The closer she got to Evergreen, the heavier the snow. That added to Lisa’s happiness. Maybe there would be a snow angel in her future. She hadn’t made one since... It had definitely been way too long.

She took the Evergreen exit from the highway, reducing her speed on the quaint country road while still belting out fa-la-la-la-las. Up ahead, a red truck with pine trees in the back stood at the stop sign. She pulled up behind it. After a moment, when the truck hadn’t budged, she rolled her window down and peered around it. That’s when she realized the hood of the truck was up.

Aw, man. She leaned her head out the window.

“Are you having trouble with your truck?”

“It’s not my truck,” a man’s voice said. What kind of answer was that? “Is it stolen?”

A dark-haired man with what looked like a day’s
worth of beard poked his head around the truck. “No. It’s on loan from a friend,” he said with a smile. A very attractive smile, Lisa couldn’t help but notice.

The truck had to be an early ’50s model. Nice. She could’ve done without the gaudy wreath on the back, but it was a sweet ride. Who loaned that kind of vehicle to someone? They must’ve been a pretty good friend.

She didn’t know why she had the urge to tease him, but she gave in to it. “Ohhh,” she said with an exaggerated moan. “You broke your friend’s truck?”

That got a reaction out of the guy. He stepped out from the front of the truck, looking on the defensive. “I didn’t break it, it was already...”

Lisa almost grinned, nearly breaking the ruse, then frowned in an attempt to look serious. “Hey, it looks to me like it—”

He shook his wrench in her direction. “You’re just messing with me.” His smile registered in his eyes as he laughed.

Busted. “I am. I am.” She flung open her door and got out. “No. Seriously. Can I do something to help?” He eyed her cautiously as he wiped his hands on a red shop rag. He was wearing a green down jacket, and he didn’t seem the least bit worried about dirtying the off-white sweater beneath it. “How are you with old engines?”

“Astonishingly good,” she admitted. Years of hanging out with her grandfather every summer in his garage while he worked on his old cars had paid off.
The old truck looked to be in great shape. It had either been kept in a garage and treated with white gloves, or there’d been one heck of a restoration on it. The flame-red paint job was so perfect it looked like it had just come off the line.

He looked unsure whether to believe her. “Really?”

“Yeah. May I?” She took the wrench from his hand, noticing that his shiny red toolbox was from about the same era as the truck. Nice. “Thank you.” She leaned in to look under the hood. “All right. What have we got here?” She reached in and gave something a tap. “Have you tried this?”

“Yes.”

The motor was clean. Someone took superb care of this ride. The spark plugs didn’t appear corroded or oily, but she tapped on the spark plug wire just the same. “How about this?”

“Twice,” he said.

“Hmm. I bet you haven’t tried this.”

But before she could give the battery cable a good jiggle he said, “Yes. I tried that too.”

“Ah, but...” Lisa reached in to the engine and cranked the wrench against something that seemed a little stuck. “Let me just...” She got it to budge, then stood back. Handing the wrench to him, she asked, “Do you mind if I try to start it?”

“No, go for it.”

“This is a beautiful old truck.” She crossed in front of him, opened the driver’s door and climbed in.

“Yeah, isn’t it?”
She closed the door. On the seat of the truck was a clipboard with an employment application for Banford Logging, Inc., already filled out. The guy’s name was Kevin Miller. *He looks like a Kevin.* In the passenger’s seat, a wooden crate overflowed with fresh vegetables: collards, sweet potatoes, eggplant, carrots, zucchini and peppers. They made her a little hungry for a good stir-fry. “All right.” She leaned forward and twisted the key. The engine struggled.

“Hold on a second,” he said.

“Yep.” She took her hand from the key and put both of her hands in the air.

He did something under the hood, then stepped out where she could see him. “Okay. Try it again.”

She turned the key and the truck started right up.

“Hey! Look at that!” She rested her elbow out the window. “Teamwork.”

“Yeah.” He walked over to the driver’s side of the truck. “Although I contend that I did most of the work, and most of that before you got here.” He leaned against the front fender, just behind the cute little round side mirror.

“That is fair. However.” She raised a finger toward him. “Had I not come along, you’d still be standing here with your little feet in the snow.”

“Also fair.” His friendly smile sent a zing right through her that could’ve melted that snow.