

Days before Christmas

Most days, Gia Hawk knew she'd soothed the savage soul within her husband, because it showed on his face and in his actions ... mostly still in resting scowl faze, but it was a happy scowl, she knew and felt this.

But some nights he prowled the house without cause.

Checking and rechecking the windows and locks like he thought his demons would slither through the cracks if he didn't double down and keep them out.

On these nights, Gia either waited it out for him to come back and crawl into their bed and curl around her where she could love the hell out of him until he settled down again. Or like now, as she agitatedly pulled on one of his shirts from the bedroom chair and hastily slipped it on.

She was about to follow him down.

She couldn't rest if he was unsettled and she just simply loved him in their bed with her.

They were connected in every way possible, which meant if her man was unsteady, she didn't feel so good either.

She left the warmth of their bed behind, Sunny would be sleeping on her front, butt in the air, hands tucked under her as was the way she loved best.

Their girl was nearly one and wouldn't really understand Christmas yet, but it didn't stop Gia from adding a tiny pink tree on the dresser in her room.

Much to Hawk's sigh when he saw it in there.

"I don't have enough to do by dragging out the twenty trees you have in storage, you now put one in our girl's room?" He'd complained, to which Gia grinned really big and won him over.

Their puppy had been dreaming about all the treats she was receiving from her humans after her ordeal earlier, but like Gia, she'd followed her master

down an hour again and would be Hawk's shadow until he got back into bed and only then would their Frenchie puppy fall into her bed too.

She'd been sulking all day because someone ... *not Gia* ... left the back door open earlier and Hawk had to tramp cold through the neighborhood to look for an escaped Khalessi. He found her five blocks away having a grand time in a yard with a giant rottweiler. The little flirt. Hawk was not pleased and Khaleesi hated when her daddy was mad at her. She'd pouted and whined around him for the rest of the day until he gave her belly rubs as forgiveness.

Gia found him out by the porch, his hip to the railing gazing into the dark night with a joint to his lips. The plume of smoke from his lips traveled up to the sky.

He didn't smoke often, but if he did, it was either at the club, or on nights like this he did it outside. She remembered the night they shared a smoke and the way he'd fallen to his knees on her old decking back in Texas and licked her between her legs for the first time.

It was the first of many and each time felt spectacular.

Just like that night long ago, she smiled to herself and yet it still felt fresh as though it were yesterday, the night air nipped at her bare legs and she quickly moved over to Hawk. He turned at the sound of her and lifted his arm silently for her to burrow in.

It didn't take a second to find her spot on his ribs.

God, she wished sometimes that they'd been having this for their lost decade, all that time wasted when they could have been loving each other and Hawk would have had his peace so much faster.

They might have had at least six kids by now too and the Christmas ahead would be a lot more of a ruckus.

Though she had those regrets, her happiness superseded any of those thoughts for long.

She was here and her Hawk was here and that's what mattered.

It smelled like snow in the air. She hoped they got it soon. It was a pain in the butt to drive in but she was much like Zara in that the world became so much more magically romantic when it was dusted in white snow.

Maybe she'd talk her husband into playing in it with her this year.

He was so stoic that she found new ways to give him fun every single day.

He didn't speak for a while, just content to have his arm around her and a gaze out into their backyard.

They'd talked about moving to a bigger place in the near future, but in all honesty, she loved their house. He'd rigged it up security wise so that even the FEDs wouldn't be able to get in. Every inch of their yards, front and back were monitored. Hawk didn't mess around when it came to her and Sunny's safety.

She loved the area, it was peaceful and they had non-intrusive neighbors, plus the school district wasn't far and one day soon they'd be walking Sunny there.

Hawk would be happier with his family in a fortress, probably underground where no one could bother them and guarded by someone like Game Of Thrones The Mountain.

Only for Gia's sake did he compromise, so that's why she didn't nag him when she kept seeing him upgrade the alarm system or adding more locks and apps to his phone so he could watch their castle wherever he was.

She loved him *wholly*.

Taking slow drags of the smoke, he rubbed a hand on his chest over his Little Bit tattoo. He only wore a form fitted white tank and the loose sweatpants but his body was always radiating heat.

He was ideal to cuddle up with in bed during the winter months.

She joked he was her living, breathing hot water bottle.

He gave her his scowl she adored and just told her he was whatever she needed him to be.

He completely melted her.

“Love you, baby.” She whispered.

He didn’t turn his head but his fingers did squeeze her hip. “Love you too, little bit.”

Those words from him never ceased to fill her with wonder and joy.

But she hated him feeling unhappy even for a second.

Her hand continued to move on his chest until he’d finished the last drag, he stubbed it out on the railing and tossed it in a bucket that was nearby. He’d never dump any smoke on the ground for Sunny to pick up.

It was then he turned her in his arms and folded her in to his chest.

Kissed the top of her head.

“You should be in bed.”

“So should you.”

“Couldn’t sleep.”

“And I couldn’t sleep without you.”

Khalessi gave a huff at their feet as if reminding them that her princess sleep was also disturbed because of her humans. When she didn’t get any attention she huffed again and plonked her little butt over one of Hawk’s feet.

“Sorry, little bit. Just restless.”

“Anything you want to talk about?”

She heard his smirk clearly when his hands stroked down her back and fitted on her butt. “You going to head shrink me?”

“If that’s what you want. But I’d prefer it if my husband talked to me.”

“Fuck,” he breathed, kissed her head again. “I love hearing that word on your lips.”

“Does my husband like that?” She smiled into his chest and felt his arms tremble tighter.

Hawk was tactile.

With her.

And Sunny.

It took them a good while to get to a place of him finally grasping that she absolutely loved his hands on her and she wasn't repelled by anything he wanted or needed from her.

Which meant now if they were in the same place, they were touching and Gia lived for those shivers he gave her.

She'd told him once that it was hard to love someone else unless they loved themselves first. She recalled Hawk's reply like he'd only just said it because the words ingrained into her heart so deeply. He'd told her, “Gia, that's bullshit. I've never loved myself but I saw you and fell so fucking hard. Love you so fucking much, it's difficult to breathe and I don't even care about how much I hate myself because I'm too busy being infatuated with my little bit of a thing.”

Seriously, she'd needed a moment to breathe after that. And every day since she thought about those words and loved him twice as much, just because.

“You are wicked, little bit.” His voice was thick and amused.

A few minutes more of silence and she looked up at him, found his eyes on her. He truly was the most handsome man she'd ever met.

Some months he let his beard become hobo chic again and other times, like now, he clipped it shorter around his lips. His long sandy colored hair hung loose around his shoulders and that just made Hawk off the scale sexy.

Not that he'd ever let her tell him so. He'd scoff and call her blind.

She could never get enough of him, what did he think all that was, pity sex?

Gia had a very empathetic nature, especially for her job, but no amount of pity would make her fuck a man as often as she crawled all over Hawk.

She thought he was beautiful and he could roll his pretty man eyes at her all he wanted; she would never think differently.

“Are you okay, Colton?”

“I am now. Just needed some air.” His lips touched her forehead. “And you.”

“I’m right here, always.” She did her own kissing, by touching her lips to the bare part of his collar bone. She loved when he trembled because of her. “If you didn’t know already, I’m kind of obsessed in my husband.”

“Gia...” he warned gruffly and she smiled knowing that he was coming back to himself, that whatever had unsettled her Colton, he was letting it drift away and not consume him. “You’re asking to get fucked right here on the deck.”

“Am I?” She couldn’t pull off innocent to save her ass, he knew better.

“Yeah you are, and you gotta be up early tomorrow for more of that Christmas crap with your mom.”

She did, but she could go another round with him no problem.

When he was inside her she knew he was at peace, he told her often enough and she only wanted to give him as much peace as he’d never had before.

“This time last year I was massively pregnant like a blimp and you couldn’t fuck me everywhere like you wanted to.”

Though it was dark, she’d lay money on his eyes flaring.

“I managed, little bit,” he boasted with a smirk tipping up his lips.

Oh, boy, did he.

“Are you worried about Christmas? I told you Santa knows you’re a bad boy, you’ll still get gifts.” She joked to hear him chuff his breath with his Hawk version of a laugh. She grinned in his arms.

“Got all I need right here and sleeping upstairs in her bedroom.”

Her heart burst.

No matter how often he shared his feelings, it was magical and Gia scooped up the words and stuffed them all inside her heart.

She gave him time, content in the silence and the gentle night air as she snuggled into him, knowing he’d either tell her in his own time or he wouldn’t. Nothing could sway Hawk.

And then. “I sometimes wake up and think this ... *you*, has all been a dream and I’m back in the nothing again, Gia.”

Her heart twinged hearing his sincerity. Her arms banded tighter around him. “Never happen, baby. I would have found you some another way. Don’t you know, Colton Hawk was always fated to belong to me.”

He visibly inhaled, she felt it in his chest.

“Do you know what I want to do?”

One of his hands traveled up her spine and cupped under Gia’s hair, tipping her head back. His eyes almost glowed like a hungry wolf’s eyes under the moon.

Gia grinned at his raised eyebrow.

“Does it involve me carting fucking trees from room to room, holding do-dads for you to hang everywhere and listening to you sing off key?”

“Grinch,” she nudged him and felt his remaining hand drop down to her butt where he pushed it into the waist of her shorts. “I thought we could go sledding.”

“Gia, no.”

“I don’t mean now. Tomorrow or this weekend when it snows.”

“No, it’s fucking dangerous, you’ll go head first and I’m not spending the holidays with you in traction.”

“Fine,” she sighed, put upon all dramatic like and she skimmed her hands around his trim waist, nuzzling his chest with her nose, having been aware of his answer already. He was a maniac for her safety. He’d no more let her hurtle down the side of a hillside than he would let her ride on top of the roof of his truck. “I guess we can decorate more trees.”

She heard his manly chuckle and he squeezed her ass, “played me.”

Yeah, she knew how. It was a Hawk’s wife kind of gift.

“We’ll put movies on and then have a lot of sex under each one.”

He growled so hot she felt it pulse between her legs and then Gia found herself lifted into his arms while he strode back inside their house, making sure to lock up behind them.

This side to Hawk always gave her heart a thrill.

He was possessive and attentive all wrapped up in her Hawk package and she adored him.

Worse than that actually.

But as they approached celebrating their second Christmas together, she knew she would never get done with trying to make them as happy and as packed with as much love as she could.

He had a lot of Christmases to make up and Gia was intent to give them to her man.

If her festivities riled him up? All the better.

She smiled into his neck.

“We’ll start on that fucking now, little bit.”

“Okay,” she smiled. “If you insist.”

Christmas in the Hawk household would never be dull, she promised herself.

Love, family, trees and Hawk on top of her.

It really was a wonderful life.

