

Rose Petals

by Finnegan Flawnt

A supermodel, carrying a large Valentine's box, fell from her considerable, prized height on the ice in front of the grocer's and stayed down, her long, shapely legs distorted somehow. The box burst open and dozens of tiny cognac-filled chocolate hearts were spread out around her, making it look like a carefully prepared photo shoot.

"Will you help me get up, please", she said to a young bearded man, who was hurrying past. The man stopped and stared at her.

"What do I get if I do?", he asked with an ugly smile, picked one of the chocolate hearts up, unwrapped it and let it disappear in the matted mass of his facial hair. The model gulped and looked even more needful than before.

In that very moment, the Greek grocer, a recent immigrant from Rhodes, the rose of the Aegean sea, flew out of the shop like an angel, sailed across the snow mixed with the woman's frozen tears and offered her his arm, which she grasped and used to pull herself up. As soon as she stood steady, she slapped the young thug so hard that he lost his balance and dropped like an overstuffed burrito.

The model stomped her fur-lined boots, shaking off the anger, turned to her rescuer, carefully straightened her face and her coat, hugged him tightly and said: "Thank you - you're my hero" in a raspberry-colored voice that went through him like a double shot of Uzo.

The Greek grinned and replied in a thick accent: "Parakalo! I has more sokolata inside. You come in and pick. Let's live this slime here." She nodded, took the man's arm and they disappeared into the shop without looking back.

The young man struggled for a while to raise himself, his face ribbon red, then gave up. The sun came out and sparkled on the wrapping paper as a sly ray of shame entered the man's heart.

Inside, the supermodel blew her highbred nose with rose petals.

