



## Cape Cod Christmas, 1957

by Jane Sarah Staffier

As I was walking out the door the phone rang. I stubbornly refused to answer it, passing the tinsel-covered tree as I grabbed my car keys.

It could be Mom with a request to find that mincemeat in the jar, which seemed to have disappeared from the planet. Or it could be the choir director anxious about the new robes that were promised for the Christmas Eve service but still had not arrived.

My mind was awl with the presents I had left to buy, the few days I had to buy them and the large bite from my small budget it would take to accomplish all of this.

I went back to the ringing phone and coolly stood over it. Deep down I knew why I didn't answer it. I was afraid it was You-Know-Who, and that was over. Would he please let it go, so I could let it go?

I was trying hard but his face was in my dreams – the last thing I saw at night, my first thought in the morning. No one I met came close to him, to what we had, to the deep-down undeniable soul mates we were to each other.

I looked at the ornamented tree again, sure to be celebrating my own blue Christmas eating a turkey with Mom. The season of peace and love seemed to have passed me by, adding another layer of misery to it all.

It underscored what I didn't have, and no one I talked to seemed to understand. If I opened one more card and a wedding picture of a cute couple fell out, I would scream out loud. Bah humbug!

Ashamed of my thoughts, I put on a smile and reached down for the receiver and heard the other party hang up. Fine, I thought. I could go on with my day.

I opened the door and a rush of cold air enveloped me. I stood there, transfixed. A huge basket on the porch took my breath away. The simple eloquence of brilliant red roses and green leaves outlined against white snow spoke volumes. I'd heard the doorbell ring as I was taking a shower, but thought no more of it. I brought them inside and felt something against my leg.

"Scottie!" The white terrier saw his chance and escaped across the yard in a trice, leaving a tell-tale trail of prints. He was already out of sight as I grabbed the leash and gave chase, glad to hear his jingle bell collar sounding in the crisp air.

What was that sound? A motorcycle nearby slowed down, then stopped. I turned the corner in time to see Scottie, tail wagging, scooped up by a laughing You-Know-Who. I slowed down to catch my breath. This is not going to be easy.



"Merry Christmas, Gigi. How's this for timing?" A naughty dog in the arms of a naughty boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend, both adorable.

"Faultless!" I said icily, reaching for Scottie's collar, trying hard not to smile.

"Did you get them?" He bent down and whispered in my ear, patting Scottie and not letting him go.

"The roses?" I feigned ignorance badly. He nodded and broke into his irresistible 200-watt smile. "Thank you, but...." I began.

"Don't be cruel, Gigi. I want to—"

"Want to what?" I broke in, proudly tossing my ponytail, remembering the past and feeling every inch his match.

"I was wrong," he said humbly. "Gigi, can you ever forgive me for what I did to what we had?"

He was melting my heart. It didn't help that Scottie also looked contrite. I sighed and went to turn away, but he took my chin with his thumb and forefinger and turned my face up to his. "Please, Gigi. I've changed. Things will be great from now on, like the old days. You'll see."

I paused to consider life without him. Life with him.

"I'm asking for a chance with you. For me. For us. You got the roses?"

"They're beau-tiful." My voice caught as a tear made its way down my cheek.

"And the note?" He brushed away my tear with his finger.

"Scottie ran out the door. I didn't have a chance to read it. Wh-what did it say?" What could it say? My heart was pounding. I thought I'd faint.

"Darlin', now, what do you think?" His navy blue eyes were directed full on me. My cheeks were fiery hot in the tingling cold. I could not turn away. "You're all I want for Christmas. Now and always. Marry me, Gigi!" With a jingle of bells, Scottie barked and sprang to the ground as he took me in his arms.

"Yes, yes, yes, Elvis!"

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