

Christmas Blue

by Lady Dragonsinger

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Chapter 1 of 1

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It was December, and the holidays were only a few weeks away, less than a month actually. She sat at her kitchen table, cradling a mug of hot chocolate in her hands. There was a cold inside her that had not gone away for a while now, and she wondered if the warmth of the mug could flow through her skin and veins and melt that horrid cold. Arthur and Ron had gone out to search for the perfect tree, which meant it would be way too tall and bare spots to be covered up with ornaments and tinsel. It was the kind of tree they found every year, and it would not have been the same if the tree reeked of perfection because then it would not be a Weasley tree. It just would not have seemed right.

This year, however, she sat there, and a part of her wished they would come back without one so they would not have to then have the ensuing family decorating party. This year, Hermione and Harry would be joining them, as would Fleur and Percy's new girlfriend. That was not the problem though. It was not the fact that there would be new people there to join the fun. What left a cold place in her heart were the one who would not join them, the thought of which caused tears to well up in her eyes.

Brushing her hand across them to dry the tears before they fell, Molly heard the kitchen door push open just a bit and thought Arthur and Ron had already returned, but there was no one to be seen. No person that is because in a few moments after hearing the initial noise, Molly found herself confronted by a green toad, a very familiar green toad. "Trevor!" she exclaimed, both surprised and delighted. "Are you out visiting again while Neville's working?" she asked, managing a small smile for the little familiar.

Trevor looked at Molly with what could only be described as a curious gaze before taking on a look of sadness as he somehow sensed hers. Seeing the look on his countenance, Molly asked him, "You miss him too?" Occasionally, the twins would involve Trevor in an exploit or two during their time at Hogwarts, which was usually when Neville thought his toad had gotten lost again.

Trevor seemed to nod, or maybe it was just Molly's imagination that he was answering her question. She never was sure exactly how much the little fellow actually did communicate. "It just does not seem right celebrating with him gone," she finally came out and admitted for the first time not just to anyone else but to herself. "You're not supposed to bury your child. It's just not right." Molly did not hold back the tears this time.

For the past seven months, Molly had been doing her best to be the strong one. Arthur needed her after Fred's death. George needed someone to help him through the loss of not just a brother but his twin. The others needed someone to be there as they coped with the loss of a sibling. So it was that Molly had pushed back her own grief and did what she did best, take care of her family. It was her grief that was locked up and cold in her heart and had been keeping the normal joy she felt in preparing for the holidays from growing. Tonight, she rested her head in her arms and cried harder than she ever had in her life as a small toad named Trevor moved closer and rested his head against hers.

Molly had no idea how much time had passed while she cried and sobbed but when she did stop, there were no more tears left in her to shed. Still Trevor remained as she dried her eyes and gathered her senses about her once more. "You know, for a little toad that does not speak, you seem to give great advice, Trevor," she told him with a smile. The pain was not gone. Molly knew it never would be, but now it could begin to work itself out to something she could live with day by day. "You make sure you bring

that Neville over here for Christmas," she told Trevor before lifting him off the table and setting him on the floor by the back door. As he hopped out and across the field heading back to his master, Molly waved and watched till he was out of sight. Once Trevor was gone, she turned back to the stove to heat more milk for hot chocolate for when Arthur and Ron returned.