



Christmas In Evergreen: Letters to Santa

Nancy Naigle

“They’re sweet together,” Carol mused as she watched Lisa and Kevin.

Joe popped up out of nowhere between Carol and Michelle. “Don’t go stirring the pot, Carol,” he said, shaking his head.

“I do not stir the pot, Joe.” She leaned back and placed her left hand on his cheek, then kissed the other.

Michelle drew back. “Carol Shaw, you tried to set me up with no less than three people last year alone.” She placed a hand on Carol’s shoulder and walked back to her table.

“Yes.” She wiped her hands on a towel and set it on the counter. “But I stopped,” she insisted. “As soon as you told me you weren’t interested.”

“Yeah, right.” Carol would never stop matchmaking. It was just part of who she was.

The door to the cafe opened and Hannah bounded in with a big smile, followed closely by a man and young boy. “Hey guys.”

“Hey, Welcome back.” Carol walked over to greet them.

“Thanks. You remember my older brother, Thomas.” She hugged the young boy at her side. “And my nephew, David.”

Joe stood next to the Christmas tree holding a red carafe. “Yes, of course. Thomas, it’s good to have you back.”

“It’s good to be back,” Thomas said.

Michelle couldn’t take her eyes off the tall, bald, and charming Thomas as he stood there in a nice pullover and winter coat next to his son. Joe was tall, but Thomas was an easy few inches taller than him.

“We’ve missed the Kringle Kitchen and your incredible apple dumplings,” he said to Carol.

“Why, thank you.” Then with that mischievous smile on her face, Carol grabbed Thomas by the arm, practically dragging him across the cafe. “Have you met Michelle?”

Hannah looked confused, and Michelle could’ve died when Carol finally stopped right beside her chair. Michelle stood, trying to roll with the awkward moment. *Carol’s at it again!*

“The famous Michelle?” Thomas nodded to his sister. “Hannah talks about you all the time, and somehow we haven’t met.”

“Yeah, we’re always missing each other when

you're in town, I guess." Michelle licked her lips. She hoped she didn't look as flustered as she felt right this moment, especially with Carol gawking over the two of them. "Nice to meet you."

"Yes." Thomas was quiet for a second too long, giving Carol another opening.

"Well, come on. Take your coat off." Carol tugged on his coat sleeve, then pulled out the chair next to Michelle. "Have a seat right over here next to Michelle." She scurried behind Michelle. "And let's bring this table over and get you two all cozy, too," she said to Hannah and David. Hannah helped move the tables together.

Carol rushed off and came back with a pot of coffee in a flash, warming up Michelle's coffee first. "So, Thomas. Correct me if I'm wrong, but you and David spend Christmas here every...*other* year. Right?"

"Right. My ex-wife and I, we trade off Christmases."

Carol eyed Michelle. "I see." Her smile was wide as she did a slow turn away, making sure Michelle saw the "go-get-him" look in her eye.

No. You're not a pot stirrer, Carol. Right.

Michelle laughed nervously, but thankfully, Thomas was laughing too.