

The beautifully decorated Christmas tree took up a large portion of the living room; its sprawling branches donned with shiny ornaments and bright lights beckoning onlookers to come closer. Underneath the tree were dozens of gaily wrapped gifts; including a toy rocking horse which was being ridden by a fair headed little boy held on the horse by muscular arms which belonged to a slightly balding man with laughing green eyes.

“What a wonderful Christmas!” Maddie cried in joy as she entered the room bearing cups of cocoa. She smiled as two pairs of identical green eyes turned her way. David picked up the bright eyed toddler and approached Maddie with sparkling eyes that put the lights on the Christmas tree to shame. “Merry Christmas Mommy!” David held out the boy to Maddie.

Maddie reached for the baby but all she found was air as the baby seemed to slip through her waiting arms. She cried out David’s name as she stood there with empty arms. “David! The baby!”

Maddie jolted awake with tears streaming down her cheeks and David’s name on her lips. She covered her face with her pillow as sobs shook her body. This wasn't the first time she had a dream of her lost son; they seemed to get more vivid and more heartbreaking each time she had one. Finally, her sobs subsided but the ache in her heart remained. She sat up in her lonely bed and decided to get an early start on her day. She never was able to fall back to sleep after one of those dreams. Maddie threw back the covers and headed for the shower.

She was beginning to hate going into the office. It was a week before Christmas and Maddie Hayes was dreading the day and all the festivities that led up to it. Everyone seemed to be full of joy and Christmas spirit. Agnes was still decorating the office and the employees were excitedly talking about their holiday plans and weeklong vacation. Even David seemed to be looking forward to Christmas. Maddie had little holiday spirit; she wished the holidays were over. This year she had little to celebrate; she had lost the two things in her life that she cared about: David Addison and their unborn child. She tried to cover her unhappiness by burying herself in work but it was no longer working. She couldn’t bear to work with a man who seemed to no longer have any interest in pursuing their relationship. The loss of the baby seemed to have driven David successfully away when her four and a

half months away and her marriage to another man couldn't. Maddie was left feeling alone and bereft; David seemed to have turned his back on her. She thought they may have found their way back to each other after spending the night in the elevator together but when David reverted back to the party boy Addison of old Maddie knew it had been a ruse. David no longer wanted any sort of relationship with her and she had to accept it. He even seemed to be done with their business partnership. Over the past few months David made sure they worked on separate cases; he usually went out in the field with Viola while she was delegated to desk duty and paperwork. David barely spoke to her; and when they did interact he was cold and unfeeling toward her. It made Maddie sad to think she had not only lost David as a lover but as her partner and best friend.

Maddie realized that she had to make some changes in her life after the New Year and one of them was leaving Blue Moon. Seeing David, being around him every day was not allowing her heart to heal. She needed to get away from him if there was any chance of a normal life for her. Perhaps someday she would meet someone else but having David in her life was preventing her from even looking. Maddie decided she would sell her half to David; he could pay her share out over time. He had Viola to work with and he could always hire an office manager to do the work she had done over the years. Maddie figured David would be happy and relieved with her decision. Maddie thought maybe she would go back to Chicago or maybe she would travel around the world. All she knew was that she had to get away from David Addison.

She pushed herself to dress and take a taxi to work; David had taken the car for God knew what mischief he had been up to and he no longer asked to pick her up in the morning when he had the car. It was like they were little more than strangers. The David Addison she knew had been taken over by a bitter, cynical man and she yearned to have the old David back. She knew that would never happen. Maddie believed he blamed her for everything that happened; even losing the baby. She also believed that David was relieved he didn't have to keep the promise to be there for her when the baby came. He had turned into David the party animal again. Maddie knew he wasn't going home every night alone. He was single he could do whatever he wanted. She just didn't understand how he could look passed her and not notice that she was dying inside a little bit more every day. Or maybe he did notice and just didn't give a damn. After all, he had turned away from her

when she needed him the most. The loss of their son could have brought them closer together but instead they grew further apart. Maddie walked out of the elevator and walked down the familiar hallway toward Blue Moon with a heavy heart and a lump in her throat. She stood outside the office door for a few moments. The office was full of hustle and bustle this time of year, getting cases wrapped up before the Christmas and New Year's break. The office was decorated festively for the holidays. Maddie could see her smiling employees milling about laughing and talking to each other. They were all full of Christmas spirit and holiday cheer; they were all looking forward to spending time with family and friends. Maddie was sad and alone and she had no desire to join in any of the holiday joy. Not when this would have been her son's first Christmas. Maddie wasn't even going home for Christmas like she had told everyone. Her parents had decided to go on a cruise and Maddie didn't want to go with them. She just wanted to be alone and sleep the day away. Maddie opened the office door and put on her usual fake smile.

David had spent the previous night in bed with yet another faceless woman in yet another attempt to chase away the ghost of silky blonde hair and soft blue eyes. And again he just felt dirty and sad. Driving to work that morning David made a decision. He was wasting his life trying to forget Maddie and it sure wasn't working. There wasn't enough tequila in the world to make him forget the feel of her in his arms; and boinking other women just made him ache for Maddie more. He knew he didn't want to have sex with just anyone anymore he had the real thing and he wanted it again. He wanted to make love to the woman he loved; and that woman was still Maddie Hayes. Why had he distanced himself from her after the loss of the baby? Part of it may have been learning the baby was actually his. Why had she been so damn adamant that it wasn't his? Did she *want* to drive him away? David had been hurt and angry and that coupled with the agony of losing the son he had realized he wanted so badly made him shy away from Maddie. He couldn't share his pain; he didn't want to see hers so he kept away. He knew he had been wrong and that she probably hated him so he distanced himself further until only a shell of their relationship, their friendship remained. They didn't even have any sort of working relationship anymore. David used to enjoy going out in the field and solving cases with Maddie but now it seemed she had no interest in working cases with him so he took Viola. Bert was a good detective but David didn't feel any excitement working with him. He missed Maddie. But now it was like they

were strangers when only a few short months ago it seemed they had a future ahead of them. A baby and a family with Maddie would have made David the happiest man alive but that was not to be. This would have been their son's first Christmas. David suddenly realized how Maddie must be feeling and he was filled with overwhelming guilt. He needed to be there for her. David knew that he had to be the one to fix their shattered relationship before it was too late to repair the mess they had made of their lives. David missed her terribly. It was up to him to bring the holiday spirit to both of them and start off the New Year the right way.

Maddie was sitting at her desk trying to figure out her next move for after the New Year. When should she tell David she was leaving? She thought she would wait until after the holidays. She knew she was doing the right thing for both of them. Maddie was trying to make herself feel better by imagining all the fun things she could do. She thought maybe she'd travel, maybe to Italy. Or Ireland; she always wanted to see the green of that country. Maybe go to Germany; or places she had never been before. She would start over; forget she ever knew and loved David Addison. She knew no matter what she tried to do to get him out of her mind and her heart she was never able to do that. But it would be easier to do across an ocean.

Maddie sat up when she heard a knock at her office door. Why did she always hope it was David? "Come in." She called out as she pushed papers around on her desk to look like she was busy working. Maddie was once again disappointed not to see David standing in her doorway.

Agnes came bouncing in her office with a big smile covering her face. She was dressed in a Christmas sweater decorated with jolly Santa and Christmas trees. Her Christmas earrings were bells that jingled when she walked or moved her head. Maddie could hear the Christmas music playing in the outer office and she suddenly felt tears behind her eyelids. She fought the urge to cry and welcomed Agnes into her office. Agnes placed a stack of envelopes on Maddie's desk with a grin. "Oh Miss Hayes look at all the Christmas cards!"

Maddie pretended to be happy about the Christmas cards that she couldn't care less about. She forced a smile to her face. "Oh nice!" She forced out of her dry throat.

Agnes nodded her earrings jingling. "So you must be excited to be going home to see your parents. How long will you be in Chicago?"

Maddie looked up at Agnes and smiled. "I'm not going home to Chicago for Christmas."

"You're not?"

Maddie shook her head. "My parents are going on a cruise with friends. They asked me to go but I said no."

"Oh. A cruise sounds like fun Miss Hayes. You should have gone."

"No I'm just staying put in LA Agnes no big deal. It's just another day really."

"*Another day?* Miss Hayes it's Christmas!" Agnes was stunned and upset that Maddie said Christmas was just another day. "Oh I wish Bert and I were going to be here for the holidays Miss Hayes you could have come to our place for Christmas dinner." Agnes was worried about Maddie. "Well, at least we will all be together for our holiday office party. The whole office can't wait for it!"

"You know Agnes I think I'm going to sit that out too. I'm sure everyone will have a great time."

"Oh no Miss Hayes you have to go! How could you not go to the office Christmas party? You're the boss. Does Mr. Addison know? "

"No Mr. Addison doesn't know and I'm sure he wouldn't care anyway. As you may have noticed Mr. Addison seems to be doing his best to keep away from me." Maddie sad sadly. She saw the look in Agnes eyes. "Agnes I'm just not in the festive kind of mood this year. Please don't make a big deal over it, it's just better that I stay away. Please promise me you won't tell anyone. Everyone will still have a great time even if I'm not there. Probably a better time." Maddie forced a laugh.

"But Miss Hayes I know Mr. Addison wants you to come to the party...."

"Agnes I really have a lot of work to finish up."

Agnes knew it was Maddie's nice way of saying please leave now and mind your business. "Yes Miss Hayes" Agnes walked out of Maddie's office and practically ran over to David's office. She didn't even knock.

David was at his desk making some calls to the catering hall making sure things were set for the office Christmas party which was a few days away. He was set to leave the day after the party for Philly. He hadn't been home in years and his father was a bit shocked that David said he was coming home for Christmas. David knew Maddie was going home to Chicago for the holidays and he didn't want to be in LA without her; it reminded him too much of another time. David looked up when his office door burst open.

"Oh Mr. Addison you have to do something and fast. I'm very worried about Miss Hayes."

David marched down the hall rapped on Maddie's office door and pushed the door open with a bang. He strode over to her desk perching on the corner and staring at her with green lasers. David realized he hadn't sat on her desk like this in a long time; something he had once done every day. He shook that thought out of his head. "Hey Blondie Blonde."

Maddie's head shot up from the work on her desk when she heard her door bang open. *David*. She watched as he blew in her office like a tornado something he used to do at least once a day. Maddie couldn't remember the last time David had been in her office. She also couldn't remember the last time they were alone. She looked at him warily as he perched on the corner of her desk using the nickname for her she hadn't heard in ages. "David is something wrong?" Why else would he be here?

David stared into her clear blue eyes which couldn't mask the sadness in their depth. "I'd say something is wrong! Our fearless leader not coming to the annual Christmas party?"

Agnes! Maddie fumed. She felt a sharp pang over her body; David's eyes, his closeness; the smell that was pure David was making her senses reel. "David really. I'm sure the party will be fun without me. Probably more fun." She shook her head. "I'm not in the mood for celebrating."

David saw the slump of her shoulders and the misery on her face she was trying to conceal. He felt guilt overwhelm him. He vowed he would put a smile on her face again if it was the last thing he did. "Maddie. Maddie. Maddie." David gave her his crooked half smile that still made the butterflies appear in her belly. "Come on.

We'll have fun! Eat too much drink too much maybe dance a little." He raised an eyebrow.

Maddie shook her head. She couldn't bear the thought that David might bring a date. "I don't think so." The idea of him with another woman hurt her deeply; actually seeing him with someone else would kill her.

David smiled into her eyes. "Well I do. Go get yourself a new dress and I'll pick you up at 7."

"Why would we go together? Why, when you've barely spoken to me in weeks?"

David knew she was right. He didn't know what to say to her; her sad blue eyes bore into him making him feel like writhing in shame. David knew he had avoided her like the plague; and when they did interact he knew he hadn't treated her very nicely; he admitted to himself ruefully that he had been very cold and bitter toward her. He had felt so angry and so hurt he had to take it out on somebody and Maddie was the closest one to him. He knew deep in his heart that what he had done; how he had turned his back on her after the loss of the baby was cruel and mean and he only hoped she would allow him to make it up to her for the rest of their lives. He looked at her and stammered over his words. "Well ummm I've been kinda busy ya know with The Enselmo case. Me and Bert have been spending most of our time trying to break this damn case." David shook his head. "Sorry, I missed you." He smiled at her.

Maddie felt a little thrill when David said he missed her but that didn't erase all the hurt he had inflicted over the past weeks. "You missed me?" Maddie asked unbelievably. "Is that why you did your best never to be in the same room with me; and when we were you looked right through me?" Maddie snorted. "What is it you want from me David?"

David took her hand he was happy she didn't pull away; he laced his fingers through hers and looked at her seriously. "I want to go to the party with you. I want to enjoy your company." He winked. "Come on Blondie? Whadda you say?"

Maddie was confused. She would love to spend the evening with David enjoying each other's company but she also knew she needed to separate herself from the green eyed devil who was no longer hers; that is if he ever was. She looked at him and knew he wasn't telling the whole truth. What was he hiding?

David continued on when she didn't speak. "Listen Maddie everyone in the office is really looking forward to this party. And really how would it look if the owner of this company; if their esteemed leader didn't make an appearance? That would be like a smack in their faces. They care about you Maddie. You see how hard they have been working for you, for us, for Blue Moon this past year! The least you can do is show up and smile and eat and maybe limbo to show your appreciation!" David nodded. "It's the right thing to do." He raised an eyebrow. "Come on! You. Me. Party?"

Maddie knew David was right. The employees really had changed over the years. "Ok. But *no* limbo." She joked although her heart wasn't really in it. She sat back in her chair staring up at him. For a moment she felt like crying but she wouldn't cry in front of him. He didn't care about her tears. "Fine. I'll go with you to the party."

David smiled at her. He had been very worried that he wouldn't be able to convince her to go to the party. "Great! Thank you. The employees will be very happy to have you there." And so will I he thought.

Maddie loved to see him smile. She hadn't seen him smile like that at her in a long time. But her heart shriveled when he said the employees would be happy and not that he would be happy. "Yes of course the employees will be happy. That's important."

"Well then." David stood up. "I guess I'll leave you to your work."

Maddie looked down at the mess of papers on her desk. She wished he'd stay and chat with her more; maybe about a case they were working on together like they used to but there were no cases they were working on together. "Yes I'm very busy. I want to get these papers signed off before the holiday break."

David wished she would have asked him to stay and chat about some case they were working on together or help her clear up the work on her desk but she seemed eager for him to leave. He nodded his head and turned and walked out of her office slowly hoping she would call him back. She didn't. He closed the door softly behind him.

Maddie sat at her desk looking at the closed door. Well there was no turning back now. This may be her last time to spend with David. She decided she would go all out and buy a special holiday dress to wear to the party. Something extra special

and memorable. Deep down she knew that she wanted to hold David in her arms; have him in her bed one last time before she left him for good. Subconsciously, she was also hoping maybe she would have a Christmas present from God; David's baby. But on the surface of her mind she hid those thoughts from her consciousness.

David walked into his office; sat down and picked up the phone. He was tying up loose ends and making sure this was the best Christmas party Blue Moon ever had. He wanted to see Maddie smile.

Maddie was trying to finish up her last bit of paperwork before the office closed for the holiday break. All the employees had been happily talking about their plans for their holiday. Maddie tried not to listen to the happy chatter of her employees; she was happy that everyone was looking forward to a Merry Christmas but this year she couldn't get into the spirit. She was even dreading going to the office Christmas party. How had she allowed David to persuade her to let him take her to the party? Maddie thought he was only being nice to her; trying to be a friend and that hurt her more than his cold silence. Despite her *'pals'* speech she could never just be David Addison's friend. She sighed deeply as she closed the file she was working on. She lay on head back on her chair and tried to stir up some excitement for the party. She thought of the dress she had bought and despite her misgivings she felt a smile come to her lips. When David saw that dress she knew friendship would be the furthest thing from his mind. Maddie shook her head; she had things to do to get ready for the party that night. She was going to get her hair done and was treating herself to a Mani/Pedi. Maddie was about to stand up when she heard a knock at her door. "Come in." Maddie thought everyone had already left for the day. She was pleasantly surprised to see David leaning against the door jamb with a secret smile on his face.

"Hey Blondie you still here? Everyone has already left for the day."

"Actually, I was just leaving." Maddie packed her briefcase and stood up. She rested her hip against her desk.

"You do remember I'm picking you up at 7:00pm?"

"Yes of course I remember. You kept reminding me all week." Maddie laughed. "You sure it won't be a problem?"

“Picking up my partner is no problem. Just be a good girl and Ole Dave will take charge. I promise I’ll take good care of you.” David told her with a wicked look in his eyes that made Maddie shiver with excitement.

“A promise huh? Taking care of me is hard work.” Maddie threw at him stunning both of them with her boldness.

David felt hot under the collar as a smirk covered his face and his eyes turned dark with desire. “As you know hard is never a problem with me.”

Maddie was glad she was leaning against her desk because her legs suddenly turned to rubber. She shivered with excitement. “Ah yes I do remember.” The words rolled off her tongue slowly. The light hearted flirting was easing the hurt in her heart and giving her some hope that maybe there was still a spark that could be ignited from the embers of their relationship.

David just stared at her until his intensity made her uncomfortable. “Well then I guess I’ll see you later.” Maddie told him looking away.

“Yep. Looking forward to it.”

“Yes I am really looking forward to it too.” All of a sudden, Maddie was looking forward to the night.

David blew her a kiss as he left her office. Tonight should be interesting he thought.

Maddie stood in her office for a few minutes. She could feel the butterflies in her stomach. Tonight should be interesting she thought.

David pulled up in front of Maddie’s house in the limo he had hired for the night; he was going to try his best to show Maddie he still cared about her; that he still wanted her, that he loved her. David was a bit nervous as he opened the car door and began to trek to her front door; maybe she didn’t want him back was a real possibility. He knew he had been less than a stellar lover or even friend in the past months but he wanted to make it up to her if she’d let him. With a careful brushing back of his neatly combed hair David rang the bell of the door he had entered so many times in the last six years.

Maddie looked at her reflection in the mirror and was wondering if the dress was too much for an office Christmas party. The dress was deep red silk with a strapless bustier bodice; open back and a tiered skirt that ended a few inches above her knees showcasing her long sexy legs. Maddie twirled around in front of the mirror with a smile on her face. No, the dress was just right for the plan she had in mind of knocking David Addison off his feet. Even though Maddie thought their relationship was over making David admire and want her was still very important to her; and if there was any chance to get him back she knew she would jump at the opportunity. Maddie heard the doorbell ring and her stomach was suddenly filled with butterflies. She gave herself one final look in the mirror and raced down the steps to answer the door.

David's jaw dropped to the floor when Maddie opened the door and he saw what she was wearing. His eyes flew over the tight red dress that revealed the sexy woman behind Maddie's icy persona. His eyes were drawn to her shapely legs peeking out of the bottom of the dress. David had a sudden urge to run his hands over her legs but he restrained himself; instead he threw her his trademark half smile. "Wow you look amazing!" He told her kissing her cheek. He thought he noticed a slight blush come to Maddie's face and that for some reason made him feel funny in his stomach. A good funny. He watched as Maddie threw a bright red wrap casually over her shoulders unfortunately covering her creamy arms and voluptuous cleavage.

"Thank you David. You clean up nice yourself fella." She teased with a wink. And David did look heart stopping with his light gray suit, light green shirt and Christmas tie. Maddie reached out to touch his green tie which was covered with bright red Santas. She looked up at him with a sultry smile as she fixed his tie and patted down his lapels. That intimate gesture and the way she was smiling at him with an invitation in her eyes nearly buckled David's knees. Both were looking forward to the promising night ahead as David led Maddie out her door.

Maddie stopped short and glanced at David. "A limo?"

David smiled his green eyes sparkling with joy and mischief. "Only the best for my partner, partner." He opened the door for Maddie. She threw him a wicked grin as she sidled into the luxurious limo. Unexpectedly, Maddie remembered another

time David had rented a limo to take her out and her stomach clenched with the memory. Why had she immediately blamed David and left him standing on the curb just because the night hadn't met her expectations? He had tried and he didn't mean for her to be embarrassed; but yet she ruined the date and the night with her petty behavior. Maddie realized how much she had changed in the last few years; and so had David but she wasn't enjoying the change from happy go lucky charmer to cynical, sometimes bitter man. Her thoughts were suspended as she heard David ask if she would like some champagne. She nodded and took the glass he held out to her.

"I think you are going to like what I planned for the party." David told her sipping his champagne. Maddie was concentrating on how close his thigh was to hers; how he licked his lips after taking a sip of his drink, how his long fingers gently held on to the goblet. She barely heard the question he just asked her; *the party?* Oh yes the Christmas party he planned; where they were heading now. "Oh I am sure I will be delighted." She told him staring at his lips.

David couldn't help notice her perusal of him and it gave him courage; made him bolder, "Oh and you know how I love it when you're delighted." He purred in that voice almost causing Maddie to choke on the sip of champagne she had just taken. A fire began to rage in her body and suddenly the limo felt much to warm. She gulped down the fizzy liquid in her glass hoping the alcohol would steady her nerves.

David held out the bottle. "More?" David poured more champagne into her glass and moved a little closer to her. His eyes traveled over the dress then met her gaze. He winked at her and leaned back in his seat. Maddie, in turn, moved closer to David until they were almost in each other's laps. They rode the rest of the way in silence but happy to be close to the one person who rattled their senses and caused their heart to beat with love and desire. They both hoped the night would be a Christmas miracle.

When David and Maddie arrived at the hall the party was in full swing. Maddie stopped short when she walked into the room. She couldn't believe her eyes. The hall looked like a winter wonderland. The room was decorated with bright colors of red, green, white, silver and gold; all the colors of the Christmas season. Huge

ornamental wreaths, twinkling lights and sparkling garland were hung all over the room. A 9 foot Christmas tree decorated in glittering ornaments and blinking lights stood in the corner of the room. A DJ was set up in the front of the room and was playing Christmas music while all the employees mingled and laughed. Everyone was having a wonderful time. A big smile came over Maddie's face.

David was thrilled when he saw a huge smile appear on Maddie's face when she took in the tasteful decorations and the Christmas atmosphere "Hey Blondie umm everything ok? Ready to go in and have some fun?"

Maddie turned at the sound of David voice. "Oh everything is fine David. Yes let's go have some fun."

Everyone rushed over to greet their bosses; they were all secretly thrilled to see that Maddie and David had arrived together; hope rang eternal in their hearts that their two stubborn bosses would find their way back to each other. Agnes was the happiest of all to see David leading Maddie into the party with his hand on the small of her back. He threw Agnes a secret wink as he greeted the other employees with his trademark lopsided grin.

Agnes ran over to Maddie and hugged her tightly. "Miss Hayes! You look terrific!" Agnes took in the sexy red dress and felt hopeful. Why would she wear that if not to get Mr. Addison back? She grinned at her lovely boss. "Better than terrific! Great great great!" Agnes was dressed in a bright red shirt and a Christmas vest adorned with Christmas trees, reindeer and of course Santa Clause. A jaunty Santa hat rested crookedly on her head.

Maddie smiled at her quirky friend. "Thank you Agnes." She shook her head and nodded toward David who was as usual in the center of the crowd laughing and smiling. "Thank Mr. Addison for getting me here. Seems he still can persuade me to do whatever he wants me to do." When Maddie realized the implications of what she said a blush appeared over her neck and on her cheeks. Agnes just laughed and hugged her again. She pulled away and looked at Maddie who was still a bright shade of red.

"Oh, I'm sure you made him very happy by saying yes to be his date at the Christmas party tonight."

Maddie was flustered. "Well I'm not his really his date Agnes; we're just two bosses who arrived together."

Agnes giggled. "Oh I think it's a date for Mr. Addison."

Maddie felt warmth spread over her body as she watched David approaching. Was this really a date?

David was happy to see Maddie was happy. He walked right over to Maddie's side and laced his fingers through her causing an electric shock to reverberate over her body. She in turn squeezed his hand and smiled into his eyes causing his heart to flip with hope and desire. "What would you like to drink partner?" David's voice was liquid gold.

For a second Maddie couldn't understand the words that had come out of the sexy lips and eyes were drawn to. "Oh well..."

David grinned. "Drink? Wine? Champagne? Boilermaker?" His eyes twinkled with mischief and happiness taking Maddie's breath away.

"White wine would be nice." Maddie's blue eyes bored into his green ones seeming to devour him with their intensity and causing David's heart to hammer.

"Sure be back in a snap." He told her reluctant to let go of her warm hand that was linked with his. David rushed to get the drinks and was back at Maddie's side almost immediately. David held up his glass to Maddie; she held up hers to him. David smiled into her eyes flashing her green magic. "To a great partner."

Maddie smiled back at him. "Partner huh?" She asked teasingly. David's smile broadened and he winked. Maddie felt her legs shake at that look in his eyes. She quickly took a sip of wine to calm her nerves; it felt warm sliding down her throat. The wine along with the champagne she had drunk in the limo was making her feel bold and being next to David was making her aroused. She gave him a sultry look as they stood close together sipping their drinks. David pierced her with an intense look of green heat as he took her hand and led her through the crowd.

They made their way through the hall stopping to chat with their guests; sipping their drinks and just enjoying being together. They walked so close to each other that their hips brushed with each step. David put his hand on Maddie's back and

the intense heat that she felt on her naked skin rocked her to the core. She wanted him and from the way he was leaning his body into hers she knew he wanted her too.

The party was going well. Everyone was eating from the vast amount of food offered at the buffet table; drinking from the open bar and dancing to the songs played by the hip DJ. But David didn't give her flying fig about food or drinks, he had only one thing on his mind and that was a sultry blonde. David couldn't take his eyes off of Maddie. Even when she left his side to socialize with the other guests his eyes were pinned on her. He hoped she wore that dress to knock him dead because the way the dress hugged her curves and all the rest of the magnificent body it revealed made him weak in the legs and hard in another intimate place. His hands itched to touch her warm skin and make her look at him in that way she looked when she was aroused. He missed that look; the way her blue eyes seemed to darken with her want; the slight blush that covered her cheeks; the intimate smile on her lips. David nearly groaned as he imagined Maddie in the throes of passion. The passionate way she moaned and cried out his name made his senses reel and his blood boil. How could he have ever let her get away? David watched her lips as she stood talking to Agnes; he wanted his mouth on hers. David looked around and found exactly what he was looking for; a sprig of Mistletoe. He smiled wickedly as he approached his blonde siren.

David spotted Maddie across the room talking animatedly to Agnes; he loved seeing the smile on her face and the sparkle in her eyes. He tiptoed toward them coming up from behind Maddie; he put his finger to his lips to tell Agnes not to let Maddie know what he was doing. Agnes played along as he pressed lightly against Maddie holding the mistletoe over her head. He winked at Agnes as Maddie turned around.

Maddie felt someone behind her and then she noticed the mistletoe hanging over her head held by an arm in a familiar suit. David? She quickly turned around to find David leaning into her with a devilish grin covering his face and a wicked look in his green eyes. "David?"

David nodded toward the mistletoe he was holding above her head. "Can't break tradition Goldilocks." He teased as he leaned over to kiss her lips; the kiss was soft

and sweet. David winked as he walked away leaving Maddie to look after him with the feel of his lips on hers and her heart hammering in her chest. She was pulled out of her daze by the sound of Agnes' giggle. "Mr. Addison is always so much fun!" Agnes laughed happily. Maddie only nodded. Yes, he was fun and so much more. Maddie hated herself but she craved another kiss and she hoped the next time it would be longer.

David sprinted over to the guys who were in the middle of a rousing discussion about football. Maddie watched as he immediately made himself the center of attention; all the men seemed to hang on his every word. Maddie knew how much they all admired David; especially Bert Viola. Agnes interrupted her train of thought.

"I think you are having a great time tonight." Agnes said cheerfully.

"Oh yes Agnes I really am. You really did a marvelous job planning the party. The hall looks wonderful, the food is delicious and the DJ is great. Thank you for your hard work. It's just perfect."

"Oh I really didn't do much to plan this party Miss Hayes. It was mostly all Mr. Addison's doing."

"What? David planned the party? All of this?" Maddie's hand gestured to the whole room.

Agnes nodded causing her Christmas earrings to jingle. "Yep! Mr. Addison said he wanted the party to be perfect for you. Guess it is huh?"

"Perfect for me? Why?" Maddie couldn't understand it. David had practically ignored her for months and out of the blue he decides to plan a special party for her. Maddie wondered what if Agnes was exaggerating. "Why would he do this for *me*?"

"Why don't you ask him Miss Hayes?" Agnes saw Bert approaching and smiled. He was dressed in a bright red shirt and a Christmas vest; his outfit matched Agnes' down to the Santa hat on his head. Maddie smiled at Agnes and Bert who seemed to be so much in love with each other. Why couldn't she and David have such an easy relationship flitted through her mind?

"Excuse me Miss Hayes. But if you don't mind I'd like to steal away my beautiful girlfriend for a dance." Bert smiled at Maddie as he took Agnes' hand. "Might I say you look very stunning tonight?"

Maddie returned his smile. "Thank you Herbert. Of course go and enjoy yourselves!"

Maddie watched as Bert and Agnes danced to the Jingle Bell Rock with some of the other employees. She enjoyed seeing her employees singing and dancing to the popular Christmas tune. Maddie heard a deep voice singing in her ear. "That's the jingle bell rock!" She looked up to see David grinning down at her with that crooked half smile that turned her into mush.

"So Blondie can I get you another drink? Something to eat maybe?" David asked with a gleam in his eye.

"Something to eat sounds good."

David led her to an empty table. "What would you like to eat?"

Maddie sat down then looked up at him with a sexy look in her eyes. "Why don't surprise me."

"Oh, I'll surprise you all right." David winked at her as he headed to the buffet. Maddie sat watching everyone. They all looked so happy and carefree; she almost envied them. It had been a tough year for her. She wished and hoped that the coming year would be better. She saw David returning with two laden plates of food. She patted the seat next to her. "Care to join me handsome?"

David looked around like he was looking for someone. "Handsome me?"

Maddie nodded. "Handsome you. Very."

David smiled at her. "Miss me?"

"Maybe." Maddie flirted.

They ate in silence enjoying the food and each other's nearness. They watched the employees dancing as they ate their meal.

"David the food is just wonderful." Maddie told him as she enjoyed the sweet potatoes with toasted marshmallows on top.

"Yeah they really know how to put out a good spread here. Glad you like everything." David told her taking a bite of the sliced ham.

"Oh I do. It's just perfect." Maddie looked into David's eyes.

David leaned back in his seat and looked over at Maddie who was staring back at him. He wanted to kiss her again so badly; he reached into his pocket and pulled out the mistletoe. Maddie watched David reach into his pocket. She saw the mistletoe and smiled. He was going to kiss her again. She was delighted. David held the mistletoe above their heads. Maddie looked up at the mistletoe and then back at David. They both leaned into kiss at the same time. This time the kiss was more passionate. Maddie felt David's tongue dart out quickly and lick her lips. She was just about to chase his tongue with hers when she was interrupted by the sound of glasses being clinked along with laughter and catcalls. Maddie looked up to see that the employees were cheering them on. Maddie felt a bit embarrassed but instead of getting angry she laughed as she bent over and gave David a quick kiss on his lips.

David was startled but happy with Maddie's reaction to the teasing of their employees. "Sorry about that babe." He laughed.

"Nothing to be sorry about cowboy." She smiled up at him.

"Hey next slow song would you do me the honor of a dance?"

"Yes I'd love it."

After a few fast dances the DJ told everyone he was slowing it down for the romantics in the room. David stood up and extended a hand to Maddie. She smiled up at him taking his hand; David led her out onto the dance floor holding her tight to his body. Maddie felt the heat cover through her at the feel of David's rock hard body against hers. She moved her hips into him and was happy to hear him groan with delight. Maddie moved closer to him and felt how excited he was which caused the heat to spread like a wild fire over her body.

They started to sway to the voice of Elvis singing 'Blue Christmas'.

I'll have a blue Christmas without you  
I'll be so blue thinking about you  
Decorations of red  
On a green Christmas tree  
Won't be the same  
If you're not here with me

And when those blue snow flakes start falling  
And when those blue memories start falling  
You'll be doing all right with your Christmas of white  
But I'll have a blue, blue, blue, blue Christmas

Ooh  
Ooh  
Ooh  
Ooh

Decorations of red  
On a green Christmas tree  
Oh, won't be the same  
If you're not here with me

I'll have a blue Christmas, that's certain  
And when that blue heartache starts hurting  
You'll be doing all right  
With your Christmas of white  
But I'll have a blue, blue Christmas

Maddie and David held each other close as they listened to the sad song lyrics. The words of the song rang true to both of them. They knew their Christmas would be sad and lonely if they spent it apart but neither was willing to voice it. So instead they danced together and prayed the other would be the first to declare their feelings. A game they played well and much too often, David suddenly realized. He sang the lyrics softly into Maddie's ear.

David's hot breath singing into her ear was making Maddie's body tingle. The feel of David's warm body against hers felt delicious yet it wasn't enough for her she wanted to feel him even closer. It had been so long since David held her close. She felt sadness overtake her when she thought of how this Christmas should have been but she refused to succumb to those feelings now. Later when she was alone she could dissolve into a puddle of tears. Tonight she wanted to forget for a while and make believe things were different for her and David. She wanted to lose herself in his strong arms.

David held Maddie close as he sang in her ear. He didn't want to have a sad Christmas. He wanted to show her he wanted her; loved her. He only hoped she would give him the chance to do so. He knew he had been wrong to stay away from her but he had been so consumed with his own misery he didn't even think of hers. David realized what a jerk he actually was but now he would start to be the man he deserved. He continued to hold onto her tightly and slowly move with her to the song.

Neither of them noticed they were the only couple on the dance floor. The employees were happily watching their bosses dance together. They all hoped this song would make their bosses realize they didn't have to have a Blue Christmas; that they could be together. Agnes was hopeful seeing David and Maddie hold onto each other so tightly. Bert looked over at her. "My love I can tell you are hoping for a Christmas miracle with Mr. Addison and Miss Hayes."

"Oh Bert look at them! They love each other; you can see it you can feel it. I hope they do get that Christmas miracle."

Bert put his arm around Agnes' shoulders and held a sprig of mistletoe over her head. She looked up and giggled knowing Bert was taking a page out of Mr. Addison's handbook. They leaned in and kissed. Agnes and Bert were happy with their love and both hoped that their pig headed bosses would also find the love that was between them.

Agnes waited until the song was over then approached the DJ and asked for the microphone. Maddie and David realized the song was over and that they were the center of attention. Reluctantly they pulled apart unsure of what their next move should be in front of the employees; Agnes' voice calling for everyone's attention let the confused couple off the hook. Maddie and David were glad to see the employees' eyes focus on Agnes instead of them.

Agnes continued. "I just want to say that tonight's Christmas party has been the best one we've ever had at Blue Moon." All the employees cheered in agreement. David and Maddie looked around and were full of smiles for their employees.

"Mr. Addison you did a great job planning this party for us and Miss Hayes. Thank you. I know I speak for everyone when I say we are so happy to be working at Blue Moon and we would like to present you both with special Christmas gifts." Agnes waved Maddie and David closer to her and Bert who was standing beside her holding two white envelopes in his hands. David took Maddie's hand and led

her over to Agnes and Bert. Bert handed them the envelopes with a huge smile covering his face. David and Maddie were touched by the love they felt emanating from their staff.

"After you Maddie." David gestured for her to open her envelope. Maddie ripped open the envelope. She held up her present which was a gift certificate to her favorite day spa and salon. Maddie read aloud the card that came with it. "Treat yourself to a full spa day. You deserve it! Love the Bluemooners." Maddie smiled with tears of happiness in her eyes. "Thank you so much everyone!"

David smiled over at Maddie then tore open his envelope. He pulled out a gift certificate to a popular new restaurant David had been dying to go to. David read his card as Maddie had. "You deserve a special night out on the town with a special date. Enjoy." A grin covered David's happy face. "Wow guys this is great! I've heard great things about this new place. I would need to take a very special lady with me to such a very special restaurant." David gave Maddie a sidelong look. "Luckily I know a gorgeous blonde who I hope will be my date."

Maddie looked at David and smiled. She would love to go with him but if she stuck to her plans she wouldn't be around after the New Year. Of course no one knew that she was thinking of leaving Blue Moon.

David took the microphone from Agnes. "Santa dropped some goodies off for all you Bluemooners as you call yourself. Santy Claus told us that most of you were nice this year but even the naughty ones deserved a treat." David laughed. Maddie took out a bunch of envelopes from her purse. She handed them out to the staff.

"Merry Christmas and Happy New year to you all! Thank you for your hard work!" Everyone was so excited to find a generous bonus check in their envelopes. Blue Moon had finally become what David had promised from the start; a successful agency that made money. The staff deserved their bonus checks. They all shouted, "Thank you Mr. Addison and Miss Hayes." Everyone laughed and circulated as the DJ began to play "Rock Around the Christmas Tree." Everyone headed to the dance floor leaving Maddie and David alone.

David put his hand in his pocket and felt the mistletoe. He wanted to kiss her again. Maddie turned to David and saw a devilish look in his green eyes. He had one hand behind his back; he grabbed her with his free hand and pulled her close against his body. He held the mistletoe above their heads but before Maddie even realized what was happening David crushed his lips to hers; kissing her passionate-

ly. The kiss went on for a few minutes both wishing they could keep kissing forever. David wanted to get Maddie alone for a few minutes. He had an idea. Maddie felt breathless as David pulled away from her. "Hey Blondie blonde let's go for a walk." He suggested in a low voice.

"A walk? A walk where? We can't leave the party David it's almost over."

"Just for a few minutes. I want to talk with you privately. Come on we will be right back. Trust me they won't miss us." David stared at her with green cat eyes.

A slow burn slowly enveloped her body. David was the only man that could make her body feel hot and aroused with just a look. Maddie nodded. "Ok let's go talk." She told him in a voice as low as his. Maddie knew she was playing with fire but she couldn't resist the chance to be alone with him. He had such power over her. From the moment he persuaded her to keep the agency open he could always get her to things his way. It was maddening but she had to admit that was one of the reasons she found him so exciting and attractive. She winked at him and held out her hand. She was the lion that was being led to her slaughter she thought but she was willingly putting herself in danger.

David laughed at her and took her hand and led her out of the room. He led Maddie to a dark empty room across the hall from the party. Maddie closed the door after them then leaned against it never taking her eyes off David. She raised an eyebrow. "So what do you want to talk about?" She knew David didn't have talking on his mind. She felt the fire raging over her body. Her mind was telling her to leave and go back to the party but her body and heart were not listening. David put one arm on the wall by the side of her face as his other hand played with her hair. "Talk? Did I say talk?" He purred as he lowered his head until their lips were almost touching. "I meant kiss." His tongue wandered over her lips slowly. The minute David kissed her she was lost. She couldn't pry herself away from him if her life depended on it; he could make her body want him with one kiss. Maddie wrapped her arms around his neck pulling his head closer. Her tongue traced his lips mimicking what he was doing to her. David moaned her name as he danced his tongue into her mouth. His tongue lapped at hers until they began devouring each other with hot wet kisses.

God, how she missed his mouth covering hers; consuming her with his tongue and lips. How she missed the feel of his body against hers. How she missed his love-making. She couldn't stop the animal instincts that were spurring her on. Her body was an inferno; only David could ignite her to such a mindless passion. "Oh Da-

vid." Maddie rotated her hips against David feeling the excitement in his pants. She gasped as he grinded his huge bulge into her most intimate place as his hands fondled and caressed her breasts which he had easily freed from the confines of her dress.

"Oh baby you missed this didn't you?" David whispered into her ear. His hands began to run down her body; up and down her legs between her thighs until she was writhing under his hands. David kept whispering into her ear in his hot caramel voice; how hot she was, what he was going to do to her, how good he was going to make her feel. Her only response was moaning his name and pulling on his hair. Maddie knew she should pull up her dress to cover her breasts and run away from the green eyed devil that was actually making her want to be fucked against a wall in a catering hall. But she couldn't. She was putty in his hands and at that moment of time she reveled in his mastery of her. She felt David pull up her dress and run his hands under her sodden panties and she gasped with a need she couldn't control.

David was thrilled to feel the thigh high stockings hidden under her dress. His fingers played over her silk panties that were showing evidence of her arousal. David's member jerked in his pants when he felt how much Maddie wanted him. He wanted her more than any other woman he had ever met. How had he ever let her get away? David began to pull down her panties but his hands stood still when he thought he heard someone approaching. He stopped kissing her and pushed her slightly away when he heard the sound of the door opening. David quickly pulled up Maddie's dress to cover her breasts. She was still squirming against him lost in her passion and unaware of the interruption. She tried to pull David back against her until he whispered in her ear they had a visitor. The young waiter was staring at them wide eyed until David growled at him. The boy ran away and David laughed. He turned to Maddie whose face was flushed from her arousal and her lips were red from his kisses. He pushed a stray tendril of hair off her face. "Maybe we can finish this later babe."

Maddie straightened her dress feeling embarrassed, relieved and yet disappointed too. She was so confused. Would she have really let David fuck her against the wall like a common tramp? She suddenly felt sick inside. "Maybe." She walked out of the room heading back to the party. David walked behind her eyeing her voluptuous figure and shapely backside hoping her maybe was really a yes. He needed her to live he realized; they needed each other.

The party was nearing an end and everyone was bidding each other goodbye and wishing their friends and co-workers happy holidays; Blue Moon was closing its doors until the day after New Year's. Maddie and David circulated the room wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Everyone was thanking David and Maddie for the wonderful party and the generous bonus checks.

David watched Maddie as she moved around the room talking and laughing to the employees; he could tell her mind was really miles away. He tried to catch her eye and smile but she wouldn't look his way. Maybe he had been wrong to corner her against the wall but she seemed to want him as much as he wanted her. He wondered what would have happened if that waiter didn't interrupt them? He didn't think it would have made Maddie happy if they had made love against the wall in the empty room. She deserved better from him and he planned to show her how much she meant to him. He looked over at her again; she was still the most breathtaking woman he had ever seen. He shook his head when once again she failed to meet his eyes. David wished he could read her mind just this once. Why was this particular blonde so damn confusing and why the hell did he love her so much?

Agnes and Bert ran up to David and Maddie. "I hope you have the very best holiday." Bert told them in his usual serious manner as Agnes smiled at his side, nodding her head in agreement. She was hoping that David and Maddie would wind up together this Christmas and for all the rest of the Christmases of their lives but she knew it was in their hands now. Agnes hugged Maddie tightly. "Have a terrific holiday Miss Hayes!" Maddie nodded holding back the tears that threatened to fall. She would not let anyone see her sadness; she didn't want to ruin their night. Maddie felt her emotions spiraling out of control now that the night was almost over. Maybe she should never have come to the party with David. Now that the night was ending she wasn't looking forward to going home to an empty house. She hated that she would be alone for the holidays. She hadn't even put up her Christmas tree this year. She could never muster the energy to decorate. Maybe she should have gone on the cruise with her parents but it was too late now; they had already left. Maddie tried to convince herself she would get through this; she was strong. She excused herself and went to retrieve her wrap leaving David alone with Agnes and Bert. They watched her walk away. Agnes hugged David then pulled back and

looked deep into his eyes. "Don't you leave her alone Mr. Addison." She warned. "She needs you."

David nodded. "Don't you worry your curly head Agnes. I plan to stay by her side." David pursed his lips and threw a look at Maddie. She was approaching with her wrap on her arm and a fake smile covering her face; the veil had dropped down over her eyes David noticed with a pang. He just hoped it wasn't too late to put the warmth and happiness back in them this Christmas.

Agnes also saw Maddie heading their way. She threw David another stern look and whispered. "You better Mr. Addison. No excuses!"

Maddie was unaware of the exchange between David and Agnes. She was still wondering if she had done the right thing coming to the party with David; her body and her soul were once again craving his touch. She could still feel his lips crushing hers. She could still feel his hard body against hers. Suddenly Maddie felt a sharp pain in her heart. David was leaving for Christmas. Philly was waiting for him. She saw David and Agnes talking and hugging. They were such good friends. Agnes would be there for David when she left Blue Moon; not that he would care very much Maddie thought sadly. Maddie walked over to them once she got her wrap wearing her plastered on smile.

"I'm ready David." She told him without a hint of her feelings in her voice. David didn't know what to say he just nodded. They waved one last time at the staff as David led her out to the limo.

The ride to Maddie's house was silent. Maddie was wrapped up in her thoughts of David and David was wondering how he could keep his promise to Agnes when Maddie seemed so unapproachable and icy now. David couldn't understand why she ran so hot and cold. Maddie seemed to welcome his flirting and advances all night and now she is as frosty as a glacier. David peeked at Maddie from under his long lashes. She was sitting with her back ramrod straight looking very haughty and regal. David had a strong urge to take her in his arms and wipe that snooty look off her face. He wondered if he still had that power over her. Maybe she doesn't want me anymore he thought. Maybe she was just wrapped up in the romance and excitement of the party and then came to her senses when I cornered her against the wall. I bet she realized that she didn't want me after all. The thought that maybe they were over and done hit David like a sledgehammer. No, it couldn't have just been the party that caused Maddie to look at him with such warmth and tenderness. She still loved him. He wanted to take her in his arms and kiss the hurt

away that he saw lurking behind her eyes. He knew he had been the cause of much of that pain and he hated himself for his cowardly actions over the last months. David didn't know how to make things right and keep his promise to Agnes. So he just sat back and waited until they reached her house. Maybe he'd be lucky and she would ask him to stay with her. David highly doubted it. He would have to make the first move and he hoped that he didn't feel the door slam in his face.

Maddie sat quietly next to David in the limo. The ride home was much different than the ride to the party. Maddie was confused and hurt. She didn't understand why David had turned into the cold unapproachable man of the past few months after they were interrupted by the waiter in the middle of their little tryst. He had barely said two words to her since then and of course he hadn't tried to kiss her again. Maybe it was just the excitement of the party that caused David to shower her with his charm and attention. She figured he had realized it was a bad idea to lead her on when the waiter almost caught them making love. She only hoped that maybe one day she and David could be friends again; but now it just hurt too much to be with him without the hope of forever.

The limo pulled up in front of Maddie's house. David ran over to walk her to her front door. They stared at each other silently for a minute or two each wishing the other would make the first move. Maddie's heart fell to her feet. "Well, good night David." She told him with her fake smile plastered to her face. "I had a good time. Have a Merry Christmas. Tell your family I wish them Happy Holidays." Maddie turned away from him hiding her tears as she opened her front door. She wanted to escape to her bed and cry the river of tears that threatened to drown her. This Christmas couldn't end quickly enough for Maddie Hayes this year.