” She said flatly, “It’s breakfast time for you and bathies time for me.”

“Awww.” I whined as I was lifted up and over to be set into the crib. She pulled the railing back up and locked it in place.

“You be good little otter. I’ll be right back.” She said as she flittered out of the nursery towards the bedroom. She came back a moment later with one of my Dalmatian plush dogs which she handed to me.

I threw it back at her with a sharp, “No!” I was becoming angry and very frustrated. I was hungry too, but that wasn’t registering. I wanted my presents and I didn’t want to wait. But Mamma just turned and walked out, this time on her way towards the kitchen, leaving the spotted dog to lie on the floor where I threw it.

She left me to stew while she prepared a bottle of milk for me. I looked angrily at the door. The Dalmatian was in plain view as well, lying on its side on the floor, smiling its never changing puppy smile with its tongue lolling out. The more I looked at it, the more I wanted it and the less I remembered what I was mad about in the first place.

When Mamma swept back into the nursery, she scooped up the plush dog in one hand and guided it into my awaiting paws. In her other was a ba-ba of cool milk, which she handed me. The nipple went to my mouth by instinct and I sat back contented, snuggling my plush and suckling my bottle. The shower began to run, and a little trickle ran down the front of my diaper. But I was too preoccupied to care.



My mate returned about a half hour later, cleaned and suitably dressed and I pulled myself up to the rail still clutching my Dalmatian to my chest, the empty bottle rolling around at my feet and a little sag in my diaper.

“Is my little otter ready to see if Santa came?” She asked me with excitement in her voice.

I shouted, “Oh yes Mamma! Yes!” My tail was wagging back and forth in a futile attempt to expend all the excitement and energy building up in my little, furry body.

“Well let’s get you down and we’ll see how good an otter you’ve been this year. Step back from the rail Hun.” She said gaily.

I moved back, steadying myself with my paw on the footboard. The rail came down and Mamma lifted me under my arms and down, until my hind-paws hit the floor. I scrambled out of her grasp and toddled through the door, turned left and ran directly into the family room.

The sight I saw there dwarfed my wildest dreams. Under our modestly decorated Solstice tree, where last night there were no presents, were dozens of brightly wrapped boxes of all shapes and sizes. But the thing that first caught my eye was a beautiful oak rocking horse. It sat out in front of the tree with a bright red bow tied around the neck and through the long flowing mane of white yarn. Long strands of white yarn made up the tail and the whole thing was stained perfectly to match the furniture in the nursery. I leapt up on it and leaned back and forth in pure joy at my very own rocking horse.

Mamma appeared in the doorway. She appeared to be stooped over.

“Lookie Mamma!” I shouted, “Lookie what Santa brought me!”

She smiled at me and as she cleared the couch she said, “Lookie what else Santa brought you.”

My ears and whiskers perked up as I looked at the object she had brought in which was hidden in the front room. At her feet was a candy apple red tricycle with black white-walled wheels, a black seat and black handle grips with those dangly little tassels hanging off them. On the handlebars was a bell and around them was another huge red bow and a tag, “To: My sweet children. From: Santa Claws.”

“Whoo hoo!” I cried out, stepping off the rocking horse and sprinting over to the tricycle.

“Happy Yuletide, my love.” She said softly, smiling a motherly smile as she ruffled my head-fur, “Happy Yule.” Then she looked aloft, said a silent prayer and mouthed a quiet, “Thank you.”

“Ring, ring! Ring, ring!”



The End.
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