

<https://linktr.ee/GrowingDesires>

606 words.

<Secret Santa>

by <Growing Desires>

## Chapter Two

Time flew by and the pressure of work mounted quickly, suddenly we were staring down the barrel of Christmas break, and luckily, me and Dean had completed all of our work. In a very timely manner, I might add. The last day was entering the final hours, but I had a sense of detachment from the office by this point. I was well and truly in holiday mode.

I was reflecting on the year and what I had achieved and everything that brought my joy was found outside of these four walls. Sure, I did a great job at work, but I found it unfulfilling, I was more interested in other things. At the start of the year, I had made a promise to myself to get into shape, not just in shape, but the best shape I had ever been in. I had destroyed that goal and then some. I wasn't ever fit and buff, even now I wasn't really buff. I didn't really gain muscle; I was just very fit. My body fat had dropped considerably since I started my health kick and I felt better for it. The gym was my second home. Despite the commitment, I didn't feel like I was quite fulfilled by the results.

I was entering my mid-thirties, and I was fitter than I had ever been.

*Why did I want more? What else did I need?*

The questions rattled about my skull, and I stared at myself in the mirror. Something wasn't right about what was looking back at me, I wanted something else.

Before I could have the epiphany, the door opened, and I nearly jumped out of my computer chair.

“You’ve not grabbed your present yet Belle.” Gary informed me. “What’s wrong? Did I startle you?”

I was clutching at my chest and breathing heavily, staring daggers into him. “No. Not at all.”

Gary was mostly oblivious to social cues or more accurately, he didn’t bother to engage unless they were in a similar position to himself. He nodded and left; he had informed us earlier in the day he was going to leave early because of “all the work he does at home”. Nobody was going to argue, obviously.

*What present is he on about?*

I stood up and walked into the staffroom and saw the Christmas tree with a few presents under it. I saw a small package with my name on it.

*I completely forgot!*

“To Belle, From Secret Santa.” I said aloud.

“Who else is it going to be from?” Dean said, making me jump for a second time.

“First Gary, then you! Can people stop spooking me!” I caught my breath and glared at Dean. “Who got you?”

“I don’t know, it is a generic men’s bath gift set.”

“Lame.” I remarked.

“I Know.” He looked at the gift in my hands. “I know who got yours.”

“Who?”

“I’ll tell you after you open it, but you might not want to open it here.”

I raised an eyebrow.

“Just, trust me.”

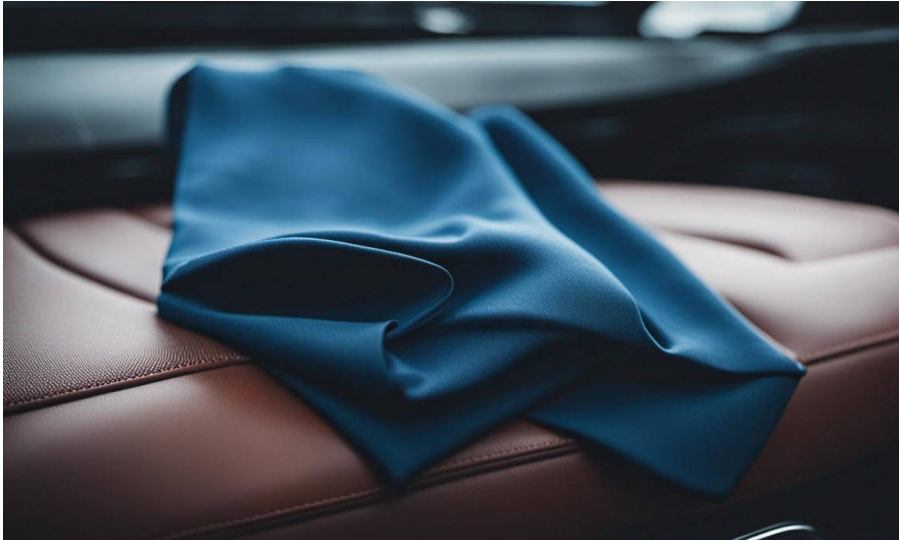
“Fine. I’ll open it in my car later.”

The day dragged itself to its conclusion and finally I was able to leave the office after a busy few weeks, finally the Christmas break was here. I grabbed my stuff, making sure to grab my present and sat myself down into my car. I quickly tore into the packaging and was shocked to find

the soft feeling of fabric; I yanked at the fabric and pulled out the garment and held it up.

The design is unique and unmistakable. I have seen this design before, on a social media platform.

*Dean.*



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