The fire in the stove sent warmth through the room. As Carla quickly undressed for bed she smiled at her husband’s thoughtfulness. Taye must have come in earlier to add wood to the fire. Tomorrow morning he would get up first and build the fire up so she wouldn’t shiver while she dressed. He always did that for her. Taye was so sweet.

To her at least. She remembered the look on his face when he gave orders to the Pack to increase the number of guards to protect Tami from Dick Dickinson. Even the warmth of the old fashioned wood burning stove couldn’t keep her from shuddering. She yanked a flannel nightgown over her head and quickly dove under the covers.

Taye came in a few minutes later. He kicked his pants off and slid in next to her. The glow from the stove just barely illuminated the taut muscles in the chest she loved to stroke. “Sweetheart.” His voice was a chiding half-growl. “You’re wearing that ugly nightdress again. Do you think I can’t keep you warm?” The growl sunk to the lowest register, making her shiver with erotic delight. “Or are you teasing me? You know how I love a challenge.”

Carla snorted, turning her face away and bracing her palms against his chest. “Hold on, Taye.”

“Why?” He sniffed delicately, tasting the air. “It’s not that time of the month again. Don’t you want to...?”

In the dark Carla rolled her eyes. She knew Taye’s wolf sight could see her perfectly. “I just want to talk first.”

“We’ll make love in a minute?” He sounded boyishly hopeful.

She rolled her eyes again. “You’re a man, all right. Don’t you ever think of anything else?”

“While we’re in bed together? Nah.”

She couldn’t help a giggle, because, really, she wasn’t much better. Just the sight of his dark eyes looking at her from under his elegant brows or his white smile made her think of sex. Not to mention what his sex god’s body did to her. But she wanted to say something important now.

She pushed him down and settled herself, nightgown smoothed primly down, on top of him. The gleam of his eyes showed her where to look. “Taye, tomorrow is Christmas. Our first Christmas together. And I don’t have any money to buy you a gift –“

“I don’t need a gift,” he protested.

“—so, I want to sing you a song. Have you ever heard of Carla Thomas?”

She could almost see his frown. “No.”

“Well, she was a singer, about twenty years before I was born. My mom and dad named me after her. She had a record that my dad grew up listening to at Christmas time, and he kept it even after CDs and iTunes… Never mind about that. He still played it when me and my brothers were kids. It was called *All I Want For Christmas Is You*. When I was little I thought it was a pretty stupid song. My dad, who sang about as well as a crow with laryngitis, would slow dance with my mom in the kitchen and sing it to her. But now I understand it perfectly. This is for you.”

She sang softly,

*“Let the kiddies have the toys,*

*And let the grownups make the noise.*

*Give the neighbors all the presents under the tree.*

*Give the snow and mistletoe*

*To the ones who love them so*

*But you’ll be quite enough for me.*

*When Ol’ Santa rides his sleigh*

*He can please me right away*

*With a present that forever will be new.*

*Tell him my poor heart will sing*

*If one gift he’ll only bring,*

*For all I want for Christmas is you.”*

Taye’s warm palms cupped her face. “That’s pretty. Am I the present that will forever be new?”

“Yeah,” Carla whispered against his lips. “I’ll never get bored with you.”

“*You* are the present, sweetheart.” His hands stroked up the backs of her legs. “The best present I’ve ever gotten.”

He purred with pleasure when his fingers weren’t stopped by panties so he could stroke through the soft hair between her legs. With a quick twist he put her under him. She savored the weight of him settled against her. It was a familiar weight. Comforting. Reassuring. Arousing. She lifted her hips up to press against his erection.

“I think we’re done being serious,” she breathed.

The feel of his hands gliding up under the nightgown made her squirm. “Almost, sweetheart.” He kissed her lightly. “Two months ago I didn’t know you existed. Only two months ago I slept alone. I had never touched you here.” He smoothed the nightgown up to lay his hand over her mound, putting exquisite pressure on her clit. His other hand pushed the nightgown up under her chin to expose her chest to the cold night air. “I had never seen these.”

Carla couldn’t quite stifle her moan when his hot mouth closed over one nipple. One of the things she loved about him was that he didn’t care that she was flat chested. All her life she’d worn push up bras to create the illusion of cleavage. But Taye could –and had—spent hours worshipping her breasts.

“Taye, come inside me.”

His chuckle was almost too quiet for her to hear. “It’s not time for my warrior of love to conquer your tunnel yet.”

Her laughter was more of a strangled snort. “You’re gonna torture me?”

“Nah.”

Carla wiggled with delight when he kissed his way up her body, dragged the nightgown over her head and tossed it away, opening her thighs with one of his at the same time so he could push himself inside her. She sighed happily at the feeling of having her mate there, the “one flesh” that the Bible talked about.

“Do you know why I wear that nightgown?” she said breathily. “Because I love what happens when you take it off me.”

Taye laughed into her hair. “It’s one of my favorite things, too.” He withdrew and pushed back in. “Being inside you is like coming home after a long journey.”

“Faster, Taye,” she moaned. “Harder.”

And because he loved her, he complied. After she had convulsed in his arms, sobbing her release, and he taken his own pleasure, he kissed her tenderly. “Merry Christmas, sweetheart.”