

Secret Angel by Cherry Christensen

EXCERPT

Hannah paused briefly, hitching a ragged breath. Examining the ground, she spotted tracks from some of the local wildlife. One pair led in the same direction as Jingles’.

“Haven’t you learned not to chase the critters?” she mumbled, tramping forward along the trail. The faint sound of twigs snapping just ahead caught her attention. She was getting closer. Two minutes — and ten frostbitten fingers — later she found Jingles perched on a tree stump by Lake Michigan. Evidently, whatever he’d been chasing had gotten away.

Hannah scooped the orange tabby into her arms and swiped at the snow clinging to his fur and the small red bells attached to his collar. Soft purring cut through the cold air, melting her frustration.

“Come on, let’s get you home,” she said, trudging back toward the shop. Jingles snuggled against her chest as they crossed the church parking lot and climbed the wooden staircase leading into Deer Crossings, the store owned by her parents.

Creeeeak.

Hannah jolted to a halt, swallowing hard. Footsteps overhead in the apartment warned her it wasn’t a customer.

“We have an uninvited guest,” she whispered to Jingles. The cat meowed in response and jumped down, running in the direction of the storeroom. Hannah tiptoed over to the counter and retrieved one of her dad’s golf clubs.

Creeeeak.

She hefted it to her shoulder, holding it like a baseball bat as the creaking sounds on the stairs grew closer. A large shadow appeared at the bottom of the steps. She gulped and swung the golf club, striking the banister.

“Put that thing away before you hurt yourself,” the stranger said, stepping into the light streaming through the bay windows. He adjusted the mail bag slung over his shoulder. “Do you always leave your front door wide open?”

Hannah lowered the golf club, staring into a pair of blue eyes matching the lake.