



*Snowed in*  
*With the*

**LUMBERJACK**

*A Contemporary Mountain Man Romance*

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

**LEE SAVINO**

# **SNOWED IN WITH THE LUMBERJACK**

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LEE SAVINO

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# SNOWED IN WITH THE LUMBERJACK

*I shouldn't be driving in a blizzard. I definitely shouldn't be driving up Snow Mountain.*

*Now my car's stuck in a ditch, and the only one who can help me is Joel Alder, the reclusive lumberjack who lives in an old hunting cabin deep in the woods.*

*Joel is three years older than me, and an ex-con. Folk around these parts avoid him, but he's always been kind to me. His strong hands, wild beard, and sun-streaked hair inspire all my dirty fantasies.*

*Now we're snowed in together. On Christmas Eve. And if I'm a good girl, Joel might make all my naughty dreams come true...*

**L** *ainey*

FAT SNOWFLAKES FLY at my car, too fast for my windshield wipers to clear away. To my right, hemlocks bow under the weight of several blizzards' worth of the white stuff. The dark forest and snowy drifts create a winter wonderland, as picturesque as a Christmas card.

My car's chosen a beautiful place to skid off the road.

I press the gas pedal and the engine whirs. My tires spin. I've just made my predicament worse.

One more attempt, and I turn off the car. The windshield wipers switch off and snow sticks to the glass. The cold seeps in, too. Pretty soon the interior of my car will be below freezing.

I fight to open my door. My car is canted towards the passenger side, half in the ditch. I swing my legs around and land in shin-deep snow. The fluffy flakes aren't so pretty when they're coating my jeans and falling into the tops of my Ugg boots. I clamber out of my Kia, grabbing my purse as I go.

My little car makes a sad sight, stuck in the ditch. Soon it'll be a white lump and no one will be the wiser. Snow covers everything and makes it beautiful, hiding the sorry state of affairs underneath. My accident will be hidden until things thaw.

I followed truck tracks to get this far up the mountain, but a new layer of snow is obliterating them. This road doesn't get plowed much, if ever. If you ask folks in town who lives up here, they'd say, "No one."

They'd be wrong. Up somewhere on this side of the mountain is an old hunter's cabin. That's where I'll find warmth, and help. That's where I'll find someone who can make a call for me. My cell doesn't get service in this remote part of town.

The wind picks up and drives the snow faster into my face. The flakes stick to my eyelashes and I blink, fighting to keep my eyesight clear. I duck between the hemlocks, gripping my parka tighter around me and wishing I had brought gloves.

*Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.* I didn't even make it halfway up the mountain, and it's colder out here than I expected. My winter coat might as well be a bikini for all it's doing to keep me warm.

I trudge through the shadowy woods. A hundred steps in, and I have a hitch in my side. I read somewhere that tracking through snow on cross-country skis burns more calories than any other activity, and I don't even have the skis. My body heats up fast, making my skin itch with exertion and sweat. My boots are clogged with snow and my thighs ache with the extra weight.

The forest is silent, all life buried under the white shroud. The only sounds are the huffs and hitches of my breathing and, under my coat, my thumping heart. I follow what looks like a path through the pines. With any luck, it'll bring me to safety. If not...

The last of the light is disappearing through the trees when the trail turns and reveals a dark wooden hut. Its sides are mounted up with snow, and the windows are dark too, but a thin wisp of smoke trickles from the chimney.

A thwacking sound breaks the quiet. For a second I think I've imagined it, but it comes again, a hollow thud. The sound of an ax hitting wood.

“Hello?” I shiver in my boots, resisting the urge to dance back and forth. I can’t feel my toes.

A shadow slants between the black tree trunks. In the low light, he looks like a frost giant with an ax in hand and snowflakes clinging to his beard. Joel Adler, the man I hoped to see.

The man of my dreams.

“Lainey,” he asks in a deep voice, “what are you doing here?”



**J** *oel*

“MY CAR BROKE DOWN,” she says. It’s Lainey Stevens from town, shivering in a snow drift, with flakes crusting her clothes. Her teeth clack together.

I swear before I can stop myself, and sink my ax into a log. I stalk forward, watching her closely, but she never flinches. Other people in town give me a wide berth, but not Lainey. She works the register at her aunt Gemma’s grocery store. I see her every time I drive down to buy supplies.

“Jesus, it’s freezing out here.” My voice sounds harsh, unused. Not many people to talk to up here. Not many people want to talk to me when I’m in town. Only Gemma Stevens... and Lainey. “Where are your gloves?”

She stares up at me, her wide eyes fringed with black lashes. Her lips are tinged with blue.

I jerk my head towards my cabin. “Get inside.”

She stumbles and I reach for her, stopping myself at the last moment. No reason to put my hands on her.

“Sorry,” she squeaks, and my soul wilts a little. She’s intimidated by me, even though I’ve been as gentle and considerate as I can be. But of course she is. Everyone knows I’m an ex-con. A felon.

And now she's on my mountain, fifteen feet from my home. Alone. Any woman would be nervous.

"I'm not going to hurt you," I growl. I sound like a psycho.

"I know." She stops and stares up at me, and a line appears between her brows. Is she glaring at me? "You would never hurt me, Joel Adler."

She's scolding me.

"All right." I can't stop my smile, and I'm glad it's hidden behind my beard. I've never been berated by someone a foot smaller and a hundred pounds lighter than me. "As long as we're clear."

I take her hand. If she's not afraid of me, she won't mind a gentle touch.

Her fingers are little icicles in mine. I suck in a breath.

"Sorry," she says again.

"Don't apologize." I propel her forward, practically hauling her off her feet in my haste to bustle her inside. When she staggers again, I scoop her up into my arms and carry her across the cabin threshold like a groom with his fairytale bride.

I kick the heavy door hard so it swings open without sticking. Snow spills off the roof, narrowly missing us. I duck inside and carry my precious bundle straight to my butt-ugly orange couch in front of the fireplace.

"Stay here," I order, and rise to shut the door and knock snow off my boots. I return and tug hers off, tossing them to dry by the fire. I'll mop up the piles of melting snow later.

I help her out of her coat and hang it up close to the hearth. "What were you thinking, hiking up here?"

"I couldn't get cell service on the road."

I bite back another curse. I need to watch my foul mouth. "Why were you even driving in this?"

"It wasn't so bad in town." Her gaze is fixed on the floorboards at her socked feet. She's like that when I visit her aunt's shop, peeking out from behind the books she reads in

between dealing with customers. She's shy, and looks young for her age. I'd think she was in her teens if I didn't know she was only a few years behind me in high school. We were in a junior English class together, because she was advanced and I was a senior with straight Ds in every class, barely scraping by. That was Lainey—smarter than the whole school, and better than me by a mile.

Ten years, and not much has changed.

"Let's get you warm." I can't think when she's shivering. I pull an old quilt off the couch and wrap it around her, then crouch to rub her hands.

"I'm okay," she whispers.

"You could've fucking died," I growl.

She has nothing to say to that. We sit in silence, her on the ugliest couch ever made, me on the floor.

My hands are battered and scarred, marred with the blue tattoo ink I got in prison. More of my bad decisions, written on my skin.

Her fingers are perfect—small, and tipped with glossy nails filed to neat crescents.

I can't stand the contrast between her hands and mine, so I leave her side to throw more logs on the fire. When I turn back to her, she's pulled off her snow-dusted hat, releasing a waterfall of silky dark hair. Her cheeks are pink under the black crescents of her eyelashes. In the firelight, Lainey glows like a jewel.

My breath saws in my chest. Next to her angelic perfection, my home is worn and dingy, one step away from decrepit. I spent the last year renovating it, fixing sections of rotten wood. My grandfather used it as a hunting cabin. There's no mention of the structure on the land deed he willed to me—either he'd forgotten it, or thought it had rotted away. I furnished the place with castoffs I found at the dump. I knew it was no palace, but I see it now through Lainey's eyes, and I'm ashamed.

No one's been up here for years, no one but me. The closest anyone's come was Lainey, six months ago, in summer.

Shame makes me snap. "You shouldn't have been on the road tonight."

"I was going to see Aunt Gemma," she stammers. "It's Christmas."

"You're from here. You know what the storms are like," I chastise her.

She bites her lip and looks to the window. The glass panes are choked with white, but there's a small dark center that shows white flakes flurrying through the night.

I want to do a lot more than scold her so I force myself to head for the door.

"I'm getting more wood," I say without turning. "Stay by the fire. It's snowing like crazy, and there's no way a truck can get up here before they plow the road. Looks like you're here for the night."



*Lainey*

TEN MINUTES in Joel's house and I've already screwed up. He scowls as he tells me to stay, as if the thought of sharing his home with me for the night disgusts him. The door slams behind him.

I palm my cheeks. Am I so repulsive? Such awful company?

My hair is tangled and the ends are wet from melting snow. I push the mass back and adjust the old quilt he threw over me. I'm wearing my nicest sweater and favorite pair of jeans. The fuzzy wool and denim are buttery soft and fall nicely over my curves, highlighting the swell of my breasts and butt, hiding the rest.

In high school, Joel was a chick magnet. He didn't have to chase girls, they flocked to him. Blondes or brunettes, pink-haired emo goth wannabes or the most prissy cheerleaders—he didn't seem to have a preference. He didn't care if you had a boyfriend or were flirting with him to make your crush jealous. He'd be down for a quickie in his old Corvette, the one he bought at auction and pieced back together with parts he scavenged from the junkyard. It had different colored doors but was still an awesome ride.

No one was surprised when he got busted for jacking cars. What was more surprising was that after he did his time for grand larceny, he came back to our little town.

“Where else would he go?” my aunt Gemma snorted when a customer gossiped about this in front of her. “He always liked the woods.”

I'd always had a crush on Joel Adler, the coolest boy in school. But that was the first time I saw him for more than his facade, the sexy charm boy who was always down for a fuck or a fight. I remembered how he created works of art in shop class: birdhouses and stools and even a cradle, made with honey-stained wood.

The next time he came into Aunt Gemma's store, I summoned my courage and gave him a smile.

The cabin door swings open, letting in a blast of frozen air. I summon my habitual smile but it falters in the frozen stare of my host. He comes in, blowing smoke and glowering at me like a frost giant who's found an intruder in his lair.

His cold stare doesn't cool his hotness one degree. If Joel was gorgeous as a boy, he's breathtaking as a man. Tall, with lean muscles, and thick brown hair striated with red and blond like rare wood. Eyes a striking, crystalline blue.

He stomps past, carrying a stack of wood that looks like it weighs more than I do. The only sounds are the crackle of the flame-eaten logs, and his harsh breathing.

I knot my fingers together. I've messed up and I don't know how to make it right. So I sit in silence and watch Joel

stack wood. Once he's done, he strips off his coat and toes off his boots, and my own breaths grow heavy. He's got a flannel shirt on, and while I watch, he loosens the button and rolls up his sleeves. He's not bulky, but he's strong. Sleek as a mountain lion. Even the indigo smudges of his prison tattoos lurking under the crisp, gold-tinted hairs on his powerful forearms are sexy. Another layer to the enigma that is Joel Adler.

I've always liked puzzles. Mystery novels, or romances with anti-heroes. Chapters with layer upon layer of intrigue my intellect can sink into. The blessing and curse of the voracious bookworm: a life lived sitting in corners, hiding between the pages, reading instead of living life.

One more semester, and I'll graduate with my Masters in Library Science. I'll move out of my parents' summer home, find a job, wear frumpy sweaters and pencil skirts, adopt a succulent and a cat. Become a cliché.

The only blip on my horizon, the only piece that doesn't fit, is Joel Adler. Another woman would know exactly what to say to him. She'd be cuddled right up with him on the couch.

"Are you cold?" he asks, staring at the fire as if it'll give him the answers.

"I'm good." My voice is soft.

Coming here was a mistake. I know that now. Some adventures are best left to heroines in books.

I shift on the couch, and a paperback flops from the quilt's folds to the floor. The cover's torn off, but I recognize the font.

I slide off the couch to my knees to rescue the book, a familiar friend. "*Secrets of a Summer Night*." I pick it up and smooth the pages. "I love Lisa Kleypas. Were you reading this?"

From my position kneeling on the floor, Joel looms even taller. His blue eyes burn and his nostrils flare.

"Get up." He motions me back to the couch.

I catch my apology before it escapes and obey, but he's already moved away to another part of the cabin. This place is one open room. He can't escape me, not unless he goes back out to chop wood. And he's already used that excuse.

He stands in the kitchen area of the cabin, as far away from me as he can get without heading into the cold. I've made him upset. How? Why?

I clutch the book to my heart. Books are easy. Books, I understand. "I love this book. I reread it all the time."

"I know," he says, his back still to me. "I've seen you read it. You gave me that copy, remember?"

"Oh..." I do remember. I keep a stack of paperbacks by the register to read and reread. Sometimes I give them to customers. Why didn't I remember I gave this to Joel?

I'm so flustered, I open the book and read a few lines. I don't look up until Joel's shadow falls over me.

His voice echoes in my ears and I realize he's been calling my name.

"Sorry—"

"No apologizing," he corrects me gently, and plucks the paperback from my hands. I would protest and clutch it to my chest like a safety blanket, but he replaces it with my second favorite thing in the world: a mug of tea.

So that's what he was doing in the kitchen corner of the cabin. Making me tea. Loose-leaf Earl Grey, from the smell of it, in a carefully knotted teabag. I bury my face in the fragrant steam.

Joel remains standing, cradling the book in his palms. His fingers are long and elegant, even rough with scars and tattoos. A craftsman's hands. "And yes. To answer your question. I was reading this."

"Really? I mean..." I stammer. "I didn't mean to imply I didn't think you'd read it."

"It's okay. I didn't used to read like I do now. Picked it up in prison." He glances at me then, checking for a reaction.

Does he expect me to shy away from the reminder he did time?

“If you like that book, you’d like the whole series. I have a whole list of favorites.”

“A whole list?” There’s a hint of a smile under his beard. He’s teasing me.

“She’s good,” I defend. “Everyone loves *A Devil in Winter*. But my favorite is *Marrying Winterborne*.”

“I’ll check it out. Drink your tea.”

I sip the hot liquid. It occurs to me that he keeps issuing orders and I obey without thinking. “This tea is really good.” The kitchen takes up one corner of the cabin, to the right of the door. The fireplace and couch are opposite. In the middle of the room is a wooden table with a single chair. Beyond that, in the far right corner, is a big bed.

I snap my gaze back to the fire and meet Joel’s ice-blue eyes. My cheeks burn, knowing he watched me snoop.

*Awkward girl is awkward.* Why did I think tonight would be any different? It would take a lot of Christmas magic to fix my dorkiness.

“I’ve never been here before,” I mumble to my tea.

“No one has.” Joel sets the paperback on the mantle. “Kinda the point of living alone on a mountain. The privacy.”

I set my mug on the floor, feeling ill. “You’re angry with me. I shouldn’t have come.”

“No, Lainey.” He crouches in front of me and closes his hands around mine. “I’m an asshole.”



**J** *oel*

LAINNEY LOOKS SO MISERABLE, I'm ready to banish myself from my own home. Instead, I warm her fingers between mine. She's not as frozen, and a lot of my tension eases out of me knowing she's warming up.

"You scared me," I admit.

"What?"

"It's dangerous for you to be out on the road, in the snow. You could've died. Why aren't you with your family?"

"My parents are in Arizona."

"Right." I knew that. It's wrong, how much I eavesdrop on Gemma and Lainey's conversations. How much I keep tabs on Lainey. "They own a place there now."

"Yes."

Acid fills my mouth but I make myself ask the next question, "Why aren't you with your boyfriend?"

"With Landon?"

Landon. A frat boy with no chin who thinks he's hot shit because his dad owns some strip malls a few towns over and dips his toes into politics. When Landon visits Lainey at the

store, he parks his red Mercedes in the Reserved for the Disabled spot.

“We broke up.”

“You dumped him?” I settle beside her on the couch.

“I... It was mutual.” Her gaze drops away, her shyness tinged with shame. “He wanted more than I wanted to give.”

Heat flares in my chest. “Did he do something to you?”

“I’m okay, Joel,” she says quickly, as if she recognizes there’s a monster inside me roaring to be let out. “He didn’t do anything.”

I make a note to check if she’s telling the whole truth, or downplaying it to be nice. If Landon hurt her, I’ll kill him with my bare hands.

It’d be so easy. Hang around one of the ratty college bars on a Friday night and wait for him to stagger out drunk. Hit him over the head or choke him out, and secure him in the trunk of a throwaway car. I live on a ton of private land. It’s easy to hide a body in these woods.

“Joel.” She puts her hand on mine, and my murderous visions fade away.

“It’s fine. It just wasn’t working out.”

“You’re too good for him.” Her hand is delicate, pure, in my dirty palm, but I can’t let her go.

“It’s nice of you to say that.”

“It’s true. You’re too good for anybody in this town.”

Her long lashes flutter. She doesn’t believe me. I shouldn’t touch her but I can’t let this pass.

“You’re perfect.” And she is. Dark hair, dark eyes, pure skin. Lush curves under the bulky sweaters she wears. She zoomed through high school and college, graduating early. She’s only working at the grocery store to pay the bills and help out her aunt. Soon she’ll have her Masters and be done with our small town.

Lainey Stevens is going places. Me? I'm an ex-con, living like a hermit on a deserted mountain. I might as well be a million years older than her. I fix up old cars and sell them at a profit, making enough so I don't have to count coins when I buy ground beef and tomato sauce at Gemma's store. Lainey's so high above me she might as well be in the clouds.

But she doesn't seem to understand that. She shrugs off my compliment.

I grasp her chin, forcing her to look at me. "It's true. Lainey, listen to me." I wait until her gaze meets mine. "You are perfect. You are. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise." Our faces are inches apart, her breath sweet on my lips. "Do you understand? Say *yes, Joel.*"

"Yes, Joel."

Damn, if that doesn't get me hard.

Her tongue darts out and licks her top lip, glazing it. She has a perfect mouth with thick and curvy lips. I bet her pussy looks the same.

I'm so busy fantasizing about her pussy, I almost miss her little laugh.

"You're always lecturing me. Remember the last time my car broke down?"

I do, vividly. The summer heat, and her bent over to check her tires, her dress hitching up the back of her curvy calves and delicious rear. She wore a white cardigan and looked modest and sexy at the same time. "You were driving up here with bald tires. You deserved a lot more than a lecture."

She's looking at the floor again, instead of at me. "You said if it happened again... I'd be in trouble."

"I said more than that. I told you if you ever drove on bald tires again, I'd turn you over my knee." I wait for her to run, screaming. Instead, her breath hitches and her lips curve.

I save us both from the silence. "I'll take a look at your car before they tow it. I might be able to fix it. Your car and I have a good relationship."

“You’re always rescuing me.”

I rise, because I can’t sit close to her any longer. My dick makes it too uncomfortable. “Right. You’re going to sit cozy. I’m going to feed you. And in the morning, I’ll trek out to call for a tow. If the roads are good, I’ll take you home. I can try to text Gemma now, so she’s not worried.”

“Okay.” She sounds reluctant. “I texted her too. She won’t be worried.”

Something about her tone strikes me as off, but I don’t think too hard about it. After I’ve fired off the text, I serve her a bowl of beef stew and hover over her to make sure she eats. “You’re lucky I was here tonight,” I say, picking at my own stew. I don’t want to think about what would have happened if she’d been stuck up here alone.

“I heard you tell Gemma you’d be home for Christmas,” she blurts, and ducks her head.

I rock back on my heels, feeling amused that she eavesdropped on me, just like I do with her. I might go grocery shopping more than I need to, just to see her.

I take her bowl and hand her back the book to read while I wash up. I’m mopping up the wet spots where the snow melted on the floor when what Lainey said earlier lands.

I might not be book smart like Lainey, but I have my own brand of smarts. Lainey’s good at a lot of things, but lying isn’t one of them.

L *ainey*

JOEL LOOMS OVER ME. “You lied to me, Lainey.” He looks so stern. “Gemma isn’t in town for the holidays. She flew out to be with your parents.”

I swallow. I’ve spent the last few minutes trying to think up excuses and pretending to read.

He takes the book out of my hand and sets it aside. “What’s really going on here?”

“You said you’d be alone.” I knot my fingers together. “It’s Christmas.”

His brows slant down.

“No one should be alone on Christmas.” I resist the urge to squirm under his fierce stare. *Be bold.* “So I came up here.”

“You came up here,” he repeats slowly.

“I want to be with you.” And I put my hand on his leg. A tremor runs through me. Or maybe him. Or both of us.

“Fuck,” he breathes. “You did this on purpose.”

“I didn’t mean to break down. I was hoping to find the road.”

“You could have been hit by a car. Or gotten lost in the woods.” The tops of his cheeks flare red. He lets out a gust of

air and motions sharply. “Stand up.”

I rise and he takes my place, immediately grabbing my hand to guide me down into his lap.

His *lap*.

“Wh-what—”

“It seems my first lecture didn’t take hold. So I’m going to give it again... with a little reinforcement.”

“Reinforcement?”

“Oh, yes.” His hand skates up my back. “It’s time you learned your lesson. I promised you punishment, didn’t I?” When I don’t answer, he gives me a squeeze. “Isn’t that right?”

I nod.

“Use your words, babygirl.”

My face has to be bright red. I squeeze my thighs together. “Yes. That’s right.” I’m breathless and my heart’s galloping. I’m on Joel Adler’s lap, staring into stern blue eyes inches from mine. I have no idea what’s going to happen, but there’s no place I’d rather be. “You said you’d turn me over your knee.”

His grip tightens but his face is calm. “Good girl. Tell me, Lainey. Have you ever been spanked?”

I shake my head before I remember to answer. “No.”

“In a minute, I’m going to help you up. I’m going to unbutton your jeans, but I won’t undress you yet. You’re going to lie across my lap. I’ll spank you over this,” he rubs the denim stretched over my hip, “first. Warm you up. Then, you’ll get punished.”

“Will it hurt?” I squeak. I’m six seconds away from hyperventilating.

“Oh, yes.” His breath ghosts across my ear. “That’s why it’s a punishment. “But if you take it like a good girl...” he leans back and tucks a thick strand of hair behind my ear, “I’ll give you a reward.”

Did I know this was going to happen when I drove up the mountain? Some part of me knew that even if I made the first move, Joel would take me on his terms. But I never imagined this, not even in my wildest fantasies—most of which starred Joel.

“Are you ready?” He doesn’t wait for the answer. He’s already guiding me up and doing exactly what he said he’d do.

I can’t stand to look at him when he undoes my jeans button and pulls down the zipper. His knuckles brush the soft bulge of my belly and there’s a sharp ache right in my core. I need him to go further. But I’m afraid of what will happen when he does.

He eases me over his lap, face down this time, so my stomach rests on the hard and powerful muscles of his legs. He tips me over so I’m a little off balance. I’m two sides of a triangle and my ample rear end is the apex, pointed up right at him. Not a flattering position. I’m used to hiding, using sweatshirts to cover up my softness and size.

His fingers ghost up my thigh, and my skin prickles under the thin layer of denim.

“You’re so beautiful,” he mutters. Each pass of his hand wakes my body up, bringing it to life. I never knew my bottom had so many nerve endings. “I can’t believe this is happening.”

*Same, Joel. Same.*

Something prods my stomach. It’s his dick. I shift so I’m not crushing it, but he steadies me with a hand in the small of my back. I’m clutching his leg, off balance, and wait for his hand to descend.

The first few smacks over my jeans are underwhelming. His palm claps down with a thuddy sound. There’s sensation but there’s no pain.

“Ready for more?”

“Yes.”

He chuckles. “I should have known. Let’s get these jeans off you.”

I start to rise and his hand on my back turns to steel.

“No.” He holds me down and yanks off my jeans somehow, scooting them over my hips. Now my face is really red. I’m ass-up and totally exposed. I wore my best underwear—a blush-pink bra and panty set. I didn’t anticipate this happening, but I’d hoped *something* would.

“Pink.” He sounds like he’s been punched in the gut. He trails his fingers across my bottom, exploring. My panties are so thin, I feel everything. The way his rough callouses catch on my soft skin. There’s reverence in the way he touches me.

His palm crashes down, and the air goes out of my lungs. He peppers my bottom with sharp, stinging smacks. Tears spring into my eyes.

But a part of me is satisfied. *This is more like it.* He said this was punishment. Punishment shouldn’t be fun. This is the way I earn my reward. And I love to strive and earn things. To prove myself.

“This is what happens to naughty girls who disobey me.” He spans in a rhythm, harder when he wants to emphasize something. “You’ll remember my lecture this time, Lainey. You’ll never put yourself in danger again.”

*Yes, yes, yes.* I can’t speak. I can’t breathe.

The flat of his hand claps my bottom, hard, sending fire shooting through me. “Your ass is getting nice and pink for me.”

My breath rushes out of me in a half gasp. Am I laughing? Crying? This is so weird. The humiliation and intimacy all rolled into one.

He pulls down my panties and I freeze up again, imaging my big dimpled bottom on display. His hand skates across my skin, barely touching me. I want to wiggle away from him but he catches me before I even try.



“You’re almost done with your punishment. And then...” He dips his fingers between my legs, brushing the pouting lips of my pussy. All the air leaves the room. “Breathe, Lainey.”

He lets his palm crash down on one cheek and then the other, covering every part of my bottom and even the tops of my thighs. I kick my feet and writhe, but he winds a leg around mine, pinning me so that I’m still. He’s way stronger than I am.

The part of me that’s fighting gives up and lets go. My thoughts float away, too. There’s nothing but Joel’s body wrapped around mine, and the punishing kiss of his hand on my skin that sparks heat and pain.

I float in a warm haze. I don’t realize he stopped spanking me until he strokes my labia again and a different sensation sings through me. His skilled fingers dance over my intimate parts, finding my clit and painting it with my own wetness. This is so different to when I touch myself, or the few fumbling attempts my ex made. With Logan, if my clit was in Kansas, his finger would be at the North or South Pole.

“You did good for me, taking your punishment.” He takes one of my lower lips between his thumb and forefinger, and rubs. “Now it’s time for your reward.” I’m restless, shifting on his legs again. He clamps his limbs down and holds me so that I can’t slide away. Unable to move, I’m forced to focus on the feelings. He tickles my clit and circles it, rubbing at the itchiest spots, making the neediness build in my limbs until a little golden pulse flares through me and satisfaction floods my core. My lips part and my breath comes in a rush. The first pulse is followed by another, and another. And all the while, Joel rubs my back, murmuring, “Good girl.”

I’m wobbly when he pulls off my underwear and jeans and eases me back up. My face is flushed from being upside down. My hair is a lost cause.

“Whoa,” I breathe, and his eyes crinkle.

He holds my gaze as he licks his fingers. I’m too blissed out to feel embarrassed.

“There’s another reason I came up here tonight,” I tell him. He’s clothed, and I’m naked from my hips down. Not quite my fantasy, but we’re a quarter of the way there.

He inclines his head, the flinty spark in his Arctic gaze warning me to tell him the whole truth. My bottom throbs.

“I wanted to give you a gift.” I pause but he doesn’t guess what I wanted to give him. I’ll have to spell it out. Problem is, I don’t think I can say it out loud.

I grab the hem of my sweater and pull it over my head. It drops to the floor. I wait, wearing nothing but my blush-pink bra. *Please, please, get what I’m trying to tell you.*

Understanding lights his eyes. He grips my hips and pulls me closer to him. “This is what you want?” There’s a rough edge to his voice. Underneath my burning bottom, his dick surges.

“Actually,” I say, “it’s more like a gift you could give me. Because...” the word sticks in my throat, “I’ve never done it before.”

His eyes flare, then narrow. “Lainey... are you telling me you’re a virgin?”

I bob my head up and down, and remember to use my words. “Yes.”

“Holy hell.” His hands fall away from me, shocking my skin with a sudden rush of cold.

J *oel*

LAINY SITS ON MY LAP, her bare skin glowing in the firelight. She looks like an angel, an apparition, an emissary from heaven come to bless the faithful. Except I'd be the last person an angel would visit.

And yet here she is, midnight eyes and hair, unwrapped in my lap like a gift.

*She came up here to seduce me.*

I can't move. I can't speak. I can't think.

After a moment, she shivers and wraps her arms around herself. Her chin drops. "Please don't say no."

I gather her to me immediately, sliding my arms around her. "No. No. I'd never say no to you." She collapses against me and I encourage her to, pulling her chest flush to mine and stroking her hair. "I don't think I'm capable of it."

She shudders, and I feel the emotions filling her to the brim. She's been through a lot in the last hour. I keep her cradled against me for a while, stroking my hand up and down her back. Eventually, I can't resist rubbing her bottom, exploring the marks I left on her, but she doesn't seem to mind. She relaxes further.

I glide my hand over her body, finding my way to the seam between her legs. I shift her in my lap, easing her thighs apart and soothing them until they relax and fall open.

The scent of her arousal rises, and I grit my teeth so I don't come in my pants. I haven't had to fight an orgasm like this since I was a teen, and even then I didn't have to fight this hard. Lainey destroys my control.

"You're going to give me this," I cup my palm over her sweet pussy, "for Christmas?" She's hot and pulsing and oh so wet in my hand. My rough, tattooed hand. The contrast of her perfection against my ugly flesh should make me want to look away. Instead, it gets me hotter. "This most perfect gift... for me?"

She squirms but her lashes lift and she looks squarely at me. "Yes. I want you..." her voice wobbles and she musters more strength, "I want you to have it. To have me."

I wait for her to change her mind. *She's not drunk. She's alone but she drove up here. For me. She hasn't said no. She took off her shirt.*

And as I stare, her chin lifts another inch.

She wants this.

I can't wait a second longer. I scoop her up and stride to my bed, where I lay her out like the virgin offering she is.

As I stare down at her, I know two things: I'm going to hell for this. But it'll be worth it.

She's so soft and sweet—chubby thighs and belly, lush breasts spilling out of the top of her sexy bra, lying on my faded flannel sheets. I can't resist her.

This is a dream. In the morning, she'll be gone.

But right now, she's here. My angel. My miracle on a dark and sacred night.

I lean down and kiss the inside of her knee. She squirms and kicks, unused to being worshiped. If I get my way, she'll get used to it. I'll work my way up her gorgeous body,

pleasuring every inch of her. I'll tie her down if I have to. My bed posts are sturdy. And tomorrow—

*No. There'll be no tomorrow.* This gift, this miracle, is only for one night. I need to make the best of it.

So I get comfy between her legs. When she tries to inch her knees closed, I part her thighs so her pussy blossoms. The scent of her is the sweetest perfume. I kiss a line from her knee to inches from her dripping center, my beard scraping up the sensitive flesh until it's chafed pink. I like my mark on her.

"Joel," she breathes. Her hands come to rest on my head. If she tries to push me away, I'll pin them down, but for now I like how her fingers tangle in my hair, ready to hold on tight. "You don't have to go slow for me. You can—"

"Shhh, babygirl." I stroke two fingers up and down her outer pussy lips, rubbing them with the lightest touch. She's shaved smooth, and ultra sensitive. She torques her hips one way, then the other, and I steady her with a hand at her waist. "There's no rush. This is for me."

"But—"

"No talking." I make it an order, and don't miss how her pussy gushes in response. *Beautiful.* I scoot further to the apex of her thighs. "I'm going to get to know you. Inside and out." I take one labia between a thumb and forefinger and rub until she can't catch a breath. I nuzzle the inside of her knee, nipping her tender flesh. She's spread before me like a book, and I want to read every chapter. Study every paragraph. Memorize every line.

There are faint stretch marks on the curves of her hips and insides of her thighs. I trace them, first with my fingers, then with my tongue. She makes the most adorable little whimpers and squeals. Is she embarrassed about her body? Her responses? At one point she tries to roll on her front. I spank her sweet ass. "No. No hiding from me."

It takes her a moment to obey. I give her another swat and her rear jiggles so nicely, I spank it some more. The redness from her spanking has faded to a pink flush. It'll be interesting

to see how much punishment she can take. She rocks back into position before I can imprint a red mark in the shape of my hand on her bottom.

Her eyes are dark as night, her lips glossy from biting them.

“Relax. I’m going to make this good for you.” I slide my palms under her ass, gripping her punished flesh in a reminder of what happens when she disobeys me. I need her to let go, to give me control. Erotic pain can unlock some people better than pleasure can. I suspect it works that way for Lainey.

I let my beard brush over the crease of her thighs, teasing her, circling her wet center. Her scent envelopes me until I’m drunk with it. I thumb her pussy lips until she’s restless and desperate, not for escape, but for more.

That’s when I lick her. She tenses up but I wear her down, massaging her intimate folds with the lightest touches of my fingertips and tongue. I tickle her clit and taste her from the top of her labia to the bottom. I prop her hips up higher and lick in long, rhythmic strokes. Up and down, up and down, until her hips rock with each pass.

Every so often, she lets out a little coo or sigh. She’s been such a good girl, keeping quiet this whole time.

I take a break and lean back, spreading her labia to drink in the view. Her little clit is swollen and needy.

“I want you to come. You can cry out if you want, but the only thing you say is my name. Got it?” I punctuate my command with a light smack, right on top of her clit.

She gasps.

“Nod if you understand.”

She nods so hard, her hair flops into her face.

“Hang on, babygirl.” I dive back in, licking her in the same rhythm until she’s at a simmer.

“Joel,” she hums my name at a volume barely above a whisper. I lick lower, and delve a thumb to massage the shiny

skin around the knot of her anal entrance. All of her is mine. Mine to explore. Mine to possess. Mine to fuck.

“Joel!” She clenches her bottom cheeks, trying to squeeze herself shut, but I press my face to her pussy, driving my tongue into her channel to lick up all the juices there. Her hips judder, her whole body vibrating at peak intensity. She turns my name into a moan. I squeeze her ass in rhythm to my tongue fucking her.

She finds my head, digging her fingers into my hair and tugging hard enough to rip it out by the roots. I don’t stop. She’s panting my name, singing it out as her muscles clench.

“That’s it, baby,” I say, my mouth filled with her pussy. She jerks, coming undone on my tongue. Her cries are the sweetest music.

I rise up, beard dripping, and crowd closer, making her legs stretch wide. Her pussy is hot and sopping wet in my palm. I’ve penetrated her with my tongue. She’s loose from her orgasms, but she needs more preparation before I give her my dick.

I slip a finger inside, collecting the wetness. I add another and watch her face—the flutter of her eyelashes, the tiny wince in the corner of her mouth.

“You can take me,” I tell her, and the wrinkle between her brows disappears. She’s so damn responsive to my commands.

We stay like that, joined by my fingers inside her. I toy with her, exploring her wet heat, hooking a finger around to find the rough patch on the front wall of her pussy and swirling over the ridges until it swells.

She’s already come twice, her pleasure painted pink on cheeks and chest. The next time she comes, I’ll be inside her.

“I’m going to put my dick here,” I tell her, being crude on purpose. I have three fingers at her entrance, stretching her. “Inside you. I’m the only man who will have you this way.”

*Now and forever.* The thought flashes through my mind, and I push it away.

She nods, looking nervous and eager at the same time. It's too much. I slide my fingers out of her and yank off my flannel shirt so fast, I lose a few buttons. My undershirt and jeans get tossed on the pile. Her eyes widen at the sight of my dick but she doesn't scramble away.

I fist my cock, squeezing hard to stay my orgasm. This isn't about me. It's about her. I've gotta make this good for her. I can't forget myself.

I get close enough to run a finger over the soft pad of her lips. "One day, I'll fuck you here."

Her eyes grow heavy and her lips part, allowing my finger to penetrate her mouth.

*Fuck.* If I don't stop now, I'm going to blow.

She reaches for me then hesitates.

"You can touch me, baby. I want you to."

"Like this?" She runs a finger up the side of my dick and it jerks. She pulls away, so I take her hand and guide it. Her fingers are small and dainty, and the sight of them clutching my cock threatens to make me explode.

I cast about for something to distract me. Anything. "The last time you tried to come up here. This summer, when you got a flat. Were you...?"

"Trying to give you my virginity?" She nods. "That was attempt number one."

And I lectured her about her tires and sent her home. "I'm an idiot."

"My seduction technique needs work." She touches her thumb to the head of my dick, gathering the precum and spreading it around. Then she wraps her fingers around the shaft and gives it a tug.

My thighs tremble as I fight the urge to spill in her hand. "Your technique is just fine." I pull her hand away. "You're too good."



She narrows her eyes like she doesn't believe me. I trace her soft lips again.

"Before, when you were on your knees... I couldn't stop thinking of this. Then I hated myself for it," I tell her.

"Why?"

"How can someone like me ever hope to deserve you?"

She grabs my hand and kisses it. "I want you."

I shift so I can line myself up with her pussy. It's now or never, or I'm gonna come on my sheets.

I stop. "I don't have a condom." How could I be so stupid? This cabin has been my haven, my place of hibernation. I live like a monk. "I've never had a girl up here."

"It's okay." Lainey's hips jerk towards mine, silently begging. "I'm on the pill."

"I've been tested. I don't have anything. Any STDs."

"Neither do I," she tells me, solemn.

I pass a hand over her, memorizing the curve of her belly, the generous swell of her hips. My work-rough hands are tanned and stained with ink, obscene beside her pure flesh. An angel and an abomination. The sacred and the profane.

There's no redemption for a man like me. Lainey is as close to heaven as I'll ever come.

But I'm damned if I can't stop myself from possessing her all the way.

**L** *ainey*

JOEL LOOMS OVER ME, his hands on each one of my knees. He sits between my legs like I always imagined. My thoughts are slow and loopy as my body sinks further into the comfortable bed. I want to stay here forever.

“I’ll need to go slow,” he rasps. “I don’t want to hurt you.”

“I don’t want you to hold back. I want it all.” I’ve risked this much and come so far. We’re not stopping now.

I prop myself up and reach for him, draw him down, and kiss me. His beard scrapes my face. I taste myself on his lips, a musky and sharp flavor, with a hint of Joel underneath.

“I want this,” I whisper into his mouth, and that seems to be enough.

He shifts himself over me. “All right, Lainey. All right.” His hand comes to my left breast, the ragged nap of calluses catching on my soft skin in a rough caress.

He dips his head and kisses me deeper. I open to him, inviting him to give me more. We fall back into each other as easily as if we were born to do it.

His dick probes my entrance. I’m wet enough, he can push in. The stretch burns in the best way. I make a little sound and

he pauses but I arch my hips up, letting him sink in a little more.

He holds himself over me, not quite all the way inside me. His broad shoulders fill my vision. All I can see is him.

“Breathe, Lainey.”

I pant against his mouth. I scrape my nails down his back, scratching lightly. He’s left his mark on me and I want to leave my mark on him.

Will he remember this night? Will he think of me fondly? Or will this barely be a blip on his radar; the faintest memory?

“Lainey,” he calls. “Come back to me.”

I blink, and study the glacier ice in his eyes. I tip my hips up and dig my nails into his back, pulling him closer. I want my skin to meld to his.

He rocks over me, moving deeper. His weight comes down on me slowly, and I breathe to better accept the pressure. Finally, he’s sheathed fully inside me, his hips cradled in mine. I feel him deep in my belly. We’re together as close as people can be. It’s everything I’ve ever wanted.

“You’re going to come for me again.”

“I don’t know if I can.” I’ve read that it’s difficult for some women to orgasm vaginally.

He pulls out a little and slides back in, angling his hips somehow so he drags over a sensitive spot in my pussy. Sparks fill my vision. “Don’t think. Just feel.”

His body works over mine in a rocking, easy rhythm.

“So tight,” he mutters. “So beautiful. My angel.”

Pressure builds in my belly. With each drag of his cock, a hot flush comes over me and my muscles draw up tighter and tighter.

The fire’s burned low but the temperature’s rising. The heat builds between us.

I writhe under him, needing to move, needing more.  
“Joel...”

“That’s it, babygirl. Say my name.” He glides in and out of me. “Look at me. I’m the one who’s fucking you.” His cock swells inside me, stretching me until I can’t take any more. “Give over, Lainey. Give everything to me.”

He lowers his head and nips my lip. The combination of the pain, his scent, the way his cock rubs me—it’s too much. Something inside me snaps, and golden warmth fills my limbs. Joel shudders over me, his cock pulsing deep inside me. For a moment, he lets his full weight press me into the bed. He kisses my brow, my right cheek, my lips. Then he pulls out and gathers me to his chest.

For a moment, we simply breathe.

There’s nothing left of the fire but a few glowing embers. The sweat’s cooling on my skin but I don’t want to move. “Is it true? You’ve never had a girl up here?”

“Only you.” He kisses my temple.

“I like that.”

“Possessive, are you?”

“You have no idea. I’ve had a crush on you since high school.” The darkness makes it easy to spill my secrets.

“You were too good for me in high school. Still are.” He draws away and prowls naked into the kitchen. I squint but can’t see what he’s doing until he returns and presses something warm and wet to my sore pussy.

He cleans me up, wiping away the traces of himself. But part of him is deep inside me. When he’s done, he tosses the washcloth on the floor, but doesn’t return to my side.

I’m shivering. “Come back to me.”

He fixes the quilt so it’s covering me, and stretches out beside me. Other than a few pops and crackles from the dying fire, it’s so quiet, I imagine I can hear the falling snow. Joel’s breathing is deep and soft, but his body is tense beside me. What is he thinking?

“Joel?”

“I’m here, babygirl.” But he sounds distant.

“Did... did I do okay?”

He rolls to me, gathering me in his arms. “You did perfect. You are perfect.”

I settle back against him. This is what I’ve wanted for so long—to be in Joel’s arms.

“I have a confession of my own to make,” he says. “I don’t need to buy groceries half as much as I do.”

*I knew it!* I smile into the darkness. “I was wondering what you were doing with all that ground chuck.”

“Sometimes I’ll just drop it off at the soup kitchen. Whenever my day’s too long and grinding me down, I drive past Gemma’s store. And if I drive past, I have to go in. Because nothing in my life goes so wrong that it can’t be fixed by seeing you.”

I hum and snuggle closer. “After prison, why did you come back to town?”

“Because I was done searching for what I already had. You make your life and your happiness.”

*Exactly.* I trail my fingers over his skin. I can’t see them in the dark, but I know he has some freckles here and there. I’ve studied him for so long but I barely know him. It’ll take me a lifetime to educate myself about this man.

“I wish...” His voice cracks.

“What?”

“I wish I could spend every night like this.”

“But we can.”

“No. I’m not in your plans, babygirl.” His fingers stroke my belly. “You’re going to finish school and move on to bigger and better things.”

“Working at a library isn’t necessarily bigger and better.”

“You’re too smart for this town, too smart for me.”

“You’re plenty smart.”

“Lainey, please.” He catches my hand, stilling it. “I have to let you go.”

“Do you want to let me go?”

“I want to hold on forever.” His hand flexes, gripping my fingers tighter before releasing them. “But I have to do what’s best for you.”

*I decide what’s best for me*, I want to say. Instead, I look out the window. The snow’s mostly stopped falling. A few errant flakes drift through the dark blue square. “What time is it?”

I feel him shrug. “Probably after midnight.”

“So it’s Christmas.”

“Yes.”

I got my wish. It’s time to make a new one. I yawn, fighting off a rush of tiredness. It will be so nice to fall asleep in Joel’s arms. It’ll be a dream come true. But I want a few more moments to savor it. “Thank you for my gift.”

He drops a kiss on my bare shoulder before tucking the blanket over it. “This was the best gift anyone’s ever given me. I’ll never forget this.”

He makes it sound so final. And now I understand: he doesn’t think he deserves me. *Oh, Joel*. “You think I’m smart, right?”

“Smartest one I know.”

“Then trust I know what I want.”

“Lainey—”

“It’ll work out.”

His sigh stirs my hair, but he doesn’t argue. “Go to sleep.”

Obedient as ever, I relax against him.

*You make your life and your happiness.*

Joel thinks we can't last. He thinks that when the sun comes up and the snow stops falling, he'll have to let me go.

But there is magic on Christmas. Maybe it'll be enough to work another miracle.

So I close my eyes, and make another wish.

# EPILOGUE



ONE YEAR LATER...

**J** *oel*

I SWING the ax above my head and let it fall. The log splits with a satisfying thunk. The temperature's falling below freezing. My breath is white on the wind but the work warms my muscles until I'm sweating and tempted to strip down to my shirt sleeves. I'm almost done, and it's a good thing—the clouds overhead tell me a blizzard's on its way.

I hustle to chop the rest of the wood, setting aside the best pieces to sell online. Turns out woodworkers will pay premium dollar for New Hampshire hardwood. I spent the last year building up my online shop, finding the best wood and planting trees to replace what I've cut down. Between that and the jobs I get fixing cars, it's been a good year. I made enough to add a room to the cabin, and that's a good thing too, because I'm not the only one living here now, and we need the room.

The snow's starting to fall when the door swings open and Lainey steps out. The sight of her makes me catch my breath, the same as it always does. The same as it did years ago, when I came back to town and she greeted me with a shy, soft voice in the grocery store.

Her cheeks curve, pink where the cold nips them, and her smile lights up the gray day.

“There he is,” she coos to the little bundle in her arms.  
“There’s Daddy.”

“It’s too cold to be outside.”

“He wants you,” she says, tipping the bundle to show me my son’s tiny face. He has blue eyes the exact color of mine, but his round cheeks and angelic smile are all Lainey.

“Go inside. I’m almost done.”

She obeys. The door shuts but I can still hear her talking to Joel Junior, singing a lullaby off-key.

I savor the sound. It’s been one year since she trekked up here to give me the most precious gift anyone’s ever given me. A gift that keeps giving. Our son was born in September. We got married in June, after Lainey graduated. She got a part-time job in a nearby college town, and helps me with the store on the side.

Lainey thinks there’s magic on Christmas, but I have another theory. There’s nothing supernatural about my wife’s determination and a car that won’t stop breaking down. It’s Lainey.

She’s the magic.

*Thank you,* I mouth to the frozen air. To whoever’s listening: God or angels or just the snow-filled clouds in the sky. *Thank you.*

I set my ax under a tarp and head back inside to my home and my wife and my son. My angel, my redemption.

My miracle.



THANK you for reading Snowed in with the Lumberjack! Want more sexy lumberjacks? Check out [Beauty & the Lumberjacks](#).

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For film and TV rights inquiries: [lee.savino@leesavino.com](mailto:lee.savino@leesavino.com)

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USA today bestselling author Lee Savino loves writing super spicy romance with wild, one-of-a-kind plots and world-building, plus all the feels. Her favorite heroes are hot, dominant alpha-holes—the type of men who can handle the hot-mess heroines who crash into them and turn their lives upside-down. Lee's books have been translated into multiple languages and she's still amazed she can make a living writing what she loves to read.

For tons of crazy fun, join her [Goddess Group on Facebook](#) or visit [www.lee savino.com](http://www.lee savino.com) to sign up for her mailing list and get a free book.

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