All My Dreams Fulfill

by ScatteredWords

Summary

What better excuse than a cold to spend a winter's evening inside with your fiancee? A little bit of fluff as a rather belated Carmilla Secret Santa gift.

Notes

The song featured in this (and where the title comes from) is the Nora Jones cover of Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender." Happy belated holidays!

The illness had struck suddenly.

There was no warning, no slow encroachment into ordinary life. One evening, she had felt perfectly fine. The next morning…

Weakly, she raised her head from the cushion. Her eyes itched in the bright, flickering light. Strands of hair stuck to her damp forehead. Every muscle seemed to ache, making movement an impossible dream. The buzz and hum of voices pounded at her aching ears. A swift, final end to her misery would almost have been welcome.

Having a cold, Laura decided for the hundredth time in two days, seriously sucked.

She sniffled and burrowed deeper into her nest of quilts. Every lump on the cheap IKEA couch seemed to have joined forces for the express purpose of pummeling as much of her back as possible, and not even The Great British Bake-Off could take her attention away from the dry burning in her throat.

Immortality was supposed to be different. It was supposed to be perfect; it was perfect for
Carmilla, the lucky jerk. Blowing her nose, she wiggled into a marginally more comfortable position. When she’d taken a deep breath and tipped the glowing blue Water of Youth down her throat, colds had been the furthest thing from her mind.

And yet here she was. Just as much of a mucus-y lump as she’d been every winter since middle school. It was as if nothing had changed.

She reached for more tissues; in the lamplight, the midnight blue sapphire on her left hand glittered bright as a star. In spite of herself, she smiled.

Well. Not nothing.

The front door slammed, sending a fresh wave of pain rolling through her skull. The second a groan escaped her lips, the heavy footsteps approaching down the hall sped from a slow, easy lope almost to a run. And then there was Carmilla.

Raindrops clung to her dark curls, creating a halo-like effect in the soft light of the living room. Her dripping leather jacket was sure to leave puddles on the slick hardwood floor, but Laura couldn’t muster up the energy to care. She blew her nose loudly once more.

“Hey, Carm,” she croaked once the tissue was safely balled up in the trash can next to the couch. “How come you never get sick?”

Some of the concern in Carmilla’s heavily lined eyes melted into amusement. “I’m dead, remember? Nothing for the viruses to catch hold of. They have to replicate wildly somewhere else.”

“Like me,” Laura grumbled.

Carmilla shrugged. “Not like you can die from it anymore, cupcake. Though I doubt a cold ever killed anyone.” Her tone was nonchalant, but her gaze swept quickly over couch and coffee table, taking in couch drops, tissues, laptop, and most of all, Laura herself. Who, under that calculating look, found herself wondering if Carmilla had ever gotten a medical degree.

Just as she decided that would have been too much work for such a practiced dilettante, Carmilla’s eyes settled on her empty mug. She briskly scooped it up and strode toward the kitchen. A moment later, Laura heard the click and hiss of a gas burner starting up, followed by the gurgle of the faucet.

“How bad is it out there?” she called over her shoulder.

“Bad,” came the reply. “If the temperature drops another degree or so, they say it’ll—” The kitchen abruptly fell silent but for the first quiet pops of the kettle starting to bubble.

After a moment, Laura said, “Carm?”

“Ssh.”

Carmilla wandered back into the room, head cocked like a cat listening to a strange noise. She made her way to the window and drew back the curtain. Involuntarily, Laura gasped.

Fluffy white flakes spun like ghost dancers past the window, floating galaxies against the darkening evening sky. Some part of Laura’s mind marveled at the view. Even after twenty-eight years, snow was still a miracle to her.
“It never gets old,” Carmilla half-whispered, as if reading her thoughts.

With some effort, Laura heaved herself off the couch and padded over to stand beside her beloved. She leaned on the windowsill despite the chill seeping through her blanket-shawl.

“Not even after centuries?”

Carmilla glanced at Laura. “No, love. Not even after centuries.”

They stood like that for a long minute, regarding the snowfall. It felt like the first time, Laura realized, even when it was only the first of the season. And if Carm was to be believed, it always would, until the end of time. There was something deeply comforting about that.

Suddenly, Carmilla let the curtain drop. She walked briskly back to the kitchen and returned clutching her phone. The little device clicked as she shuffled through it, her attention fixed on the screen.

“What-” Laura began. The only response was a pale hand held up to shush her.

After a moment of silent scrolling, Carmilla seemed to find what she was looking for. Soft guitar chords filled the air, overlaying the white noise of the increasingly white city outside. A few seconds later, a female voice crooned from the tiny speakers.

“Love me tender, love me sweet,
Never let me go…”

Laura raised an eyebrow, wincing as the motion made another dull throb blossom in her still-aching head. “And here I thought I was the sappy one.

“What?” Carmilla asked sardonically. “You didn’t realize you were engaged to the queen of romance?”

“Self-proclaimed.”

“And after three centuries of traveling the wide world, who would know better?” came the amused reply.

“I thought you were a countess, anyway,” Laura said. It was hard to look dignified in penguin pajama pants beneath a fuzzy pink blanket worn like a shawl, but she was determined to try.

Carmilla smiled. “Countess of romance, then.” Without further argument, she extended a hand in her fiancee’s direction.

“Uh-uh,” said Laura with a chuckle. She clutched the blanket tighter around her shoulders. “Fever, remember? My inner thermostat is pretty trashed right now.”

Carmilla rolled her eyes and stalked into the kitchen. Keys, lighters, and other, more arcane knickknacks rattled as she rifled through drawers, banging them carelessly open and shut. At last she returned, a triumphant gleam in her eye and a small, silvery object in one hand.

“What is-” Laura began. But before she could finish, there was an impossibly quick flurry of cool fingers at her collarbone. Then Carmilla stood in the doorway once more, hand still held out, quite as if she hadn’t moved at all.

And a shiny new safety pin now held the blanket in place around Laura’s neck.
She glanced from the pin pack to the vampire who’d put it there. The vampire now looking at her with an almost feline expression of satisfaction.

Laura heaved a theatrical sigh. “Okay, Casanova. You win.” And with that, her hand slid into Carmilla’s.

It wasn’t a dance for the ages. No magic and mystery in a glittering ballroom or looming threats of supernatural destruction. No ornate silken ball gowns, rare blossoms, or sweet-smelling candles. Not even a bottle of cheap screw-top champagne. Just the soft touch of Carmilla’s hand at the small of her back and the spicy scent of pine in the air as they swayed with the music. She rested her cheek against Carmilla’s shoulder and felt the feather-light brush of a gentle kiss against her hair.

So much of this situation would have seemed unreal a scant six years before. The immortality, the vampire fiancée- the successful freelance journalism career most of all. But now- now it was normal. As normal as rubbing her thumb across the back of Carmilla’s hand and admiring the way the Christmas tree lights set hints of gold shining in her dark hair. As normal as two girls dancing in an upmarket Toronto apartment.

Laura drew back slightly, tilting her head to look up into Carmilla’s eyes. Carmilla’s brow furrowed. “Everything okay, Cupcake?”

“Yes. Better than okay.” She reached up and smoothed a strand of hair back from Carmilla’s forehead. “I want to do this forever.”

With a final guitar strum, the iPod fell silent. Carmilla’s face split into a smile, wondering and impossibly tender. She gazed at Laura as if staring at the moon. As if she was something sacred.

“I think we can arrange that, Liebling.”

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