



SAMHAIN PUBLISHING

Baby It's  
Cold Outside  
Shelli Stevens

*Holiday eBook Freebie*

Baby, It's Cold Outside  
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“You’re sure the cut doesn’t make me look too frumpy?”

Heather squeezed her fingers around the styling brush, and kept an encouraging smile pasted on her face. The salon was almost empty. Just her, the customer, and Bing Crosby singing White Christmas. Again.

“You look fantastic, Georgiana.” Heather touched the edges of the older woman’s bob. The same haircut she asked for every three months.

“Well.” The older woman tilted her head left and then right. Then she gave a slow nod and smiled. “Yes. Yes I suppose it does. Henry will be so pleased.”

“Of course he will.” Heather unfastened the black apron from around her client’s neck and lowered her chair so the petite woman could stand up. “Alright, let’s get you on your way to your holiday party.”

And *maybe* she could attempt to get to her cousin’s.

A half hour later she fumbled to lock up her shop, clutching her long faux fur jacket around her festive red halter dress. God it was colder than a witch’s tit out here.

She turned from her shop and shivered, pulling the Santa hat tighter around her ears. Okay, it wasn’t a wool cap or something equally warm, but it would have to do.

Glancing down at the traffic flow of First Avenue, she was surprised at how light it was. Her brows drew together as she watched for a cab. It was the Saturday before Christmas, you’d think everyone and their mom would be out and about.

And where the hell was a cab when you needed one?

Headlights cut across two lanes, blinding her, before the car came to a stop next to the curb. She stared at sleek black Lincoln Town Car and then looked to her left and right. Nope. No one else waiting to hop in the car.

The driver’s side door swung open a second later and a man unfurled himself slowly.

She lifted her gaze to see his face—which felt a bit awkward since it was usually the other way around. She was a tall gal.

And he was certainly attractive enough. Early thirties maybe, black hair, blue eyes and a chiseled face that gave him a great old Hollywood vibe.

A frisson of familiarity darted through her as she met his considering gaze. She jerked her attention away from his eyes, wondering how she could possibly know him.

He wore an expensive looking black suit, with a crisp black shirt under it. Drove an expensive car. It was doubtful they ran in the same circles. Obviously the man had money.

“Can I offer you a ride?” he finally yelled, not even bothering to come around to the other side of the car.

Was he kidding?

She folded her arms across her chest. “Do you have any candy?”

His eyebrows shot up in dismay. “Do I have any—”

“I mean, if I’m going to get in the car with a stranger you should at least be offering me candy.”

Amusement flickered across his face before his gaze moved over her. A pretty damn thorough inspection. Beneath her coat her nipples tightened at his perusal and she shifted her stance, slightly annoyed by how easy she was to get hot and bothered. *Somebody needs to have a meeting with her vibrator later.*

“But we’re not strangers,” he said and shut his door, finally walking around to the sidewalk. “Or don’t you remember, Heather?”

Oh shit. She clutched the fury edge of her coat tight around her and narrowed her eyes. Please don’t let him be some suppressed memory from a party back in her college days.

She'd had an encounter like this once before and, damn, that had been embarrassing. But then, something told her this guy would be a hard man to forget.

"I'd like to say I do remember," she admitted as he came to stand next to her. "But I'm a shitty liar."

Something wet hit the tip of her nose and she glanced toward the streetlight to see if it was raining. Instead of rain she saw the soft white flakes in the light. Her lips parted in surprise. Hell, she hadn't seen this coming.

The man gave a soft laugh and she turned back to face him and found his gaze on her mouth.

"We met at a barbeque a few months ago."

A barbeque? Another flake hit her cheek. Barbeques were like summer time events. Warm weather and hot dogs. Jeez, that seemed a long time ago. It was freezing. Almost Christmas. And apparently snowing. In Seattle. It rarely snowed here.

"The name is Quinton. You were dating my cousin."

Dating his...oh *hell* no. This man was a relative of Barry? It all slid into place. The barbeque she'd attended with her then boyfriend back during the summer. Before she'd dumped him like a week later. Kind of hard not to do when she'd discovered he was boinking her receptionist.

She remembered Quinton watching her that day, his gaze predatory. More than interested. She'd thought he was cute, but must have forgotten him in the Barry drama that ensued.

"So you do remember me." He grinned, exposing a line of perfect white teeth. "Hop in, I'll give you a ride."

No way. Any relative of Barry's could only be trouble.

"I'll walk, thanks." Heather turned on her heel and began walking in the opposite direction.

\* \* \*

Quinton stared after her. Unable to focus on anything besides the curves of her tall body. The platinum Bettie Paige styled hair bouncing under the fluffy Santa hat. She had quite the pin-up feel about her.

His cock stirred against his suit pants. She was almost sexier now than when he'd seen her back at the barbeque. When she'd been leaning over the railing, the back of her cherry patterned dress rising high over her bare thighs. He'd wanted to lift it over her ass and take her from behind. God, he'd wanted her. Then and now.

And she was walking away.

"Wait," he yelled and hurried after her.

Snow brushed against his face, coming down heavier. He caught her before she crossed the street to the next block, grabbing her elbow and swinging her around.

She arched an eyebrow.

"It's snowing, you can't walk."

"It'll stop."

"It's supposed get worse, don't you watch the news? Six inches by midnight."

"No, I hate the news. It's too depressing." Her gaze dropped to the crotch of his pants. "And only six inches? I'm surprised."

He hardened further at her flirty response and the air hissed out from between his teeth.

"Oh, sweetheart, that's much more than six inches. But you won't know until you try it."

Her lips quirked with amusement and her eyes...he was pleased to see the flicker of heat in them. Interest.

"I'll drive you anywhere you want to go," he murmured, sliding his hand down her elbow to catch her hand.

"Anywhere?" She repeated and stepped closer.

A snowflake landed on her brow and he resisted the urge to melt it with his lips.

“Anywhere.”

She ran her tongue over her mouth and glanced at his car. “Do you have any plans tonight?”

“Not at all.”

“Okay. A ride anywhere I want. I’m holding you to it.”

A prickle of suspicion hit him at her suddenly smug look. He didn’t have time to analyze it though as she walked past him toward his car.

He just beat her to it, opening the passenger side door and letting her climb in. For a moment her retro looking coat parted and one bare leg slid free.

His chest tightened and he bit back a groan. God. It didn’t matter where she wanted him to drive her. She could say New York and he’d agree.

Quinton closed the door and jogged around to the driver’s side, settling in.

She cast him a skeptical look. “You’re listening to Christmas music?”

He grinned wide and reached for the volume, turning it up. “Love the stuff.”

Pulling the car away from the curb, he tapped his fingers against the steering wheel to the driving beat of the Christmas Sarajevo by the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. It seemed a good fit as the snow started to come down heavier, battering his windshield.

“Are you for real?” she asked and shook her head.

“Pinch me and find out.”

“Hmm. You’d like that too much.” Sitting back in her seat she buckled her seatbelt. “Nice suit. Are you sure you weren’t heading out to a party?”

“Not at all. Just got out of work.”

“On a Saturday? Three days before Christmas?”

“Yeah.”

“What do you do?”

“I’m a lawyer.”

“And apparently a workaholic.”

He laughed softly, because she’d nailed it. “So where am I taking you?” *And how do I make sure you’ll give me your number afterward.*

She didn’t answer for a moment and then cleared her throat, saying softly something that sounded like, “Peppertown.”

“Say that again?” He grinned and cast her a sideways glance. “I thought you said Peppertown for a moment there.”

“I did. My cousin Christy lives over there. She’s having a huge holiday party tonight. She makes this eggnog from scratch and it’s good. Like *real* good. You’re going to love it. I think it has rum in the recipe.”

Quinton blinked his mouth falling open. Fucking Peppertown? She was *serious*?

“That’s like...three hours away.”

“I know.” Heather sighed and glanced at her watch. “Shit, we’re going to be late. The party starts at eight. You wanna floor it?”

“No,” he sputtered and loosened the top button on his shirt, casting her an incredulous look. “I don’t want to floor it. I don’t even want to—”

“Drive me over the mountains?” She batted her eyelashes. “You promised me anywhere.”

“Yeah, well I sure didn’t think you’d pick a city over a freaking mountain pass.”

“Yeah, well, you’re saving me gas money. Thanks, Quinton.” She laughed and placed her hand on his leg briefly and squeezed.

He inhaled swiftly and glanced down at her hand. The red nails still lingered lightly on his thigh. Lifting his head he met her gaze. She held his for a moment, before a small amount of color filled her cheeks.

She cleared her throat, pulled her hand back and looked out the window. “Oh how pretty. I love the lights downtown this time of year.”

He followed her gaze to where they were passing Westlake Center. The holiday carousel was running and the buildings were all shiny with lights. The Macy's star practically a beacon for the shoppers to flock to. It was a sight. Something he never tired of.

"You don't have to drive me if you don't want," she finally said softly. "Seriously, it is a long drive. I was just messing with you."

He didn't answer right away. He had every right to drop her butt off at her house and head back home. To drive to Peppertown this time of night—in a snowstorm—was absolutely nuts.

But he hadn't pulled over to the side of the road on a whim. No. The minute he'd recognized her stepping out of the shop, he'd made an instant decision. He'd spent months hoping to see her again. This was his chance, and the hell if he was going to blow it.

Besides, when was the last time he'd gone to a holiday party? Hell, hadn't he worked the last few years all the days leading up to Christmas? Not to mention that homemade eggnog sounded pretty damn good.

"I'll drive you."

She laughed, her eyes widening. "Oh my God, are you serious? Do you even have chains for the tires?"

"Yeah. I'm a big skier. Go up to the pass on the weekends. Well, when I'm not working."

"If we go we'll have to spend the night, though."

"I always did like a slumber party."

Her smile grew. "I like you, Quinton. You're spontaneous."

Hardly. His lips twitched. If she only knew.

Heather settled back in the soft seats of the Town Car and let the heat blow over her body.

She turned her head and watched the snow batter down on the last minute shoppers outside. The music had changed again, and now *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year* was being drilled into her head. As if she hadn't heard that one quite enough at work.

Still, she found herself humming along silently in her head. And could almost admit she enjoyed the holiday songs. Come December 26th that stuff had to go. But before hand...she kind of liked it.

"So, have you finished your shopping?" she asked.

"I don't shop."

"You don't? Not even for your family?" She teased. "Or for Barry?"

"My parents are dead, and I have no brothers or sisters." His mouth tightened as he said it quite matter-of-factly. Her stomach clenched in sympathy. Then he added. "And Barry is an asshole."

Heather let out a soft laugh. "Yes. Actually he is." She paused. "And I'm sorry about your parents."

"Thank you. It happened years ago when I was in college. Boating accident." He glanced over at her. "And I'm sorry about Barry. I heard what happened through the grapevine."

Right like that wasn't embarrassing.

Heather grimaced and dealt with her humiliation in the usual way. Blunt humor. "Don't be. The sex was terrible."

Not like it was a lie. It had been!

Quinton choked on a laugh. "Was it?"

"Oh just horrible." She grimaced. "The man couldn't give a woman an orgasm even if he'd been reading a manual. He'd poke a finger at my clit like it was some kind of bug in the dirt. *Poke. Poke. What is this? Oh wait, let's touch my penis instead.*"

Quinton laughed harder. A hint of red stole up his neck. "You're not serious."

"Completely. He sucked." She bit her lip. Not caring that she was about to get even more

brazen. "What, is it something that runs in the family? Does your penis have a short attention span as well?"

He turned to look at her again, the humor leaving his gaze. In its place lay a smoldering intensity that had butterflies taking up residence in her belly.

"Blood is the only thing we have in common. My penis has a great attention span." He waited a beat, his mouth curving into a predatory smile. "Maybe you'd care to find out some time?"

Her heart tripped and she ran her tongue across her lips. "Maybe I would."

His nostrils flared and the desire in his eyes deepened until she jerked her head away, suddenly flushed.

Quinton must've hit the gas pedal harder, because the car shot forward, smoothly passing the other cars on the interstate. A few minutes later they turned onto I90 and were speeding toward the entrance to the mountain pass.

Heather shifted in her seat. Her mind swam with images of going to bed with Quinton. Of him kissing her breasts. Going down on her. Moving inside her.... *Stop it! You are not considering this!*

God! How hot was it in here? She groaned and jerked off her coat, tossing it in the backseat. Her skin, bare to the warm heated car, tingled when she felt him look at her again.

"I like that dress. Red is a great color on you."

"Thank you." Unwillingly, her gaze turned to his again.

The expression in his eyes was even hotter now. He wanted her. Without a doubt. She swallowed hard and licked her lips, looking away.

The car started the incline into the mountains and she bit back a sigh.

Snow was coming down so hard it was almost impossible to see out the window. Her frustration grew to concern as the cars in front of them slowed, taillights flashing red in the blinding white.

"What's going on?" she asked, squinting out to see the trees beyond the white.

"Not sure," he murmured and a moment later he had to completely stop the car. "Hmm. I wonder what's up. Let's check the radio."

He reached out and turned the stereo to an AM station. It took a few minutes wading through the news before the traffic came on. And then they heard it. The report confirmed the niggling suspicion that had begun to take root in her head.

"The pass is closed?" he muttered, turning it back to the Christmas station.

"For now, they're trying to clear it."

"Damn. So we just wait here?"

"I guess." She bit her lip.

The music changed again and she almost laughed. What the hell? It was like he'd laid down the soundtrack for this drive. Mariah Carey singing *All I Want For Christmas Is You*.

And heaven help her but she *did* want him. Her breasts had grown heavier in her bra. There was a warm ache between her legs. Her body was practically screaming *Yes, get some!*

Her gaze darted to the exit up ahead and her pulse quickened with a really bad idea. "Or maybe we don't have to wait here so to speak."

"Oh?" He turned to look at her, lifting an eyebrow. "What are you thinking?"

She stared straight ahead. Her heart thudding in her chest. "You could drive on the shoulder and get off at that exit."

"Not much there. Just some back roads."

She licked her lips. She was nuts. Absolutely crazy. But it was Christmas. And Mariah Carey was telling her to get some. In a bit of a cheesy bubble gum pop fashion.

And right now, she couldn't think of anything she wanted more than to touch Quinton. To be touched in return.

"Yeah...kind of private," she murmured and turned to meet his gaze, hoping everything she was suggesting was blatantly portrayed in her eyes. She was a bit out of practice with this seduction thing.

“Oh. Oh!” He drew in an unsteady breath and his gaze swept to her cleavage. “Private sounds pretty damn nice.”

And then he jerked the wheel to the right, spinning the tires as he pulled onto the shoulder and passed every one to get off at the exit.

The snow fell heavier here and was deep on the road. His tires spun a bit and she gripped the door, shifting in her seat, hoping it would ease the ache between her legs. It didn't. Not in the least.

She looked over at Quinton again, shifted her gaze toward his lap and moaned. God, he was already erect and pressing against his pants. And it looked like he hadn't been kidding about being way bigger than six inches.

Quinton turned onto a small road, drove about twelve feet and then shut off the engine. The music kept playing though and he made no move to turn it off.

“It's going to get cold,” she warned softly.

“You should know better.” He unfastened his seatbelt and moved his seat back. “It's about to get very hot.”

A charge of excitement rushed through her blood and she swallowed, feeling dampness in her panties now.

“You don't happen to have condoms do you?” she asked.

“I've got at least one in the glove compartment. Come here.” He reached for her, pulling her out of her seat and sideways onto his lap. He plucked the Santa hat off her head and tossed it into the backseat. “I have to say I think we're both a little bit crazy.”

She let out a throaty laugh. “I was just thinking the same thing.” She dipped a finger past the collar of his shirt, tracing the hard ridge of his chest. “But I don't care.”

He let out a soft growl and captured her finger, raising it to his mouth. His tongue flicked out over the tip, before he caught it between his teeth.

He slid a hand between them and cupped one of her breasts, squeezing the flesh and flicking over the nipple.

Nipping her finger again he murmured. “I can't wait to do that to you here.”

His finger flicked her nipple again, to emphasize his point. Heather groaned, the heat spreading like wildfire through her body.

The song changed again to a familiar, sexy one. *Baby, it's cold outside...*

It might be snowing buckets, but Quinton was right. It was definitely going to stay hot in here.

He kissed her neck and worked his hand down the front of her dress and into her bra. Her whole body arched when his palm cupped her bare flesh.

“Quinton,” she whispered, squirming on his lap.

“I know, baby.” His cock ground into her hip, his breath heating her neck in soft little bursts. “Oh God, do I know. I have to warn you, I haven't done this in a car in a long time. I think high school.”

“Ditto.” She let out a breathy laugh. “We'll just have to help each other through it.”

“I can do that.”

Her dress had ridden up around her thighs and when his hand moved between her legs she let them fall apart.

“So soft,” he muttered and slid his hand higher. A moment later his fingers brushed the soaked crotch of her panties. “So wet.”

Her cheeks flushed. “Yeah, well, you have only yourself to blame. Well, that and my own dirty thoughts.”

“Is that so?” He grinned and pulled her panties to the side. He brushed a finger against the slit of her pussy and she inhaled sharply. “And what about my dirty thoughts?”

Her lashes fluttered as pleasure zinged through her. “I completely encourage them.”

Quinton traced his finger over her mound, but didn't go inside. She wanted his fingers inside her, though. Now.

He nuzzled his mouth up her neck again and kissed her jaw, then moved inward. The

first brush of his lips against hers was so sweet. Tender.

The next second, his mouth grew harder, his tongue slipping inside hers to explore.

His finger finally pressed inside her body and she groaned, her muscles clenching around him.

He added a second finger, pushing deep. "You feel so good."

Heather gripped his suit edge and pressed down against his hand, her tongue still moving in a slow tease against his. The pleasure sat low in her belly and spread. Through every inch of her body.

She whimpered, tearing her mouth away and throwing her head back.

His mouth immediately sought the pulse in her throat. And when he flicked his thumb over her clit, she went off like an explosive.

Her heart slammed against her chest and her head spun from the intensity of her climax. Pressing her head against his shoulder she closed her eyes, knowing there was nothing crazy about what they were doing.

If anything, it was crazy that it had taken her so long to find a man who could make her feel like this.

"What are you thinking?" he asked, softly, his words hot against her ear.

"Just how fantastic that was." Her lips quirked. "And how I can't wait to ride you."

Quinton almost came in his pants at her words. Damn, if she wasn't just the sexiest thing. He never knew what would come out of her mouth. Found himself looking forward to hearing what she'd say next.

"I want you, Heather," he muttered and reached behind her neck to untie her halter dress. "I *want* you riding me."

Her dress fell down to her waist, revealing a black strapless bra. He reached behind her again to dispense with the unwanted barrier.

He reached for her breasts but she scooted away.

"Hang on." She giggled and leaned forward to open the glove compartment.

Her ass bobbed in his face and he groaned, reaching to unfasten his pants. God he wished they had a nice bed to do this in, so he could fully explore her body. Taste every inch of her.

He pulled his cock free from the slit in his briefs and stroked the swollen length. It helped, if just a bit, to ease some of the frustration.

"Here we are." Heather slid back onto his lap, her gaze immediately going to his lap. "Wow. So beyond the six inches."

He was too turned on to even laugh, just watched as she rolled the condom onto his cock. Her red nails moving rapidly in the process.

"I've wanted you since the barbeque." The confession was past his lips before he even saw it coming.

She stilled and lifted her gaze. "Really?"

He touched a strand of her hair, sliding it between her fingers before tucking it behind her ear.

"Really."

"Well. I should tell you that I was checking you out, too."

His lips twisted. "You didn't even remember me."

"I recognized you. You just had to remind me where we met." She pulled off her panties and tossed them to the side, then settled her knees on the leather seat on each side of his thighs. Wrapping her arms around his neck, she murmured, "Once you told me...I knew exactly who you were."

A thrill of possessiveness rocked through him, and then surprise at the unfamiliar emotion. Quinton slid his hands to her hips and urged her downward.

With her dress gathered around her waist, breasts and thighs bared, she licked her lips and lowered herself slowly onto his cock. The heat of her channel gripped his shaft, dragging

him deeper into her tight wet center.

Quinton closed his eyes and lifted his hips, groaning as he thrust fully up into her.

Heather sighed, fully seated on his cock now. Her hands toyed with the hair on the back of his head as they both just sat still to savor the moment.

When he opened his eyes again, her breasts were directly in front of his face and he let out a soft growl. Leaning forward, he licked one pink tip and loved the moan she made. The nipple hardened further under his gaze and he smiled, doing it again.

Heather let out another gasp and ground down on him, starting to move slowly back and forth.

"Yes." He cupped her breasts, squeezing them and thrusting up into her.

They set a rhythm, rocking against each other as snow hit the windshield, but no longer melted. The inside of the car was already cocooned by white.

"Quinton!" She gripped the lapels of his suit and threw her head back. Her body clenched around his cock as she orgasmed once more, her frantic cries absorbed in the car.

Quinton slid his hands to her hips and took over, thrusting up into her. Harder. Faster. His sac tightened and he pulled her harder down onto his cock, burying himself deep.

"Heather!" He choked out her name, pressing his face against her shoulder as he came. His body shaking from the aftermath.

Her hands smoothed down his back and she kissed his forehead.

When his mind finally cleared, he focused his gaze past her at the window covered in fluffy white snow.

The radio was blasting out *Here Comes Santa Claus* and his mouth twitched.

*You and me both, buddy.*

Heather pushed back the hair off his forehead and smiled. "I have to say that was even better than I thought it would be."

He looked at her. Her flushed cheeks, swollen mouth. And eyes that were still shining from her orgasm.

"That's an understatement," he said softly and touched her cheek.

Something flashed in her eyes. Awareness. Unease. She slid off him and recovered her panties. In record time she'd pulled them back on and tied her dress back into place.

"Hey, we can just head back to Seattle," she said, settling into the passenger side. "We don't have to go over the pass."

In the midst of tucking himself back into his pants, Quinton froze. "You don't want to go see your cousin?"

She blew a strand of hair off her forehead and then bit her lip. "It's not that," she finally admitted. "I just feel like I swindled you a bit. And now that we've...well there's really no need for you to go through with this. I'm sure you can't wait to get home."

His stomach twisted with a sudden fear. Was she looking at this as a spontaneous little holiday fuck during a snowstorm? Would she want him to call her? The idea of not seeing her again made it difficult to breathe.

"Is that what you want?" He forced the words out.

She gave a soft laugh and looked at the snow-covered window. "No. I won't lie. That's not what I want. But I understand how guys think. We had this chemistry. We acted on it. And now you're probably itching to get away and fast."

The music shifted again. *Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas...*

Quinton stared at her, saw the way her body had gone tense in defense. Maybe in fear?

His own muscles relaxed with relief. She thought he wanted one screw and then he'd run? She was so wrong. So completely wrong.

"Heather," he said softly and reached out to capture her hand. "Look at me."

She turned her head, almost reluctantly. Her expression was nothing but a blank slate. But Quinton wasn't fooled. He'd heard the insecurity in her words.

"The only place I want to go is to Peppertown." He smiled and squeezed her fingers.

"For some damn good eggnog and to get to know you better. A hell of a lot better."

She blinked, dark lashes seeming to sweep in slow motion over her surprised blue gaze. "You mean that?"

"If I didn't, I'd turn this car around and hightail it back to Seattle." He searched her face and then asked, "I'd love to go spend time with you and your family. If the offer is still open."

She licked her lips and then smiled. "It's very much open."

He leaned forward and brushed a kiss across her mouth. "Then lets chain up, see if the pass is open yet and get on our way."

\* \* \*

Heather nursed a mug of eggnog in her hand and watched the scene unraveling before her. She shook her head. Never in a million years could she have imagined *this*.

Quinton knelt down next to the Christmas tree, rubbing the ears of the new cocker spaniel Adam had given Christy for an early present.

Next to him, Adam sat arranging presents beneath the tree as the two men talked. They'd been talking all night. Hit it off instantly. Now that all the guests were gone, they were still talking.

"I'm so glad you guys got over here okay," Christy said, suddenly appearing at her side. "You know the snow is getting so deep they're talking about the pass being closed for a few days. Maybe until after Christmas."

"Oh shit. I'm sorry, cuz. I should've realized this might happen. We can get a hotel."

"Absolutely not. You guys can stay here."

"But you only have one extra room."

Christy nudged her in the side. "Don't *even* tell me that's a problem. I've seen the way he's been watching you all night."

Heather's stomach flipped and her pulse fluttered. Had he really been watching her? Her face warmed as she thought about what had happened back in the car.

"We did something crazy on the side of the road," she confessed, never having had secrets with her cousin. "Like Bow-Chicka-Bow-Wow crazy."

Christy burst into laughter and shook her head. "Well, there's a nice way to stay entertained while the pass is being cleared."

"Christy, we barely know each other," Heather muttered. "He's Barry's cousin. We met under weird circumstances."

"I don't care how you guys met. You need to keep him." Christy turned to look at Quinton again. "I like him. A lot."

So *do I*. The idea was more than a little freaky. She hadn't liked a guy this much since...oh, ever.

Quinton looked up just then and caught her watching. He arched a brow and his mouth curved into a slow smile. Butterflies took root in her belly again and she bit back a sigh.

"I'm going to take Adam up to bed," Christy whispered, and gave her arm a quick squeeze. "The room is already for you guys. We'll see you in the morning."

Adam saw his new wife approach and stood up. "Bed?"

"Yes." She grabbed his hand and they hurried toward the staircase. She winked one last time at Heather before they disappeared.

Quinton stood, patting the dog again before he approached her.

Heather's heart leapt into her throat and she drew in a slow breath to steady her pulse.

"I told you that eggnog was good," she murmured nervously. Nodding to his glass. "Could you taste the rum?"

"A bit hard not to. It was good." He set his mug on a nearby table and then reached for hers and did the same.

"What are you—"

"You're under the mistletoe," he explained, before his head dipped and his mouth covered hers.

Heather softened against him, her hands sliding around his waist as she kissed him back. And not for the first time since he'd picked her up tonight, she felt like she was drowning. Drowning in sensation. In emotion. In the possibilities.

He lifted his head and his gaze met hers. "Thank you for inviting me over here."

"We may be stuck for a few days," she said weakly. "Possibly even Christmas. The pass is going to be closed. Longer this time."

"I heard." He cupped her face in his large hands, making her feel impossibly small. "And I have to tell you I kind of like the idea."

"Do you?"

"Yeah. I've got nowhere I need to be. But are you okay with it?"

"I'm...more than okay." She gave him a slow smile, her chest expanding with joy. "Especially if we have a repeat performance of what happened in the car."

"There is no *if*." He brushed his thumb over her mouth. "You know, when I woke up this morning I never could have predicted this. That I'd be here. With you. Finally."

*Finally*. The admission almost made her melt.

"Let's go to bed and heat things up." He winked and led her up the stairs. "Cause, baby, it's cold outside."

## Author Biography

Shelli read her first romance novel when she snuck it off her mother's bookshelf when she was eleven. One taste and she was forever hooked on romance novels. It wasn't until many years later that she decided to pursue writing stories of her own. By then she acknowledged the voices in her head didn't make her crazy, they made her a writer. Shelli currently lives in the Pacific Northwest with her young daughter, where she is President of her local RWA (Romance Writers of America) chapter. When not writing, she enjoys music, reading, being outdoors, exercising, and spending time with her family and friends.

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