

Inspector Sue Sharp: Sue's Christmas Fantasy

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Sue wasn't sure if it was the blizzard outside or the warm eggnog in her mug that was making her sentimental. It was probably a combination of both. It was Christmas Eve and she was alone by the window, wearing unflattering flannel pajamas and wrapped in the comforter from her bed, while she watched the snow fall. She'd had the chance to go to the annual Federal Bureau of Pettification's Holiday Party, Robert probably would have been there, but she'd used the weather as an excuse not to go.

"Merry Christmas..." She muttered and took another sip of eggnog. Unsurprisingly, Sue hadn't felt very festive, and she wasn't much of a cook, but she'd decided to take the time to make real eggnog just like her grandma used to. Of course, as a substitute for family or friends she quadrupled the amount of brandy in the recipe.

Her head was swimming after half a mug. She drank too much and too often, but she still got drunk too easily. She would have been a cheap date if she ever went on a date. The ghosts of happier Christmases past were blessedly drowned and that was all that mattered. Without that dead weight she could stare out into blinding snowfall and think about whatever she wanted.

A black van pulled into her building's parking lot. Despite its dark color, its bright headlights and red brake lights made it festive in her eyes. The snow was coming down so hard that the van's tire tracks seemed to disappear as fast as they could be made. Sue wiped the fog off the window and squinted. She recognized the logo on the side, a simple red dog paw with a white circle surrounding it. It was the FBP's "dog catchers" known officially as, "Service Animal Control." Their main job was picking up ComPets that had been seized because their owners were non-compliant with providing the pitifully low minimum living standards for them. Sue had worked with them a few times in that capacity. They were more famously known, however, for being in charge of capturing any Compulsory Pettification draftees who didn't report to the FBP on their appointed date.

The van rolled past her window and was soon out of her sight. Sue took another sip and shuddered. One way or another, someone was going to have a much more awful Christmas than her! The wind was howling so loud that she almost didn't hear the knock at the door. She furrowed her brow and padded across the floor towards the door, still wrapped in her blanket. There was a second, louder knock, followed by some shouting that she couldn't quite make out.

The door crashed open, shouting men in black poured inside along with the icy wind and snow. Sue screamed and fell back in surprise. Her cup flew out of her hand as she sprawled and

the eggnog, which had thankfully cooled, splashed her across her face. Before she could even recover she felt strong hands grabbing her arms and legs and a voice boom, “Lisa Allison Morrison! You are in violation of your draft order! By the authority of the FBP we are taking you into custody for pettification!”

Sue was too stunned by the cold and sudden violence to respond to the outrageous claim.

“Restrain her, boys, and get her in a crate! If we hurry up we can still make the second half of the FBP party!”

Sue finally found her voice, “No!” She yelled and thrashed helplessly. “I’m not Lisa! I’m Sue Sharp! *Inspector*- Sue-Sharp! I work for the FBP too!”

The men laughed and the one who’d spoken earlier said, “I’ve heard some desperate crap in my day, but that’s about the best! Muzzle her—come on hurry up!”

“You idiots!” Sue snarled. “Check my ID! Call my partner, detective--!” Sue was cut off as she felt hard, black, silicon against her lips. When she closed her mouth and tried to turn away, gloved hands roughly forced her back. She felt her nose pinched and her jaw squeezed until she opened with a gasp and the “knot” slipped in and filled her small mouth. Tears sprang to her eyes as she gagged when the bulbous thing skimmed her tonsils as the muzzle was buckled into place.

With the efficiency of a race car pit crew, the dog catchers bent Sue’s arms and legs painfully in half and secured them with nylon straps. They flipped her over on her knees and elbows and laughed as she groaned and teetered uncertainly.

“Come on, dog! Move it!” One of them slapped her on the rump to urge her forward through the door of a hard plastic service animal carrier. Still off balance Sue fell face-forward into the carrier, striking the black leather panel on the front of the muzzle and forcing the knot deeper into her throat. Sue gagged as she was shoved roughly the rest of the way inside.

The door slammed behind her and she was tossed around as the dog catchers carried the crate out to their van. There was one last rough jolt as she was loaded. Then the engine roared to life and they drove off with her into the snowy night.

Once Sue had learned how to manage the knot filling her mouth and accepted that she was just going to have to drool, her fear had melted away and been replaced by pure rage. She was to make sure that everyone involved in what would no doubt be referred to as a “minor administrative glitch” fired. They could downplay it all they wanted, but she was going to raise hell until she got some justice. She was so angry that she ignored the nagging little voice in the

back of her head which reminded her that the stance the FBP always took in such matters was, “The ComPet program is a flawless system. It doesn’t make mistakes.”

There wasn’t enough space in the carrier for Sue to turn around. She would have preferred to be facing the door when it finally opened. Instead, the first thing that the person or persons who had opened the door would have seen would be the backside of her pajama pants. Sue tensed as she felt strong hands hauling her out of the crate.

She squinted in the harsh light of the room as she was pulled out onto a cold metal table that hurt her knees and her elbows.

“Is this the last one for the night? I want to go to the party before they drink up the whole open bar!” A gruff man’s voice asked.

“Yes, let’s pluck it and get it out of here! I got a date waiting for me!” Another man replied.

Sue tried to speak, but the knot made her choke. She looked up at the two men desperately, but they ignored her wide eyes and unintelligible noises. She reminded herself to be patient. They’d have to take the muzzle off sometime and then she’d explain.

“Hold it still!” The gruff man ordered.

She whimpered as she felt the cold metal of the shears against her skin and she heard the *snip* as they sliced through her pajamas—her most comfortable and snuggly set. She felt the heat of the lamp hanging above even as she shivered from the cold of the room. Sue shut her eyes and shook her head as she felt her panties being cut away. It was humiliating enough when she’d had to strip in front of Donna, having two men cut away her clothes was unbearable even before one of them reached down and squeezed her small breasts.

“Haha, look at these little, bitty teats! Not even a handful! I feel sorry for whoever gets her!” He squeezed harder. Sue tried to scream but she only succeeded in choking herself on the knot again. “Stop whining, bitch! Maybe if I squeeze them hard enough they’ll swell and then they won’t be so damn tiny!”

“Cut that out!” The gruff man snapped. “Don’t bruise it!”

“Alright, alright! Jeez, where’s your Christmas spirit?”

With similar efficiency to the dog catching crew, the two men unbuckled her “forelegs” and “hind legs.” Sue was past trying to be calm and explain herself. The moment she was free she tried to leap off the table, but she was held firm as they took the padded leather restraints from each corner of the table and shackled her wrists and ankles. Sue thrashed back and forth;

fighting the restraints even though she knew full well that it was pointless having worn them before.

The man who'd squeezed her "teats" wrapped his arm around her bare midsection and held her still, while the other fixed a metal bar under her hips to prevent her from lowering her haunches.

The men checked the restraints to make sure they were secure, made a few notes and headed towards the door without a word to her. Sue knew the groomer would be coming in next. Her heart leapt. Donna loved her job. If there was one groomer who'd be willing to work on Christmas Eve it would be her.

Her hopes were shattered when she saw a dark haired, sour faced, middle aged woman come through the door followed by a young man in a lab coat. The woman lowered her face to meet Sue's and said sternly, "Listen here, pup. If little girls like you didn't try to run from their social responsibilities, then *I* and this nice young tech here could be spending this evening celebrating.. Instead, we're here taking care of errant little puppies like you! So, think about how selfish you are, and behave yourself while I get you ready."

Sue blinked back tears and strained against the restraints to try and point at the muzzle.

"No. It stays on, pup! You won't be talking like a person again for two years—at least two years. You might as well get used to it!"

Sue had hated Donna's playful, patronizing voice and somewhat, overly friendly touch the first time she'd been on a grooming table, but Sue quickly realized how much she missed the gentler approach. The new groomer's hands were cold as they were rough as she ran her fingers over Sue's hairless mound.

"Well, well, running from the draft, but we've already got nice and clean puppy parts! It's almost as if you were getting ready to be caught!"

Sue grimaced and tried to wiggle away, but the restraints and the bar under her hips kept her at the groomer's mercy.

"*And* your coat is already the standard length. Yes, I think someone *was* getting ready for this!" The woman tugged none-too-gently on Sue's hair, brushed it harshly and then put it up into high "dog ears."

"Oh, the boy's forgot your glasses!" The groomer snatched, Sue's frames from her face making her vision terribly blurry. "Dumb doggies don't need glasses! No more reading or TV for you!" She gloated and tossed the frames into the garbage.

Sue squinted and grunted in frustration as she lost control of one more thing.

With the help of the tech to hold her, the groomer released each of Sue's appendages from the restraints and slid the paw mittens onto each hand, and the paw slippers over her feet. They were dark, just a shade or two lighter than her hair with the typical pink pads on the bottoms of the paws. Her hands were forced into tight balls as the mittens were buckled and locked. The panic she felt the last time she'd been put into paw mittens was increased tenfold as she knew that unless she managed to say something, they wouldn't be on her for just a few days. How would she wear them for two, or, as the groomer had darkly hinted, more years? Sue wondered as the groomer applied heart-shaped pads over her pointing, pink nipples.

"My, my..." the groomer flicked Sue's stiff nipple, "it could be the cold, but I think this little pup is enjoying it!"

The tech chuckled.

"You'd think if she was just going to enjoy it this much she would have volunteered before she'd been drafted!"

The groomer made it a point to show Sue the plug on the end of the tail. She held the black tail by the tip and waved it back and forth like a cartoon hypnotist with a watch. Sue stared in disbelief. It wasn't the "runt-sized" one that she'd gotten before. It was a full standard plug and it looked huge to her.

Sue shook her head frantically and tried to speak again. As before only gibberish managed to spill out from behind the muzzle.

"What's that? You're excited for your new tail? Great! All slutty, little puppies love their tails, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised!"

As the groomer walked around behind her, Sue tugged frantically at the restraints and strained against the bar under her hips in a vain attempt to lower her backside. All the while a stream of unintelligible nonsense continued to emit from her muzzle.

The groomer gave Sue a stinging slap on her butt, making her be still for a moment. Then without hesitation she pressed the thoroughly lubed plug against Sue's tight, little crinkled bud.

Sue screeched as the hard plug forced her open. She never would have believed that she'd miss the old plug as the huge intrusion stretched her and hurt her. She was panting and sweating as her muscles clenched around the invader. Sue never really "forgot" that the runt-sized plug was in her like Donna promised, but she did get used to its presence. She couldn't imagine ever getting used to the full sized one! Yet, the feeling of fullness and the

degradation of it made Sue feel funny. She reared up at the feel of the same cold, cruel fingers sliding along her slit.

“See, what did I tell you? The little animal is *wet!*” The groomer declared triumphantly as she affixed the c-string to the tail. Sue moaned. It couldn’t have been arousal. It couldn’t have been. Yet, she thought of all her dirty little fantasies when she was alone and she knew that it was.

The groomer turned to the tech. “Why don’t you take care of your part and then you can get out of here?”

“Great! Thanks!” The tech replied.

The tech approached Sue with something that looked like a hole-punch in one hand, and a kind of plastic apparatus that looked like a pricing gun. Sue’s eyes widened and she began to struggle again. She was going to be tagged and branded! If that happened, even when she finally did get a chance to sort things out, she’d be stuck with the markings for the rest of her life!

The groomer held her steady as the tech approached. “Be still. You wouldn’t want it to go on crooked!”

The hard plastic rested on Sue’s left buttock for only a split second. Sue howled and choked herself on the knot as she felt her flesh burn.

“Oh, look at little miss drama queen over here!” The groomer held her tighter as the gun was placed against Sue’s trembling belly.

She screamed again and felt her bladder release.

“Disgusting...” the groomer said with revulsion. “She’s already acting like a dog that hasn’t been housebroken yet...”

Sue was crying quietly, so intent on the horrible burning on her butt and belly and what that meant, that she gasped in surprise when they grabbed her head and the glorified hole-punch pressed against her ear.

The snapping sound was almost as awful as the pain.

Neither the tech nor the groomer made it a point to comfort her. After giving Sue a clinical once over, the tech gathered up his tools and said to the groomer, “Merry Christmas!” before going out the door.

“And a happy New Year!” the groomer called after him and then turned her attention back to Sue. “Well, now little Miss I’m too special to be a puppy girl...now you’re just a number. Don’t ever forget that!”

Sue whimpered pathetically. Even the worst times when she was undercover at the kennel, there was a part of her that knew it was only temporary. The physical pain was nothing compared to knowing that she was marked for life.

After buckling a standard black, leather collar around Sue’s neck, the groomer placed the last piece of gear on her, a comically large set of pointy black ears with pink insides, or perhaps they only seemed large because they were standard gear on a runt-sized pup.

The groomer picked up a remote and hit a few buttons. Sue suddenly got that uncanny feeling that someone was looking over her shoulder. Though she was expecting it, she tensed as she heard a strong mechanical voice inside her head, “Petsitter B-Series – Mark 1 online...Standby mode...” Then she heard the same voice only out loud. “Running equipment diagnostic...Reward...”

Sue braced and sucked on the knot as the nipple covers, c-string, and tail plug all vibrated at once. It felt so good! It was like a thousand tiny fingers massaging her most sensitive and private places. She shook happily and sucked harder in spite of all she’d been through and the disapproving stare of the groomer.

“Correction...” the voice said aloud.

The pleasure ceased and without a second in between a horrible shock ripped through her in all the same places, with the collar and the dog ears doing the same to add to her agony. Though the shock only lasted for a moment, she slumped over, nearly senseless. The last time the gear had been modified to be “less-intense.” The full fury of a standard “correction” made Sue *want* to behave. She wondered why a puppy girl would ever disobey with the threat of such an intense shock over her head all the time.

The groomer nodded in approval and wiped up the puddle of urine, taking care to clean up Sue while she was at it. All the while she muttered about what a disgusting and out of control animal Sue was. When she’d finished, the groomer unbuckled Sue’s muzzle and pulled it off. Sue’s skin under the panel was clammy. The drool that had been pooling in her mouth came out like a fountain and dribbled between Sue’s front paws.

“You are without a doubt that messiest puppy I have ever seen!” The groomer scolded and wiped up the puddle. “And just look at your snout!” She grabbed Sue’s chin and began to wipe that too. “It’s filthy!” She said at the dried eggnog Sue had spilled on herself during her capture.

When the groomer had finished cleaning her, Sue opened her mouth. She wanted to say everything that evening had been a mistake, but remembering the feeling of the full shock made her pause. She mouthed desperately, "Please, I'm Inspector Sue Sharp! This is a mistake!"

The groomer sneered at her, "What's the girl? You're ready to go? Well come on, we don't want to keep everyone waiting now do we?" She pressed a button on the wall next to the door and a few moments later a ComPet handler in gray overalls showed up to take her.

Sue sobbed quietly as the groomer clipped a leash to her collar and the man in the overalls lifted her and placed her down on the floor. The groomer and the handler exchanged "Merry Christmases" and then Sue was led out of the room into the hallway.

Half-blind without her glasses and so lost in her misery, Sue didn't pay attention to where she was going. All new ComPets went to the awful, tiny kennels in the basement of the building. What a way for her to spend Christmas!

To her surprise she found herself taken to an office with a row of large, brightly wrapped boxes each with holes punched in the sides. Several of the packages shifted a bit from side to side and she could hear whimpering and crying from some of them. Her ears perked up at a different sound. In the distance she could hear music and laughter. The FBP holiday party must have been happening nearby.

"I've got the last one for you!" The handler called to a pair of what looked like office workers. Both of whom were standing next to the only open box in the row. Sue's hopes that they would be someone that would recognize her were dashed as she realized she didn't know either the man or the woman.

"Wow, what a sorry little mess!" the woman exclaimed. "They were really scraping the bottom of the barrel weren't they?"

"I know," the man replied. "All these giveaways aren't exactly purebreds! I guess that's why they're giveaways."

Sue ignored the remarks and instead squinted at the door. The handler had left it open when he brought her inside. If she could just get off the leash and get away for a few minutes, maybe she could reach the party. She shuddered at the thought of scampering into the room on all fours. Everyone would see her. There'd be a chance though that she'd see Donna, Mr. Cross, or even Robert and they could save her from the whole mess.

The handler stood by, holding her leash as the two office workers set to "decorate" her starting with tying big red and green striped ribbons on her dog ears. Sue crossed her eyes and tried to look docile as they attached tiny silver "sleigh bells" to her nipple pads, to the tip of her tail, and to her collar. The woman wrote something on a small, red and green card in pen. Sue

couldn't see the writing, but the woman taped it over the c-string, giving it a little pat to make sure it stuck.

"She seems pretty calm; can you take the leash off while we tie the bow around her neck?"

The handler nodded and unclipped the leash. Sue took the only chance she knew that she would have. Against all hope she darted for the open door. She only managed to get three strides before she felt a meaty hand grab her collar and pull her back.

"Well now!" The handler laughed. "Where do we think we're going, pup?"

The office workers laughed as he dragged her back and they finished putting a big red bow around her neck.

Defeated, Sue sobbed uncontrollably as they announced they were finished and she was hefted up again and set down inside the sturdy, open box. No one said anything to her as the top was put on, sealing her in near total darkness with the only light coming from the small air holes on either side of her new, temporary prison.

It was like being in a very localized earthquake. She was tossed about as the box was carried and loaded onto presumably some kind of vehicle. The ride was bumpy and cold. Then she was roughly unloaded and dropped hard somewhere else. Somewhere that was blessedly warm.

Sue had been left in near total darkness and silence for what felt like an eternity. She tried not to think about all the gross, fat, and cruel owners she'd dealt with in her time doing ComPet welfare checks. The idea that one of them could do nearly *anything* to her filled her with fear and dread. The longer she was given to think, the more she thought about some smelly pig being her first.

Heavy footsteps outside the box told her someone was near. Her blood ran cold as she felt the box move and heard the sound of ripping paper. The top of the box opened and she shrunk to the floor and clenched her eyes shut. She whimpered fearfully as she felt a pair of strong, male hands lift her from the box as if she was nothing.

As she was lowered to the carpet her bells jingled merrily and little nose twitched at the scent of mint chewing gum. She opened her eyes and looked up to see Robert standing over her in his pajamas and bathrobe. A tall, twinkling Christmas tree was behind him.

The embarrassment of being back in puppy gear and at his feet was mitigated by the joy that she'd soon be out of it.

She raised a paw and pointed at her collar and mouthed, "Thank God it's you! Get this off!"

Even with blurry vision she could see that he was smiling at her. He didn't look the least bit surprised at seeing her either.

She pointed at the collar again, a little more emphatically.

Robert shook his head. "I know what you're thinking and the answer is, no. The collar and all the rest stay on too. For good."

Sue slowly dropped her paw and continued to stare up at him. Dread started to slowly creep in and bury her joy.

"Who do you think mixed-up the paperwork, silly girl?" Robert asked. "Well, I didn't personally, but I had it arranged. I know this isn't just what you want. It's what you need. I've seen it for months. I knew you'd never have the courage to do it, so I had it done for you!"

Sue couldn't believe her ears.

Robert reached down and flicked the bell on her collar, "I think I'll call you Jingles, at least until I come up with something better. I have to have something to call you. Sue is a woman's name...it's not a name for cute, little doggy."

Sue shook her head and mouthed, "No. Please. I don't want this!"

Robert held up the remote. "Stop lying. Better, yet, stop trying to talk at all. Doggies don't talk!"

Sue closed her mouth. She wasn't lying. Was she?

"That's better. I wouldn't want to start our new relationship by punishing you. I'd much rather do this." He pushed several buttons on the remote and Sue heard inside her head, "Good dog" as the nipple pads, c-string, and tail plug started vibrating intensely.

Sue gritted her teeth and tried to be still. She wouldn't give him the satisfaction! But it was not long before a stray whimper escaped her lips. She began to rock back and forth as she trembled under the pleasurable onslaught. She felt herself climbing and climbing and climbing. She'd never been put into "in heat" mode. She'd just been given a few quick bursts of pleasure for good behavior a few times. Being put into heat was totally different. Her whining became

louder as she lowered her face to the ground, raised her butt and started to wag her tail involuntarily.

“That’s right. Good doggy, Jingles!” Robert praised.

Instead of making her angry, his praise just made the tingling, burning, excitement between her legs all the more intense. He let her climb and climb as her whines became louder and louder and more and more desperate and wretched.

Drool dripped down her chin as she panted and shook. The juices from her pulsing, needy puppy parts began to leak out of the sides of the c-string and down her thighs as the fierce vibrating continued.

She was moments away from having an orgasm at his feet and under his unmoving gaze when the buzzing stopped. Still shaking, she looked up at him with confusion and even a little hurt. How could he have stopped when she was so close?

Robert smirked and stepped around behind her.

“Eyes forward!” He commanded and Sue obeyed even though she knew what he was going to do to her, or *because* of what he was going to do to her.

She trembled as she heard him pulling his pants down and kneeling behind her. He reached down and took the card that the office woman had taped to her crotch and read it.

“Don’t open until Xmas...” He mumbled and then laughed. “Well, it’s Xmas!”

Sue could barely hear him through the haze of arousal.

He reached down and pulled off her c-string, exposing her twitching, grasping little slit. The bell on the tip jingled as Sue wagged her tail faster and faster. She yelped when Robert’s strong hands slapped down on both sides of her shaking hips.

“Bark for it, Jingles. Bark!”

Sue didn’t have to think, she just had to obey, and she did. She let out a series of frantic, high-pitched yips. She panted loudly between each bark as she let her tongue loll in and out of her open mouth.

“I think you can do better than that!”

Sue tensed as she felt Robert’s thick, slick head against her silky, quivering opening. She whined piteously as she tried to press against him to force him inside of her, but Robert held her

firm. Her pretense of dignity, resistance, and even her usual prudishness and anxiety had all melted away.

Her woeful entreaty seemed to have worked. Her eyes popped open as she felt him sliding inside of her, stretching her, and hurting her and pleasuring her with each motion. She reached out, trying to keep her face from being smashed into the carpet and to grip something to help endure the mixture of pain and pleasure passing through her whole tiny body. Her pawed hands offered no such relief, so she screwed her eyes shut and squealed loudly as it continued inch by inch, millimeter by millimeter.

Finally, she felt his pelvis resting against her. Sue felt so full—so overwhelmed. She wanted to move on it, to wiggle and play, but Robert kept her in an iron grip.

He bent down, his hard body rested against her soft back, and whispered in her ear, “Good puppy...” He praised, his lips and his hot breath tickled her and exited her as much as his approval. Robert slid slowly and gently out of her making her whimper again and struggle to move. He drove back inside of her faster and harder making her grunt. Then withdrew and drove in again. Slowly he built up rhythm and speed, driving into her, then almost pulling out of her, then driving into her again.

Sue gave up trying to hold herself up, she felt her cheek starting to get rug burn, but she didn’t care. Robert pulled her hips back into him with each thrust, guiding her and keeping her under strict control. When he finally released her hips and took her little breasts in his hands Sue followed his guidance and pressed against his assault, keeping the same rhythm and pace he’d set for her.

Robert fondled and squeezed her breasts as he continued to ride her. He sunk down again, his sweaty skin sliding against her own glowing flesh, and praised her, “Good puppy...good puppy...you know, you’re going to give me the most beautiful litters...”

Sue gave a start. It was all happening so fast. Wasn’t she just sitting in her own chair, in her own pajamas, by the window in her own apartment? It hadn’t even been a full day since she had been captured, tagged, and branded. She’d been stripped of her independence and dignity and was in the process of being stripped of her virginity. She was barely twenty-one and hadn’t even considered being a mother. She didn’t think she was ready, but it wasn’t her decision to make.

She whimpered and tried to crawl away even as she was still moving her hips and her sloppy, grasping little hole still practically clung to him. Robert grabbed her shoulders and whispered, “Uh-uh, little puppy, you don’t get to decide. *I* get to decide.”

Something about his voice made her stop trying to get away. Instead she lowered her face back to the floor and opened and presented herself. Robert's thrusts became faster and harder and Sue responded by pressing back with as much force as she could muster.

Robert groaned and Sue felt a hot sticky explosion inside of her as she clenched down on his cock to milk every last drop of him. It was unlike any orgasm Sue had ever felt before. She shook violently and let loose a series of squeaks as Robert groaned again, but more loudly.

Sue's pajamas were discarded somewhere in the apartment. She didn't know where and she didn't care. Her brain was fuzzy from stimulation and too much eggnog. She lay flat on her back with her legs splayed apart, wrapped up in her comforter on her bed. Her slack, slick fingers still idly rubbed her swollen, tired little pussy as thoughts of Robert filling her with his "litters" still lingered on the surface of her pleasantly exhausted mind. She had a dumb, but contented open mouthed smile as her eyes began to droop. She'd done it three times in a row. She'd never done it three times in a row.

It wasn't a conventional Christmas Eve, at least not for her, but at least she'd managed to make her own fun.

Who the hell was knocking at the door? Was it Christmas day? Sue's eyes creaked open. She looked at the purplish light peaking through the mini-blinds of her bedroom window. The sun was barely up. Bleary eyed and trying not to taste her own mouth, Sue wrapped her blanket around herself and shuffled to the door. She didn't need to don pajamas just to yell at whoever had woken her up.

Without even bothering to look through the peephole she ripped the door open and shouted, "Who the hell..."

She stopped and almost dropped the blanket. Robert was standing in the knee deep snow. He had a small wrapped package in his hand with a festive bow on top.

"I..." Sue stopped.

"I tried to call first, but your phone was off. I guess I caught you at a bad time, huh?" He held out the package. "Look, you said you'd be alone on Christmas and I just wanted to give you this."

Sue awkwardly took the package and stared down at it. "Uh, thanks..."

“Well...Merry Christmas!” Robert said and turned to walk back to his car.

Sue watched him go, but something inside her made her call to him. “Wait! Look, why don’t you come in for a drink or breakfast? Just, uh, give me a minute to throw something on, okay?”

Robert turned around. “You know, breakfast sounds good.”

The End