

All I Want for Christmas Is a Vampire

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CHAPTER ONE

The air hummed with bass guitar and rampant lust. He'd come to the right place. Ian MacPhie strode across the renovated warehouse, his steps falling into rhythm with the pounding drums. The Horny Devils was the best place he could think of for finding a woman.

The nightclub was teeming with them. All lovely and all Vamps.

Bright red and blue laser lights zipped here and there, highlighting the ladies' scantily-dressed, bouncing bodies as they danced close to the stage. They surged in time with the pounding music like a wild sea at high tide, and he was sucked toward them in a greedy undertow.

One of the red lights zoomed past him, flashing in his face and blinding him for a few seconds. A burst of panic shot through him. What if none of these ladies found him attractive? What if he'd suffered twelve days of agonizing pain to look older and...ugly?

As a Vamp he couldn't see his new face in a mirror. He'd appeared in a few digital photos at Jean-Luc's wedding, or he thought he had. He hadn't recognized the strange man in the pictures. Heather had assured him he looked good, but she'd been such a happy bride, she'd thought everything was beautiful that day.

As Ian's vision readjusted, he realized his moment of panic didn't matter. None of the ladies were looking at him. They all faced the stage, their gazes riveted to the male dancer who strutted down the runway with an Indian warbonnet on his head. The war paint on his hairless chest depicted an arrow that pointed south where a bunch of strategically-placed, eagle feathers hid his wampum.

Ian took a deep breath and assessed the situation. True, the ladies hadn't noticed him, but he hadn't really tried to get their attention yet. These lassies were certainly in a lusty mood, so his chances were good. Time to put his new face to the test.

He eased into the crowd. Now what should he say? Jean-Luc had successfully courted Heather using charm and wit. He'd give that a try. "Good evening, ladies."

The roar of the music was so loud, only two lady Vamps heard him. They turned their heads and boldly inspected him.

"Not bad," one of them yelled at the other.

Ian gave them what he hoped was a charming smile, though it faltered a bit when he noticed the second girl was wearing black lipstick. He supposed the modern lassies considered that attractive, but it gave him flashbacks of the bubonic plague.

“Nice kilt,” the black-lipped girl yelled. “Cute knees.”

“Aren’t you a dancer?” the first girl shouted.

“Nay. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Ian Mac—”

“Oh, I thought your kilt was a costume!” The first girl laughed. “Do you seriously dress like that?”

The black-lipped girl joined in on the laughter.

“We need to see more than your cute knees!”

Ian hesitated. He needed a witty, charming response. “I’m sure that could be arranged.” Unfortunately, his attempt at flirtatious banter went unnoticed. A sudden surge of high-pitched screams distracted the two girls, and they turned back to the stage. Feathers were flying, and the crowd of women bounced up and down, determined to catch a feathered souvenir.

“Begging yer pardon.” Ian tried to regain the two girls’ attention. “Could I buy you a drink?”

“That one’s mine!” The black-lipped girl shoved the other girl to the side so she could nab a feather.

Ian stepped back, dismayed at how the ladies were pushing each other. He glanced at the stage and gulped. By all the Saints, the women had plucked the dancer like a chicken. These modern lassies were more aggressive than he’d realized. When it came to finding his mate, he had assumed he would do the hunting.

Ian moved back to keep from getting jostled by the frantic feather-grabbing women. Perhaps it was a matter of timing. Aye, timing was very important when hunting prey. He would sit back and wait for the right moment. Sooner or later, the dancers would have to take a break, and maybe then, the ladies would be more easily impressed.

And while he waited, he’d fortify his nerves with a stiff drink. He strode toward the bar. He had it all figured out. He was searching for a girl who was honest, loyal, pretty, and intelligent. In that order. And of course, she would need to be madly in love with him.

That last part was a little tricky. How did he go about making the perfect girl fall in love with him? He doubted his alleged cute knees would be enough.

The female bartender had a phone to one ear and her hand pressed to the other to muffle the loud music. "Sure, I'll keep talking. So you're from California? Land sakes, that's far away."

Two young ladies materialized beside her. They'd used the sound of the bartender's voice as a beacon to help them teleport to the right location.

"Welcome to the Horny Devils." The bartender smiled as she hung up her phone. "What would you like to drink?"

"Two Blood Lites," one of the California girls ordered. She snapped her sparkly rhinestone-covered cell phone shut, then dropped it into her shiny handbag.

The second girl pointed toward the stage. "Oh my God, he's so hot!"

The girls forgot all about their drinks as they scampered toward the stage.

Ian lifted a hand in greeting. "Good evening, ladies."

They passed him by, their gazes glued to the dancing Indian who was down to his last two feathers.

Ian sighed. What was the world coming to when a man with honorable intentions had to compete with a male stripper? How could he impress these modern lassies? Maybe Vanda could advise him. With her purple spiky hair and spandex clothing, she'd become a very modern woman. And a very successful one since Vamps were teleporting from the West Coast to come to her club.

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