

IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE IN WASHINGTON

Author: EmilyAnn

Summary: Part of the 12 SMacKy Days series . . . snippets of Christmas celebrations among key SMK players. Post-series.

Note: With the author's permission, this story borrows an element from Merel's FHTP universe. Since I'm taking her place in the 12 days challenge, I figured it was the least I could do . . . The song around which this was written has been a favorite of mine for quite a while. This year, having moved back to the DC area, and in light of 9/11, it takes on a deeper meaning . . .

Disclaimer: Scarecrow and Mrs. King and the characters therein belong to Shoot the Moon Production Company and Warner Brothers Entertainment Television. Lauren, as already mentioned, is on loan from Merel. The song, "It's Christmas Eve in Washington," was written by Jim London and Maura Sullivan and performed by Maura Sullivan. (For the life of me, however, I can't find a copyright date. I think I remember hearing it for the first time around 1987-88), but I can't be sure.) Anything not already disclaimed is mine. Do not reproduce or redistribute this story without my express permission.

Thanks: To my invaluable friend and beta for looking this over for me. It's always a pleasure to work w/ you . . .

* * * * *

~It's snowing tonight in the Blue Ridge~

"Maybe it'll be a white Christmas after all," Amanda commented and clicked off the evening news.

"That would be nice," her husband responded absently, more concerned at the moment with wrapping paper than weather patterns.

She bit back a smirk as she watched him attempting to extricate himself from a flimsy prison of curling ribbon and Scotch Tape. "I'm beginning to see why you bought scarves every year."

"Would you be quiet and give me a hand?" he pretended to scold her. "I want Lauren's first Christmas to be perfect."

"It will be," she answered and slid off the bed to join him on the floor. "She's got a wonderful Daddy." She took the package from his hands and amended her earlier statement, "Even if he can't wrap her Christmas present."

~There's a hush over Chesapeake Bay~

"Kurt, this is beautiful; it's like we're the only ones here." Dotty revolved slowly on the dock taking

in the sight of the moored boats decorated for Christmas.

"We probably are," he answered and grasped her hand more tightly. After a moment, he began again, "Dotty . . ."

"No," she interrupted him, "not tonight, Kurt. Let's just enjoy tonight for what it is."

He studied her for a moment, the light in his blue eyes growing softer against the reflections of thousands of twinkling white bulbs on the bay. "You're a stubborn woman, Dotty . . . but a very special one."

"Quiet," she answered him, her voice husky. "Let's just walk."

~The chimneys are smoking in Georgetown~

"Put another log on, Austin." Dr. Smyth spun around, startled by the voice behind him.

He quickly recovered his composure. "Harry . . . What're you doing here?"

"Freezing to death if you don't add another log to the fire," came the Agency founder's brusque reply. "It's Christmas, Austin; or haven't you heard?"

"Spies work on Christmas, too." Smyth poked at the glowing embers, urging the newly added log to light.

Harry drew the poker from the other man's hand. "Go home, Austin. Cristina and I will hold the fort."

Smyth looked around, noticing Harry's regal-looking companion for the first time.

"Yes," he replied with a touch of sibilance. "I suppose you will."

~And tomorrow is Christmas day~

One by one, the churchgoers filed out of the National Cathedral and into the crisp night air. Two teenaged boys and a middle-aged man then poured into a sedan. "Let's get you home to your mom," the older man, addressed the two boys.

"Dad," one of the gangly young men in the back seat spoke up hesitantly.

"Yeah," his father responded.

"This was nice; I'm glad we got to spend some time alone with you."

"Me, too, Jamie. Me, too." Joe King navigated the narrow streets of Arlington and came to rest in front of a white house.

"Be good, you two. Merry Christmas."

*~The Tidal Basin stands empty
The tourists have found their way home~*

"On a night like this, it's sometimes easy to forget what we do for a living." Francine laced her fingers more tightly with those of her companion. "It's nice - pretending to be just like everyone

else for a change."

"No, Francine," he responded, letting go of her hand to wrap his arm around her waist. "You don't want that. It's in your nature to be different; it's why I'm head-over-heels in love with you."

She looked up at him, contemplating his words and then asked, "How come you're always right?"

"It's part of my charm," he deadpanned, his eyes twinkling behind thick tortoiseshell glasses.

After a beat, she stopped in her tracks and posed another question. "How much have you had to drink tonight, Efram?"

"Not a drop." His answer came swift and sure.

"Let's get married."

He blanched. "Francine, you can't be serious . . ."

She interrupted him. "I'm dead serious. Lee and Amanda did it; why can't we?"

"Because I'm not Lee . . . and you're not Amanda. It took you two years to finally agree to even have a drink with me," he continued to protest.

"Well, I'm glad I did - I never would've known all the things we have in common." She squeezed his hand. "Will you at least think about it?"

He smiled and planted a kiss on her forehead. "Of course."

~Mr. Jefferson's standing the midwatch~

"Merry Christmas, Oleg." The man stepped out of the shadows to greet his companion.

"Christmas is a religious holiday - more opium of the masses and an excuse to participate in bourgeois capitalist excess," Oleg commented.

His companion thought for a moment, neither affirming nor refuting the statement. "What do you suppose Mr. Jefferson would think now? Knowing a religious holiday is also a national holiday." He read aloud from the inscription above the statue, "No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship ministry or shall otherwise suffer on account of his opinions in matters of religion."

"Da, Alexi," Oleg responded. "Mr. Jefferson would have made a good Marxist."

"Nyet," Alexi countered. "He was revolutionary, but he was no Marxist. Still," he added after a beat, "there is not so much difference between us and them."

Oleg regarded him closely. "You are still going to go through with it?"

Alexi made no comment, but merely nodded. Oleg shook his head slowly, before holding out a small envelope. "Take this, then. You will need it."

~There's a star over Capitol Dome~

Traffic on Independence Avenue, normally heavy, was all but non-existent. A lone cab driver, slowed to a stop in front of the Capitol steps. "Thank you." The passenger handed him a fifty-dollar bill. "Keep the change; merry Christmas."

"Thank *you*," the driver answered and pulled away.

The man stood for a moment, studying the skyline. "God bless, America," he whispered, his voice husky. Then, with a determined gait, he strode in the direction of a lone guard standing watch. "Good evening, sir," he addressed the officer. "My name is Alexi Nabokov; I want to defect."

*~It's Christmas Eve in Washington
America's hometown
It's here that freedom reigns
And peace can stand her ground*

*It's Christmas Eve in Washington
Our joyous wish to you
Is for peace, love, and laughter
To last the whole year through~*

*~Snowmen peek in through the windows
It's warm with love inside~*

"Jeannie, what are you doing?" William Melrose tied the sash on his robe more tightly as he followed his wife downstairs.

She threw the door open, and raced outside, before turning back to answer him. "It's snowing, Bill! Go get the girls."

"It's past ten," he argued weakly as his wife continued to spin amidst the falling flakes.

"It's Christmas Eve, and it's snowing," she offered by way of counter-argument. "Go get the girls."

"Okay," he smiled softly and nodded, turning to go fetch their daughters.

*~Round the tree the children gather
Awaiting Santa's midnight ride~*

"Mom . . . Lee! We're home," Philip called as he threw the front door open. "Oh, hey, Munchkin," he added, noticing his infant sister in his mother's arms.

"Welcome back," Amanda answered him from the couch. "How was the service?"

"Alright, I guess," Jamie offered. "The music was nice, but the sermon went on *forever*." He rolled his eyes to emphasize the last word.

Lauren chose that moment to yawn, as though agreeing with her older brother's assessment. "Looks like someone's getting sleepy," Amanda commented. "And you two should be in bed, too."

It's after ten. Santa won't come until you're asleep."

"Mo-THER," Philip groaned.

"You never know . . ." she smiled cryptically. "I've had some pretty magical Christmases.

They both shook their heads, but followed her upstairs nevertheless.

*~Mom and Dad are counting their blessings
Reflecting on all they've done
So thankful for another Christmas Eve
In Washington~*

"Magical Christmases?" Lee asked once she'd returned downstairs.

She nodded, joining him on the couch. "I can think of a few . . . more since I've met you."

"Funny . . ." He smiled down at her. "I could say the same thing."

"Russians," she said, the one word loaded with meaning.

"That," he agreed, "but it's more. Family . . . love . . . all those words that didn't mean much until I knew you. You've given me a reason to look forward to the holiday." He wrapped his arm around her and drew her head down to his shoulder. "Merry Christmas, Mrs. Stetson."

END