

A Christmas Gift

Joe Batty never received much in the gift line at Christmas time, maybe a card from his mates at his local and a pair of socks from his home help. In his own way he was happy and content with the hand life had dealt him.

The sad thing about Joe was that he was a virgin, he had never known the warmth of a woman's body and the love that comes after. The medical people would no doubt have a name for his lack of sexual desire, but if asked about it Joe always replied, 'Never fancied it, whatever it is.'

So Joe found himself in the maelstrom known as Christmas time. The government's winter fuel allowance was soon recovered by the gas and electricity boards, so nothing new there then. The holly and the ivy were in abundance, Santa Clause looked out from every shop window. Christmas carols floated on the air and money was splashed about, if you had it to splash.

At about eleven thirty on this eve of Christmas Joe's life took a turn for the best. Don't ask me to explain why, because I cannot. The door bell rang, Joe sprang from his chair, if it was those dammed carol singers, he would soon give them short shift.

What confronted Joe was not carol singers but a young about thirty with a beard and long hair and he looked as if he was about to collapse. Joe put his arm around him and supported him to a chair, where the visitor slumped down with a sigh of relief.

Joe busied himself around the kitchen and eventually brought two slices of toast and a mug of tea for his guest. Conversation between Joe and his visitor was limited but Joe did find out he was on his way to his fathers place but had become exhausted in the cold and wet and saw Joe's light in a sea of darkness shinning like a beacon, so had rung the bell.

Joes visitor stayed over Christmas and shared Joe's frugal meals, until the time came for him to depart. On the doorstep Joe bade his friend farewell and said, 'You know, we have spent two days together and I still don't know your name.'

Joe's friend grasped Joe's hand in his and said, 'Just call me J C and thank you once again for your help,' and with that he turned and left. At the top of the street he turned and raised his hand in a final salute. Joe's swears to this there was a ring of light around his head, but on the other hand it could have been the reflection of the street lamps.

You may ask yourself, 'Did Joe receive a gift on Christmas eve, when a stranger stood on his threshold?'

Bob Mather.