

EXCLUSIVE

# BONUS

*Epilogue*

FOR

A Billionaire  
for *Christmas*

THE WORLD  
TOOK HIM FAR AWAY.  
BUT CHRISTMAS  
BROUGHT HIM HOME.

ALISON REID

*Exclusive Bonus Epilogue*

# **A Billionaire for Christmas**

by Alison Reid

*Twenty Years Later...*

Christmas lights twinkled from every corner of Harrington Manor, casting a warm golden glow over the grand dining room. Garlands draped the staircase, ribbons adorned every doorway, and a magnificent Christmas tree stood proudly in the corner, its branches heavy with ornaments collected over two decades of family memories.

Laughter filled the room.

Exactly the kind of laughter Christian Harrington had once feared he would never have.

Eliza sat beside her husband at the head of the table, watching the chaos unfold around them with a smile she couldn't contain.

Their eldest child, nineteen-year-old Kymberly, was currently arguing with her younger brother, sixteen-year-old Jonathan, over who had cheated during a family board game earlier that afternoon.

"I did not cheat."

"You absolutely cheated."

"I strategically interpreted the rules."

"That's called cheating."

Across the table, fourteen-year-old Sophie dissolved into giggles.

"You got caught. Just admit it."

"I'll admit nothing."

Eliza laughed as Jonathan threw a dinner roll in his sister's direction.

Christian immediately cleared his throat.

Three sets of eyes snapped toward him.

The room fell silent.

Christian raised one eyebrow.

Jonathan slowly lowered his hand.

"Sorry, Dad."

"Good decision."

The silence lasted approximately three seconds. Then everyone started talking again.

Beside them sat Henry and Mary Holloway, still as in love as they had been twenty years earlier. Their daughter, Ava, now twenty, sat beside her younger brother, Noah, eighteen.

Henry shook his head as the younger generation continued bickering.

"Remember when they were all adorable little children?"

Mary smiled sweetly.

"No."

Henry frowned.

"No?"

"They were never adorable. They were tiny terrorists."

The entire table erupted with laughter.

Christian reached for Eliza's hand beneath the table. A simple habit developed over twenty years. One he doubted he would ever break.

She squeezed his fingers.

Twenty years. Twenty years since a snowstorm. Twenty years since an abandoned bride and a trapped billionaire had stumbled into each other's lives. Twenty years since everything changed.

He glanced around the table.

Children. Friends. Family. Love.

The life he'd once envied Henry for had somehow become his own. And he would never stop being grateful for it.

A sudden clink of glass interrupted the conversation.

Everyone looked up.

KyMBERly stood holding a champagne flute. Well, sparkling apple cider. At nineteen, she was still subjected to her mother's rules.

"Attention everyone."

Jonathan groaned.

"Oh no."

"Be quiet."

"This feels dangerous."

"It probably is."

KyMBERly ignored him.

"We have an announcement."

Christian exchanged a glance with Eliza. That sounded suspicious. Very suspicious.

Ava and Noah immediately stood as well. Then Sophie. Then Jonathan. The five young adults were grinning far too much.

Eliza narrowed her eyes.

"What have you done?"

"Nothing," Jonathan said innocently.

"That's a lie," Sophie said.

"A complete lie," Ava agreed.

"An obvious lie," Noah added.

KyMBERly rolled her eyes.

"Can I continue?"

Christian leaned back in his chair.

"I'm suddenly concerned."

"You should be," Henry muttered.

Mary nodded.

"Definitely."

Kymerly beamed.

"As a Christmas present, all of us have gone together and organised something special."

Eliza's eyes widened.

"You didn't."

"We did."

"Tell me you didn't spend ridiculous amounts of money."

The children looked at one another.

Nobody answered.

Eliza groaned.

"Oh dear God."

Laughter rippled around the table.

Then Kymerly reached beneath the table and pulled out a large envelope. She handed it to her mother.

Eliza frowned and opened it. A moment later she gasped.

"No."

Christian already knew what was inside. He'd known for months. But he kept his expression carefully neutral.

"What's wrong?" Henry asked.

Eliza looked up. Her eyes were shining.

"It's St. Moritz."

The room erupted with cheers.

"You two are going back!" Sophie squealed.

"For your anniversary," Ava added.

"A proper second honeymoon," Noah said.

Jonathan grinned.

"Without us."

"Which is your real Christmas present," Kymberly teased.

Eliza looked down at the tickets again.

St. Moritz. The place where everything had begun. The place where her life had changed forever. Emotion tightened her throat.

"Oh sweetheart..."

She looked around at all five children. Not just her own, but Henry and Mary's as well. They were smiling expectantly. Proud of themselves. And they should have been. It was a beautiful gift.

Christian wrapped an arm around her shoulders. She leaned into him automatically.

"Looks like we're going skiing again," he murmured.

Eliza laughed.

"Let's not get carried away."

Everyone laughed. Only Christian kept his smile carefully controlled. Because while everyone else thought they had arranged a romantic holiday to St. Moritz...

There was one detail nobody knew. Not even the children. The tiny cabin still stood high in the mountains. The same cabin where an avalanche had driven them to shelter. The same cabin where they had shared their first meal together. The same cabin where he had first begun to fall in love with her.

Months ago, Christian had quietly arranged for it to be restored. And in three days' time, he intended to take his wife back there. Back to the place where their story began.

Back to the place where he had first discovered that love was worth more than every billion he would ever own. And this time, he planned to ask her a question twenty years in the making.

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Snow drifted softly beyond the chalet windows, coating the rooftops of St. Moritz in white.

Eliza stood on the balcony, her hands wrapped around a mug of hot chocolate, watching snowflakes tumble through the evening air. The mountains stretched endlessly beyond, just as beautiful as she remembered.

A pair of strong arms slid around her waist.

"Thinking deep thoughts?" Christian asked, his warm breath brushing her ear.

She smiled and leaned back against him.

"Just remembering."

His chin rested on her shoulder.

"Dangerous pastime."

Eliza laughed softly.

"What are you smiling about?" Christian asked.

"You."

His arms tightened.

"Good answer."

She rolled her eyes.

"You've become impossible with age."

"I was impossible when you met me."

"True."

They stood quietly together for a moment. Down below, lights twinkled across the village while their phones continued to buzz with photographs from home.

Photographs of Kymberly, Jonathan, and Sophie—the three children who had become the centre of their world and the greatest blessing either of them could have imagined.

The thought made Eliza smile.

"Ready?" Christian asked.

She frowned.

"Ready for what?"

Instead of answering, he took her hand. Suspicion immediately bloomed.

"Christian Harrington."

His expression was far too innocent.

"Come with me."

"Oh no."

He grinned.

"Oh yes."

A short time later they were riding through the snow in a private vehicle heading higher into the mountains.

Eliza stared at him.

"What are you planning?"

"You'll see."

"I hate when you say that."

"No, you don't."

Unfortunately, he was right. Twenty minutes later the vehicle stopped. Eliza stepped out. Then froze.

"Oh my God."

Christian smiled.

There, illuminated by soft lantern light, stood a small wooden cabin.

The cabin.

The exact cabin.

For a moment she couldn't speak.

Twenty years vanished in an instant.

She could almost see her younger self stumbling through the door, frightened, exhausted, and trying desperately not to stare at the handsome stranger who had rescued her from the mountain.

Tears immediately burned behind her eyes.

"Christian..."

"Come on."

He squeezed her hand and led her inside.

The cabin had been restored beautifully. A fire crackled in the hearth. Fresh flowers sat on the table. The bed was covered with thick wool blankets. Everything felt familiar. Everything felt precious.

Eliza slowly turned in a circle.

"I can't believe you found it."

Christian watched her quietly. For a moment neither spoke. The fire popped softly. Snow tapped against the windows. Almost exactly as it had twenty years ago.

Then Christian reached into his jacket pocket.

Eliza blinked.

"What's that?"

He pulled out a small velvet box. Her hand flew to her mouth.

"Christian."

"I know."

"You already married me."

"I know."

A smile tugged at his lips.

"But after twenty years, I thought you deserved something special."

The room blurred through tears.

Slowly, he opened the box. Inside was a stunning emerald and diamond ring. Not to replace her engagement ring. Not to replace her wedding band. To sit beside them. A symbol of everything they had built together.

Christian took her hand. For perhaps the first time in twenty years, he looked genuinely nervous.

"There's something I've wanted to tell you for a very long time."

Eliza's heart squeezed.

"What?"

A smile touched his lips.

"Twenty years ago, when we were trapped here, you asked me if there was anyone waiting for me."

She immediately remembered. The question. His answer. The lie.

*"No one," he'd said.*

Christian shook his head.

"I lied."

She laughed through her tears.

"Yes, you did."

"At the time, I was too afraid to tell you the truth." His thumb brushed across her knuckles. "I knew there was someone waiting for me. I knew I was engaged. But the moment I met you, I also knew you were different. Special."

His voice caught slightly.

"And I was terrified that if I told you the truth, whatever chance I might have had with you would be over before it even began."

Emotion tightened Eliza's throat.

"Christian..."

"But today, I can be honest."

His voice grew rough. Raw. Beautiful.

"The only person I've ever wanted waiting for me is you."

Eliza broke. Tears spilled freely down her cheeks.

Years of love. Of children. Of laughter. Of building a life neither of them had dared imagine when they first met. And somehow she loved him even more than she had then.

"Christian..."

He slipped the ring onto her finger. Perfect. Just like the first time. Then he lifted her hand to his lips.

"I would choose you again," he whispered. "Every Christmas. Every day. For the rest of my life."

A tearful laugh escaped her.

"I would choose you too."

His forehead rested against hers.

"You are the best thing that has ever happened to me, Eliza. Every good thing in my life started with you. And I will spend the rest of my life being grateful for the avalanche that brought us together that day."

A sob escaped her. Then her arms slid around his neck. She kissed him slowly and thoroughly, pouring twenty years of love into the kiss.

When she finally pulled back, her eyes shimmered with tears and mischief.

"I love you, Christian Harrington."

His smile softened.

"I love you too."

Her gaze drifted toward the bed before returning to him.

"I think we've spent enough time talking."

A slow, heated grin spread across his face.

"I couldn't agree more."

Before she could protest, he swept her into his arms.

Eliza laughed, wrapping her arms around his neck.

"Still showing off after all these years?"

"Absolutely."

Carrying her across the room, he paused long enough to kiss her forehead.

"I think it's time you showed me just how much you really do love me."

A slow, heated grin spread across his face.

"It would be my greatest pleasure, Mrs. Harrington."

Outside, snow continued to fall across the mountains.

Inside, the fire burned warm and bright. And for a moment, it felt as though time had folded in on itself.

A lonely billionaire. An abandoned bride. A snowstorm. A cabin. And a love that had lasted twenty beautiful years.

The greatest Christmas miracle of all.

— The End —