



***'Twas A Coyote
Christmas***

Dana Marie Bell

Holiday eBook Freebie

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To everyone who's asked me about the Poconos Pack. This one's for you.

"Tell me a story."

Rick kicked off his underwear and, gloriously naked, crawled into bed beside her. It had been a long day for both of them. The snowstorm that swept through the Poconos was one of the worst on record, and Belle's hip was an aching mass of pure agony. She'd barely made it to the bedroom before collapsing on the massive bed. Rick had arrived shortly afterwards and tenderly removed her clothing before bringing her pain medicine. Now she was under the covers, naked and throbbing in all the wrong ways while her mate tried not to jar the mattress and make everything hurt worse.

"A story?"

She gave him her most pleading look. She wanted something to take her mind off the pain, and her mate was the best person she knew to do that. Rick constantly surprised her.

"Well, it's almost Christmas. How about a holiday story?"

Belle nodded eagerly. She couldn't wait. Was he going to tell her the Grinch? Or A Christmas Carol?

But Rick surprised her again.

"Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the Lodge

Not a creature was stirring, especially not Rog."

Belle giggled. Roger was a waiter in her restaurant, Lowell's. The pup was barely eighteen and had no clue what he was doing. She knew, with time, he'd get better. He'd better get better, or she was going to make him a Coyote chew toy. "Oh God. When did you make this up?"

"Shh. Let me tell the story, okay?" Belle nodded and tried to settle in, but the pain shot through her hip and made her hiss. She couldn't wait until the pain meds finally kicked in.

Rick waited until she'd stopped squirming and picked up his rhyme.

"The stockings were hung by the chimney by Clare,

In hopes that her Luna soon would be there."

Belle rolled her eyes. Clare, the Wolf who ran the front desk, was overly affectionate with Belle. So affectionate, in fact, that Belle had been forced to use the airhorn on one wintry night to get the woman off her butt. Literally. Damn dogs and their wet noses.

Just a greeting, my ass.

"Ben and Dave were nestled all snug in their bed,
While visions of Gerard Butler danced in their heads."

She really needed to stop giggling. It only encouraged him.

"The Luna and Alpha, tired of dealing with crap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap."

The wink he gave her let her know how much "napping" was occurring, at least in his head. "Like bears? We're hibernating?" Belle teased her big bad Wolf by running her fingers down his chest. It was the most movement she was capable of, and he knew it.

He took her fingers and kissed the tips. "Shush. Who's telling this, you or me?"

She waved her free hand at him regally, ignoring the stabbing pain in her hip as best she could. The pain meds would kick in soon, please God, and she'd sleep through the rest of the storm. "Continue, please."

She knew she hadn't fooled him; the concern on his face wasn't hidden quickly enough. But he continued, curling himself carefully around her, keeping her warm.

"When out on the lawn there arose such a chatter,
I stumbled from bed to see what the fuck was the matter.
Away to the window I streaked in a flash,
Tripped over the ottoman and landed on my-"he grinned at her"-ash".

Hell. She was giggling like an idiot again. Maybe the meds were starting to kick in. They could make her really loopy sometimes.

"The butt of the Alpha, white as new-fallen snow
Gave quite a show to the wolves down below.
When, what to his wondering eyes should appear,
But a minivan full of Coyotes and holiday cheer."

Belle crossed her arms over her chest. The cheerful disgust in his voice matched the pained smirk on his face. "What is with you and Coyotes?"

Rick gave her a blank look. "They're *Coyotes*."

"Well, you just made them the heroes."

Rick grinned. "Wait for it."

"The driver, their Alpha, the annoying prick,
waved up to the window. 'How ya doin', Dick!'"

Rick glared down at her and she lost it. Aw hell. She had to stop the damn giggling. Last time Nathan Consiglione, the Coyote Alpha, had been here he'd overheard her call Rick Dick. He still addressed emails to Dick Lowell, and it drove Rick nuts.

"More rapid than gunshots his curses they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them dumb names.
Now Dumbass! now, Dipshit! now, Prancer, you vixen!
Stop fighting, you morons! It's Christmas, so listen!
Get up on the porch! Be careful, don't fall!
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.
So up the front steps those idiots flew,
With hands full of toys, and St Pauli Girl, too."

More amused disgust. The Coyote Alpha loved St. Pauli Girl beer, while Rick was more of a Honey Brown drinker.

"And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
Snow falling down hard, followed by a deep 'Oof!'
I ran down the stairs and had just turned around

When through the front door Nathan came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all covered in snow and in soot.
A bundle of toys someone flung at his back,
Made him looked like a moron, all thanks to his Pack."

"You're mean." Oh, the meds had kicked in. Belle was all floaty and happy. She yawned up in Rick's face, showing delicate fangs.

"Nice." Rick kissed her forehead. "Almost done, my Luna."

"Mmm." She brushed a kiss across his chin, the only part of his body she could reach without moving.

"The snow'd fallen down like prom time for Carrie;
He looked so damn cute, just like a snow fairy!"

"Dude, seriously mean. And they call cats evil."
Rick grinned viciously and continued.

"Bah, humbug,' he cried. 'God damn, does this blow,'
he said with a snarl as he wiped off the snow.

Then the Coyote saw what he'd been standing beneath.
And he yelled 'Fuckin' A. Get your ass in here, Keith!'
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly!"

"Now see, the only parts you don't change are the ones that insult Nate." She yawned again; she wasn't going to last much longer. Already her eyelids were drooping.

"Keep calling him Nate and I'll do more than insult him." Rick was growling, the sound menacing to anyone but her. "He was chubby and plump-"

"Rick." Nathan Consiglione was far from chubby or plump. The man was a fucking Adonis, and Rick knew it.

He huffed out a sigh. "Fine."

"He looked like a dork, a giant snow elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Had Coyotes swarming all over my Christmas-time spread.

He spoke not a word, but with a quick little smirk,
He ate all the chocolate chip cookies, the jerk.
On the empty plate he dropped some Ho-Ho's,
And giving a nod, out the front door he blows."

Her eyes were closed. It was too much trouble to keep them open anymore.

"He sprang into his van, to his Pack gave a whistle,
And away they drove off like a ballistic missile.
But I heard him exclaim, `ere they drove out of sight,
'Happy Christmas to all, and to Belle-" a barely felt kiss landed once more on her forehead- "a good-night."

Rick slipped out of bed once he was sure Belle was out cold. He pulled on his jeans and t-shirt as quietly as possible. The last thing he wanted to do was wake poor Belle. Ever since the storm had started rolling in she'd been in horrible pain, but too proud to tell him about it. It wasn't until she knew the party was winding down that he'd been able to convince her to go to bed at all. Grabbing his cell phone, he headed back out into the still on-going Christmas party.

A crapload of snow was dumped on his head by a bunch of Coyotes while his Wolves stood around and howled with laughter. Rick wiped the snow off his beard. "And she wonders why I hate Coyotes."

Nate, laughing his ass off, gave him the bird. "Fuck you and your cookies. Who's the god damn snow fairy now, asshole?"

"Heard that, did you?" Rick wasn't surprised. The party was in his own part of the Lodge, a private one just for his Wolves and New York Coyotes. It was the final seal on the already done deal of the pass-through treaty they'd signed.

"Besides, you like Ho-Ho's, you prick."

"Merry Christmas to you, too. Jerk." Rick took the last of the snow and threw it at Nate.

Hell. Talk about Christmas miracles. Why else would he find himself actually liking a Coyote?

Belle smiled into her pillow at the combined laughter of Coyote and Wolf. "And to all a good night."

About the Author

Dana Marie Bell wrote her first short story when she was thirteen years old. She attended the High School for Creative and Performing Arts for creative writing, where freedom of expression was the order of the day. When her parents moved out of the city and placed her in a Catholic high school for her senior year, she tried desperately to get away, but the nuns held fast, and she graduated with honors despite herself.

Dana has lived primarily in the Northeast (Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, to be precise), with a brief stint on the US Virgin Island of St. Croix. She lives with her soul mate and husband Dusty, their two maniacal children, an evil, ice-cream stealing cat and a bull terrier that thinks it's a Pekinese.

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