

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

by Keppiehed

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Prompt(s): #25, Ancient fruitcake that's been passed on family to family, year to year because everyone's too afraid to eat it ; #62, The Death Eaters go about asking for Christmas Day off.

Warnings: crack!, implied slash

Disclaimer: This all belongs to J.K. Rowling.

A/N: Written for the Mini-fest. I usually go for angst, but this veered off the edge into unmitigated weirdness and crack. So sorry, this was just strange! I have no idea why my muse went this way for Christmas!

"Er, Ron? What *is* that thing?" Harry whispered, pointing to the desiccated lump sitting on the sideboard. It was unidentifiable, but it looked to Harry to be some sort of mummified pudding. Or a rock. But why would the Weasleys have a fossil on their holiday table? It didn't make sense.

"Oi, I dunno." Ron wrinkled his nose. "I always thought it was some kind of art project Ginny made when she was a kid. You know how sentimental Mum is. But you think she'd have the sense to move it during the Christmas feast. Lemme throw it away; she'll never notice. It's a right ugly thing, isn't it?"

As Ron got up to throw the offending lump in the bin, Mrs. Weasley let out a yell that cut through the holiday chatter. "Ronald! Where are you going with the fruitcake?"

"Fruitcake?" He gazed at the atrocity. "This is a fruitcake?"

"Of course! Your Great Aunt Callidora made it, years ago! Or was it from Aunt Charis?" Molly frowned. "Arthur! Who was it who liked fruitcake so much?"

Mr. Weasley took a bite of pumpkin pie and mumbled something noncommittal.

"Well, I know at one point Bilius definitely had it, and then he gave it back to Cedrella. Yes! That's how it went. The last time I saw her, Lucretia asked me to keep it. So we've had it since."

The whole table fell silent at the shocking admission.

"Mum! You're barmy! It's older than Dumbledore, that's what it is. Throw it out!" Ron shouted. "It isn't even safe to have in the house. Ugh!" He seemed to realize what he was touching, and he dropped it onto the platter and shivered. It made a dull thunk when it hit, threatening to shatter the china. His face turned a little green, if Harry wasn't mistaken.

"Ronald! That isn't the way of the fruitcake! It's bad luck to toss out a gift made with such love! Didn't I raise you better than that?" Mrs. Weasley's distress was loud in the overcrowded dining room of the Burrow.

"Mrs. Weasley, I think I may have a solution. I know someone who needs a fruitcake. Ron and I could deliver it this afternoon, if you'd let us," Harry offered. "It would have to leave the family, but I'm sure he'd appreciate it. This family doesn't get home-cooked meals often."

"Harry, love, you're always such a joy." Molly teared up. "What holiday spirit. Of course you and Ronald can go out. Do you hear that, Ron? A charity visit will be good for you."

The family returned to the meal, and Ron scowled at Harry. "Thanks a lot, mate. And whoever you have in mind isn't going to thank you for *that*."

"Oh, I know." Harry grinned. "That's kind of the point."

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The bell rang at Malfoy Manor. Lucius happened to be passing by, and though it was considered bad manners for someone in his position to answer the summons himself, he decided to do just that. When he pulled open the door, there was no one there. Sitting on the front stoop, however, was a brightly colored package with a red velvet ribbon on top. He lifted it up. It was heavier than he would have expected for such a small gift. Lucius opened it with care and recoiled when he saw a desecration of what appeared to be ossified fruitcake from the early nineteenth century. Or possibly before.

Lucius' eyebrows knitted in confusion. He couldn't be sure, but he was fairly certain that he'd seen this self-same fruitcake at Aunt Walburga's server about a decade ago, for Christmas dinner.

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"My Lord?"

"Yes? What is it?" Voldemort was in a testy mood. He didn't know why, but he always seemed to get into a funk this time of year.

"Er ... well ..." Fenrir was hard to understand at the best of times, what with the fangs and all, but when he mumbled he was particularly unintelligible.

"What? Spit it out, you moron!" Voldemort felt his temper fray. He didn't have the patience for tongue-tied werewolves. Not today.

"Well, boss ..."

"Don't call me boss!" Voldemort shrieked. "How many times have I told you? Huh? It's 'My Lord' or 'Your Highness' ... something majestic, you imbecile! I'm not a member of some underbelly thug organization! Can you get it straight for a minute?"

"Yes, bo—My Lord." Fenrir looked down at the stone floor.

Not for the first time, Voldemort wondered why he surrounded himself with people fit only for the lunatic fringe. "Well, what is it?"

"Uh ..." Fenrir looked as nervous as someone with limited facial expressions could. "See, the guys have been talking ..."

"The guys? Really?" Voldemort rolled his eyes. "I suppose you're here for Union wages. What, you want a raise now? You're going on strike?"

"No! No!" Fenrir looked alarmed. "Nothing like that! We were just wondering if, maybe ... well, it is Christmas and all ..."

"Yes? What of it? I haven't got all day!" Voldemort examined his nails. They were getting kind of nasty. It was hard to get by when no one would give him a mani-pedi anymore. It wasn't like there was a charm for that sort of thing. And no one thought of the practicalities when they started into a life of crime.

"Can we have the day off?" Fenrir blurted.

Voldemort paused. "What ... did you just ask me?"

Fenrir trembled.

"You dare to ask me if you get a day *off*? You think that evil gets to rest? Aw, look at me!" Voldemort mocked, "I'm a Death Eater, and I want Saint Nick to bring me a stocking full of presents! Is that it? Is that what you think?" Voldemort was shouting.

Fenrir nodded. "Yeah. I really hope for a toy train this year. I've asked every year, and I only get a set of jacks. Secretly, I think me Mum—"

Voldemort flew into a rage. "I'm not your girlfriend here! Do I look like I want to hear your secrets and have a sleepover and braid your hair? No! No, I do not! And I don't give a flying fig about Saint Nick! He's never done a thing for me, so I don't see why—"

"My Lord." The smooth voice of Lucius Malfoy cut through Voldemort's tantrum. "Might I offer a few words?"

Voldemort stuck out his lip. Which he hoped people noticed wasn't easy for him, being all snakey and having fangs and all. "What?"

Lucius approached the throne. "It would be a show of *enormous* generosity on your behalf to bestow upon your minions a Yuletide holiday."

"Why should I?" Voldemort asked, still petulant.

"I have a gift for you, as well. I should very much like to give it to you," Lucius said.

Voldemort perked up. He'd been working on Malfoy a long time. That man was yummy, there was no doubt about it. He had hair that would make a teenaged girl wet herself in jealousy. Maybe his Christmas wish would come true, after all ... ? He nodded at Fenrir. "You may all take a holiday. Enjoy! Get out."

"Thank you, boss," Fenrir said, and ran off to spread the unexpected good news.

"Now, about that gift ..." purred Voldemort. He reached up to untie the top laces of his robe. "I don't have to wait until midnight, do I?"

"Most assuredly not, My Lord," Lucius said. He smiled and held out a rather small, but brightly colored gift with a red velvet ribbon on top. "Happy Christmas, My Lord."

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