“Second Saturday of December,” Hawk intoned. “Ten a.m., Magi Pageant, complete with live animals. Four p.m., candlelighting ceremony, followed by costumed caroling around town. Sunset, the treelighting in front of Horne’s Department Store. Evening, moonlit ice skating, until everyone is tired or drunk enough to go home.”

“Good morning, Sheriff!” Lucy Brennan (née Moran) trilled as she barrelled toward the station’s pantry, arms full of doughnut boxes, baby gurgling on her back.

“Hi,” Harry said, holding the door. “Morning, Deputy!”

Hal Brennan, AKA the Littlest Deputy, waved the hand he wasn’t sticking in his mouth and squealed.

“Lucy, why don’t I set up the breakfast spread in the conference room while you get Hal squared away?”

“Thanks, Sheriff. Andy has the rest of the doughnuts...” she said, voice trailing off as she began the process of transferring her little boy from his carrier to the crib next to her workspace.

“Mornin’ Sheriff.” There was Andy Brennan, carrying more boxes as promised and yawning prodigiously.

“Hey there, Andy. Did you get any sleep?”
“Um. Some.”

“Tell you what, after the kids’ Magi Pageant, why don’t you come back here and catch a nap? I’m sure Lucy can roust you and send you back to Meadowlark Hill in time for the Candlelighting Ceremony.”

“Thanks, Harry,” said Andy sheepishly. “I don’t know how Lucy does it.”

“You’re a lucky man,” Hawk said, clapping him on the shoulder as he walked by. “Hey Harry. Is there coffee yet?”

“It’s brewing!” Lucy yelled.

Harry rubbed the back of his neck and traded looks with Hawk. “Gonna be a long day.”

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“I heard the mayor is planning to make a speech at the candlelighting,” Lucy chimed in as she began passing out full mugs. “Because it’s exactly one hundred years since the Great Blizzard of 1889.”

Harry took a healthy swig of his coffee and sighed. “Like I said, long day.”

* * *

The Pageant went off smoothly, aside from one Wise Man losing his headdress when Greta failed to keep a sufficiently tight rein on her llama. Afterward, Harry drove around for a while, checking the condition of the roads and trying to gauge the town’s mood. Not bad, he decided — a little hectic, people trying too hard to make up for a tough year, but so far more happiness than hysteria.

The sky was beginning to worry him though, with dark clouds looming in the northeast. That’s the direction the Blizzard of ’89 blew from, Harry thought.

Andy made the same point a couple of hours later when he rolled up to Meadowlark Hill in his cruiser. “Harry, look at that! Do you think the weather’s gonna hold? It’d be too bad if all the singers got dressed up for nothing.”

“Guess we’ll see. I better get on stage, it looks like they’re ready to start.”

Harry mounted the steps, accepted a long candle with a waxed paper drip catcher, and took his seat as Dwayne Milford tottered to the microphone. Harry braced himself for the inevitable squeal of feedback, but none came. Instead, the mayor surveyed the crowd for a long, silent moment, and finally said, “I don’t know about you, mm-heh, but I cannot wait to see the backside of 1989.”

There was a ripple of nervous laughter.

“It’s been a hard year, a terrible year. Possibly the worst this town has faced in the past century. We’ve been through a lot. The terrible deaths, the, the incident at the Miss Twin Peaks Contest, the burning of the Packard Sawmill and the explosion at the Savings and Loan...I, I lost my brother.”

Two seats down from Harry, Lana Budding Milford pressed a handkerchif to her eyes. In the
Finally, the mayor continued. “But that’s the past. And we’re here, now, to light candles, and sing songs, because that’s what we do. Things happen, and we lose people, but we remember the good times, meh-heh, and, and if we’ve been hurt we try to forgive, and learn, and not just survive, but flourish. That’s what we’ve always done! And that’s what we’ll do now, as we move forward into a new year and a new decade. So that’s it. Happy Holidays, everybody.”

Lana, wet-eyed but smiling, helped Dwayne off the stage as people clapped. Points of light appeared and multiplied as people began lighting their candles. Harry could hear someone starting “It’s Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas,” and someone else singing “The Holly and the Ivy” as he handed his unlit taper to a passerby and headed toward the cars.

“Wow, Harry,” Andy breathed, falling into step beside him, surprisingly dry-eyed.

“Yes,” Harry said. “Anyone needs me, I’ll be at the Double R.”

“Okay.”

As always, the diner was bright and warm and smelled of good things. He slid into his usual booth and traded nods with Norma.

“Hi, Harry. What’ll you have?”

“Coffee, and a slice of the cherry pie, please,” he said, his gaze drifting past her to settle on two particular stools at the counter. *Every day, once a day, give yourself a present,* whispered Memory.

*A present. Like Christmas.*

*Nothing like a great cup of black coffee.*

Somehow, Harry wasn’t surprised when Major Briggs and the Log Lady approached when he was halfway through his pie. “Major, Margaret. Have a seat.”

The major didn’t waste any time. “Sheriff, are you familiar with the story of Edwardo Delegato and José ‘Shorteyes’ Manuela?”

“I guess so. Weren’t they the trappers who took shelter in Owl Cave during the Blizzard of ’89?”

“Yes. As far as we know, they were the first white men ever to enter the cave. They claimed to have lit a fire and whiled away the hours by making shadow puppets that resembled the members of the court of Queen Isabella.” Major Briggs paused. “Harry...did anything about that anecdote ever strike you as odd?”

“Major, even by the standards of Twin Peaks, that is one hell of a strange story.”

“Shadows on a cave wall...” Margaret said, and frowned down at her log.

*

Come nightfall, instead of watching Audrey Horne (still on crutches but walking better every day) throw the switch to light all the Christmas trees downtown, Harry found himself hiking out to Owl
Cave, a lantern in his right hand, a bundle of dry kindling, holly, and mistletoe under his left arm. The wind howling across the cave mouth made a hell of a racket as he built the fire, which might explain why he didn’t hear the tall, cowled man approach.

“Where did you come from?”

“The question is, where have you gone?”

Was this Cooper’s giant? The perfect blackness behind the figure destroyed all sense of scale.

“We must make an exchange. You shall give a blow, and take a blow.”

Harry breathed in, breathed out. “All right,” he said, and grasped the sword.

* 

Hawk was waiting when Harry staggered outside hours later. The sheriff accepted the thermos and took a swig before speaking. “I thought...I mean, I hoped that maybe...”

“I know, Harry. Me too.”

They walked toward the road in the rising dawn. A few minutes later, Harry shrugged. “Aw hell, who knows? Maybe it did some good.”

* 

In the Lodge, the Little Man from Another Place whooped “Hallelujah,” then fell silent as the room dimmed.

An Angel appeared.

Standing by Laura’s chair, a hand on her shoulder, Special Agent Dale Cooper closed his eyes and, listening to her laughter, remembered the smell of Douglas Firs; remembered green.

End Notes

Inspired by the Bookhouse Boys badge, the traditional carol “The Holly and the Ivy,” and the legend of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (even though, as Pete Martell observes, “King Arthur’s buried in England!”).


ETA: This story was originally posted during the hiatus between season two and Twin Peaks: The Return. I’ve removed the "post-canon" tag, but aside from getting the name of Lucy and Andy’s kid wrong I don’t think this fic deviates enough from established canon to justify an "alternate universe" tag.

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