



*Her Snow Angel*  
*by Tabitha Gibson*

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"Oh no!" gasped Lisa Mills. "Not again." She sighed deeply and set her bags on the ground next to her snow-buried car.

She lifted the paper cup full of tea to take a sip but found it too hot and dropped it immediately. The precious liquid oozed out onto the ground and down the curb.

"This just isn't my day," she groaned, and turned to head for the trunk of her car for a shovel when she slipped on some ice. Lisa gave a slight screech before shoving her hands out to prepare for the fall. Thankfully, she landed in a pair of strong arms.

"Whoa, are you ok?"

The man's voice was like a smooth glove, enveloping her in its warmth. Then again, he always made her feel warm. Almost hot.

Nick Montgomery had been her neighbor for about six months now. She'd met him at the tenants' meeting but had been too shy to speak to him ever since. He'd smiled and waved a few times but Lisa found herself barely returning either before rushing into her apartment.

Now here he was, holding her close and boy did he smell good.

"Thank you," Lisa said. She cleared her throat lightly and reluctantly removed herself from his arms.

"I think Old Man Winter and Mother Nature must be at odds with each other," he said with a wink and a smile.

Lisa's heart fluttered. "Yeah, you'd think they could find something better to do on these long, cold winter nights." She flushed at her comment then turned to gather her bags, hoping to hide the crimson stain that was rapidly creeping up her neck to cover her cheeks.

"Let me help you with that," he said, and took the bags from her.

Lisa swore she felt an electric current pass between their hands. Passing it off as static from the plastic bags, she led him to the trunk. She turned the key in the lock and when the lid popped open, she grabbed the shovel she carried for this exact problem and other emergencies. Nick dropped the bags into the truck and turning to her, held out his hand for the shovel. She wasn't surprised and with a smile, handed it over.

"So I didn't see you at the last tenants meeting," Nick said as he dug deeply into the pile of snow that topped her tires.

"I had to work late that night, but I don't think I missed much, unless you count Mrs. Baker's pet poodle leaving little gifts for everyone on the sidewalk," she said and giggled.

"Or Mrs. Daniels griping about how loud Mr. Dixon keeps his TV during the day," Nick replied, joining in her merriment.

"Well, there is one thing I did miss," he continued and scraped away the slush from her back tire.

"What's that?"

"You," Nick answered and gave her a smoldering gaze before returning to the task at hand and pushed the mound of snow toward the corner and away from the traffic.

Lisa felt her face flush hot. She put her chilled hands to her cheeks to cool them down.

"There, all clear."

Lisa took the shovel from his outstretched hand and felt the same current as before. She returned it to the truck and took a few deep breaths to take in what Nick had just said. It wasn't long before he appeared beside her.

"Thank you," she blurted out, not knowing what else to say. Lisa knew she should just get in her car and race away before she said something really awkward.

"You're welcome," he replied with an easy smile.

"Well, I guess—" she began but he interrupted her.

"How about a replacement cup?" Nick motioned to the now freezing tea on the ground.

Lisa bit her lower lip nervously. She wanted to get to know Nick better, but had always stumbled over her words. Probably from the foot she always seemed to have in her mouth.

She studied him through lowered lashes. He was so good looking and charming and intelligent. She couldn't believe he was even giving her the time of day. So why was she standing here questioning it and herself? It was about time something good came of her crazy life.

Between covering for her boss while he was on vacation and running errands for her sick aunt, she barely had time to keep her own life in order. Forget dating. Not that she had the best of luck in that department but this was just tea, right?

"Sure, why not?" Lisa was surprised that the words came out so easily. Once inside the bakery, she ordered another tea latte and, after some coaxing from Nick, a blueberry muffin.

The cozy warmth and ambience of the shop encouraged them to stay and enjoy their treats and each others company. Lisa felt at ease for the first time around him as they talked about a few generic things such as the weather, good books they had just read and upcoming movie releases.

"So why don't we check that one out next week?"

She looked at Nick, stunned, and took a deep breath. Lisa nodded and smiled. "I'd like that."

They rose and after a refill, headed back outside toward her car. Lisa felt on top of the world when all of a sudden, her feet came out from under her. Nick's did too as he reached out to stop her from falling. They ended up in a pile of snow that had been shoveled from the sidewalk several feet from the bakery door. Her tea joined the previous spill on the ground, join now by his coffee.

Lisa was mortified. She glanced at Nick who gave her a grin. It was then a loud truck came toward them and to their horror, scrapped snow back in the area that Nick had just shoveled, once again, burying her car.

They looked at each other and collapsed in laughter. He rose and helped her to her feet. Impulsively, he gave her a kiss on the cheek.

"It's going to be all right," he said, and held out his hand for her keys.

Lisa dropped them into the palm of his hand and nodded. Yes it was. For once, she felt like it was really going to be all right.