Christmas Cookies on a Cruise Ship
by Parker Fairchild
EXCERPT

"Dr. Olivia Chasen," Santa's jolly baritone popped her mental fuzzy bubble.

She stopped as she struggled to whirl around. "Me?" She touched her chest with a dramatic flourish she didn't know she possessed.

A powerful spotlight illuminated her; its heat burned her already flushed face.

She pressed a clammy palm to her chest. "How do you know my name?" The haze in her mind was paralyzing all cognitive function.

"My dear girl," Santa chuckled, "you should know by now that Santa knows everything and everyone," he tapped an index finger to his temple.

Santa Claus turned to address the waiting line. "Girls, Boys, Moms, Dads, everyone, if you don't mind waiting for a brief moment, I'd like for Olivia," he pointed a white gloved finger at her, "to please come up here on stage, and tell me what she wants for Christmas."

She stood dumbfounded as the audience and the people in line clapped and chanted her name, "Olivia! Olivia! Olivia!"

Oh no! What was she going to do? She couldn't possibly go up onto that stage. She was far too shy to address a theater full of people.

But if she didn't go that would be so unexciting and so like the old Olivia.

But she wasn't unexciting! She was the new Olivia, and she was exciting! And she wanted to have fun! Correction: She was determined to have fun. Besides, she'd never see these people—her fellow passengers—ever again.