

# MERINGUE SNOWFLAKE MAGIC

## by Tena Stetler

### EXCERPT

The wind had changed direction, and the pretty ice crystals were like tiny needles buffeting her face. She looked up and down Main Street and saw only one stoplight. Finally, she turned around and walked backward for a few yards. Glancing over her shoulder, she could see her street. She started to turn around, her foot slipped on the curb and arms flailing, down she went with a thud. Clutching her precious box of goodies in front of her, they were safe. However, the mug of hot chocolate popped the lid and sent hot chocolate in all directions, including all over her brand new bright-colored parka and the sidewalk. When she tried to get up, each foot went in a different direction, then down she went again. Getting to her knees, she crawled to the sidewalk, carefully got to her feet, and tried to brush the wet snow off. The damp material stuck to her. She began to shiver as the wind whipped around her.

“Hey lady, you all right?” A man stopped his SUV in the middle of the road and jumped out. “That was quite a spill you took.” He smiled wide, picking up her mug and lid. “But I see your goodies from Candi’s place are still intact. Let me give you a ride. You’re going to freeze as wet as your clothes are.” He held out his hand. “Braydon Nightwing, but everyone calls me Blaze. I own the pizza place a few blocks down the way.”

When she reached for his hand, her arm shook. Her teeth chattered as she tried to say her name. “Wynterrr.”

“It’s warm in my SUV. Please tell me where you’re going. I’ll get you there.” He pried her fingers from the box, helped her over to the vehicle, and opened the passenger door. Warm air rushed out of the SUV, caressing her face.

*Please don’t let him be a serial killer.* Slowly, she reached behind her and patted her waistband. *Shit. Why didn’t I bring my weapon?* Getting in a car with a stranger wasn’t smart. But the warmth emanating from the vehicle was inviting. *Death by serial killer or freeze.* She crawled into the SUV and huddled in front of the heater vents.