

the Gift of the Magus



JOHN
FULLER

after two hours' plodding through raving gales of snow, Della stops to peer into her greatcoat. One eye open against the sleet, she sees under her blouse an infuriated heart beating under terrible exertion.

Why has Nature ordained a blizzard to thwart one determined traveller, in appearance so like a poor servant girl returning home before her Master that a warm parlor might greet him on this *Vollmond Christi* — the Full-moon Christmas?

Because, though dreadfully poor, Della is no servant.

She is no girl, either, pursuing such ghastly ends.

For the heartbeat observable through her blouse is not Della's own, but a murdered infant's, pendant between her breasts for warmth, wrapped in waxed chamois to keep it moist.

From this writhing heart two linen-

sheathed filaments slither to a nest of powercells in Della's pocket. Electrically stimulated, even a blood-bereft heart endures a few hours. Which is all Della needs.

There's the castle at last! and her lover alighting among broken castellations, arraying ice-crazed wings. Della smiles; her sex tingles keenly.

The heart is a gift for him. Poor, dear Yakov.

Four hours previously, Yakov finally had everything ready for reanimating the wolf — a ravishing *Canis ungerska* carcass. Then the blizzard chased the hamlet's citizens indoors. Now, swooping into the market square to snatch a newborn from which to harvest the final component — an innocent heart — was foredoomed. Abandoning the lifeless wolf, he ascended tearfully to the wuthering parapet.

Yakov's half of their plan must now abide the next *Vollmond Christi*. Eighteen

years. Della watched him sorrowfully fly off.

Suddenly inspired, she dressed, and made for town through the snow. She stove in the first door behind which a mewling suckling lay.

Della knew her power. From under her skirt appeared the rag blotted with today's auspicious blood. When a man's angry face appeared, she forced the rag against it. His *bloodslept* body dropped like bricks from a roof. In the cradle, a ripe fruit with its precious stone.

Back home, she shrugs off the thick-glazed coat, shouting Yakov's name. He is in the kitchen, making the last of the expensive tea. He looks delicious. The table holds teacups and a little gift.

Della's bosom relinquishes the sweaty chamois; she dangles it. Something jumps around inside.

"Happy Christmas," she says wickedly.

Yakov's sanguine reaction bleaches into disappointment.

“What’s wrong, *thamani*?”

Then he erupts in laughter. “Oh, *szerető*, open my present!”

It contains a repulsive matted bolus of herbs, honey, straw, hare’s semen — and magic.

The *Puell’apparebit*! Della sits upon the table, astonished.

Eaten from cloth soaked in menstrea on Vollmond Christi, the Puell’apparebit enkindles conception of a daughter. The grown daughter seducing a hjärtaschakal — a human-hearted wolf — bears an indomitable, dauntless fiendling.

“But I *bloodslept* a man for this heart! For your gift, lover. Now the rag is spent, and my bleeding’s done.”

“And I traded the Crone my wolf for the *Puell’apparebit*! I wanted you to have your heart’s desire to-night.”

Della wriggles off the table and goes for him.

You can reach me at :
shortstories@dorknerdgeek.org

Gift of the Magus