



The Christmas Delivery
by
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Christmas Eve. A tired Carol stares out the window overlooking the street. Her husband had to work, leaving her to finish all the Christmas preparations by herself. She sighs. Her lips tremble. She pulls herself together. She has to go on in high spirits. It's Christmas, a time of family gatherings, lots of love and cheers.

She caresses her belly which by now looks like a big balloon. She feels the gentle kicking of her first child, due in the New Year. With an affectionate smile she whispers; "Just have more patience little one. Only a few more weeks to go before I'll hold you in my arms and comfort you."

As if her child wants to respond, it kicks with vigor.

Pain ends her daydreaming. Woe after woe follows.

"Oh, no!" She panics. "Not now! What am I going to do? Maybe it will pass." She hopes, she wishes.

"I have to lie down!" She reaches the bedroom and glances at the phone. More pain. Her lips tighten.

She grabs the phone, dials 111. The pain increases. She doesn't know how much longer she can hold on.

"Oh John, why aren't you here!"

A voice on the other side of the phone speaks.

"111, can I help you?"

"Yes, quick," Carol gasps for air. "I think I'm having my baby. I'm all alone!"

"All right Ma'am. Please try to stay calm. What's your name?"

"Calm?" Carol shouts. "That's easy for you to say! I'm having my baby for God's sake. I need help!"

"Okay Ma'am," the voice replies. "I know you're upset. I understand. What's your name and address.

We send someone over!"

Weakened Carol gives the information. Then everything turns black. The phone slips out of her hand. It dangles next to the bed.

Meanwhile, the ambulance team rushes to her house.

They celebrated their Christmas party when duty called. No time to waste.

When they arrive at the home, everything is locked. Mike, the team leader, smashes in a window. With the others right behind him, he quickly locates Carol. They give her oxygen.

She regains consciousness.

In a haze, she sees a man with a white beard and red cloak.

"I must dream or be in heaven," she decides. "This can't be right." Her eyelids drop again.

"Carol, Carol, stay with us!" She hears the man in red. "You're having your baby. You need to work with us. We need to get it out! Breath in, breath out. Now push Carol, push!"

Still weak but understanding she has to save her child, she obeys.

"Yes, good girl!" Mike stimulates her.

“We're getting there. Now a little bit more. Just a little bit more. Okay! You've done it, Carol! He cheers. “You've done it!”

Everybody laughs. Relieved all went well. She hears the first cries of her child.

“Congratulations! It's a girl. A healthy, beautiful girl. You've been lucky, the two of you.” Mike smiles at her.

Carol now knows who stands in front of her. Father Christmas! She gazes at him.

Mike notices her astonishment. He soon realizes why she stares at him.

“Oh!” He chuckles. “I forgot I still wear this,” pointing at his costume. “You see, you caught us in the middle of a Christmas party.” He takes off his beard and hat, showing a handsome face and smile.

“Well Tara,” Carol tells her daughter. “You're a real Christmas gift, delivered by Santa Claus himself! Isn't that something? Wait till Daddy hears about this!” She kisses the tiny head.

“It's a wonderful Christmas after all.”

The End