



# Mistletoe Magic

Terri Denise Weldon

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### **Mistletoe Magic**

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## Dedication

To Cynthia  
Thanks, Sis, for always believing in me.

*I thank my God every time I remember you.*  
Philippians 1:3 (NIV).



### Praise for *Mistletoe Magic*

Warm, witty, and romantic, Terri Weldon's debut will put you in the Christmas spirit. You're in for a treat with *Mistletoe Magic*.

~ Linda Goodnight, Rita award winning author of *Sugarplum Homecoming*

Terri Weldon's debut novella is delightful. She brings the characters to life at the very beginning, sets them in a town you'd love to live in, and gives you a heartwarming Christmas story you don't want to end. You'll be looking for her stories from now on.

~ Janet Lee Barton, author of historical and contemporary Christian romance

If I had three words to describe Terri Weldon's *Mistletoe Magic*, I'd have to use funny, fresh, and realistic. This humorous story about computer dating is so appropriate in today's world. I loved Misty's loyalty and Tyler's determination to make the system work for him. Weave a little Christmas magic into your holiday season this year with *Mistletoe Magic*.

~ Sharon Srock, author of The Women of Valley View Series





# 1

"A dating service! I can't believe you want me to join a dating service." Misty Winslow slapped the Rural Romance flyer against her thigh as she paced back and forth across the dental office's worn, green tile. "Isn't it enough that I gave up my day off, not to mention Black Friday shopping, to help clean out the disaster of a room that Doc Harris called a dental library? Now you have to hit me with a dating service."

"Why are you so upset? It's a great chance to meet men with the same interests as you." Brittney Peters leaned against the doorjamb cradling a large mug of coffee in her hands.

Misty stopped pacing and glared at her best friend of twenty-five years. "I'm surprised you didn't sign me up yourself. Just because you've gone gaga over your new boss, Dr. Davenport, doesn't mean you need to start running my love life."

"What love life? Besides, did you or did you not tell me you don't want to wind up an old maid? You're two months away from being thirty. What happened with Brad was painful, but it's been eight years."

Misty flopped in the metal folding chair and admitted defeat. "You're right. It's time to move forward. I want a husband, a family, to fill up my old house."

"Then sign up. What have you got to lose?"

"OK, OK. I'll do it."

"Way to go, girlfriend." Brittney sent her a beaming smile.

Misty wished she could be more like Brittney. No thirty-year-old mother of two had a right to look that good. But then again Britt had always been beautiful. She remembered the first time they'd met at preschool when they were four. Brittney had looked like a blonde, blue-eyed angel in her pink seersucker sundress while Misty felt like a street urchin dressed in an old short set with her red hair scraped back in a ponytail. The teacher brought ice cream as a treat and Misty had dumped hers all over her brown shirt. Every kid in the class laughed at her, except for Britt. She patted her back after the teacher wiped the ice cream from Misty's shirt, and they shared what was left of Brittney's cone. They'd been best friends ever since, Mutt and Jeff.

Misty sighed and gave voice to her thoughts.  
"Why can't I be more like you?"

"What? Thirty, divorced, and living with your parents?"

"I was thinking more like beautiful, vibrant, and confident." Brittney looked like she'd stepped out of the pages of a magazine in her turquoise sweater and designer jeans. She even managed to look graceful in four-inch turquoise heels. Misty bit back a twinge of envy and reminded herself the good Lord had made her the way He wanted her—a tall, skinny redhead. Even if she didn't understand.

"You are beautiful. Do you know how many women would kill to have your red hair and lithe build?"

Misty got up from the chair and walked across the room. "You always know how to make me feel better." She looped an arm around Brittney's shoulders.

"Back at you."

"Are you sure your boss doesn't mind me being here?" Misty pulled an unfolded box from the stack against the wall and handed it to Britt. She couldn't shake thoughts of Rural Romance. A voice niggled inside her brain that only desperate women used dating services. Oh yeah, that would be her. Her stomach felt like a balloon without helium. Could Rural Romance actually be the answer to her pleas to God for a husband? She forced her mind back to the task at hand. "I don't want you to lose your job before the dental clinic even opens."

"Mind? I figure having a librarian friend help clear this mess out should score me major Brownie points with the fine doctor. And I do mean fine."

"That's my cue to get back to work." Misty pulled an old leather-bound volume of Crosby's Comprehensive Guide to Oral Care from the shelf and started flipping through it. Ooh, a first edition and signed by the author. It might fetch a good price online.

"I can't wait for you to meet Dr. Davenport. I never dreamed I'd meet another man so soon after the divorce."

"Are you sure you aren't moving too fast? The ink is barely dry on your divorce decree."

"My marriage is over. Men like Dr. Davenport don't come along every day. I don't intend to snooze while some other woman snatches him up." Brittney tapped the bottom of a box and placed it at Misty's feet. "He's successful, good looking, and charming—

everything I'm looking for in the man I'm going to spend the rest of my life with. I can't believe I landed such a plum job. I'll be around him every day."

"Enough." Laughing, Misty held up her hand. "You've done nothing but talk about the good doctor for days. Change of subject is in order here. What are you and the kids going to do for Christmas?"

"We're spending Christmas Eve with Mom and Dad. It'll take me another couple of months to be able to afford a place of my own."

"What happened?" Misty placed the book in the box, dusted off her hands, and reached for her cup of java. "I thought you were planning on moving before Christmas."

"Yeah, well I needed some really nice new clothes for work. This is more than a job. It's a shot at snagging a great husband."

Misty bit her tongue. Brittney was moving faster than an Oklahoma tornado and nothing or no one could convince her to slow down. Ten years ago, she took one look at Jon Peters across a crowded room and claimed he was her future husband. At the time it had seemed romantic. Now, well now Misty didn't want to see history repeat itself.

"You know you and the kids are welcome to spend part of Christmas with me. We can have a good old-fashioned Christmas. I'll cook a big dinner, we can open a few gifts, listen to Christmas carols or maybe watch Christmas DVDs." She longed for the day when God would bless her with a family of her own to share all the joy and wonder of Christmas with.

"The kids will be at Jon's Christmas day, but I'll take you up on that as long as I get to pick the movie."

"You got it, girlfriend. Now come on, show me

your domain."

They chatted about what the kids wanted for Christmas as they walked to the front of the dental clinic Britt's new boss had purchased from Doc Harris.

"This is my area." Britt moved behind the front counter. "It doesn't look like much now, but Dr. Davenport is going to add some kind of bead junk to make it look different."

"It's called beadboard, and it will look fantastic," Misty said.

"He's also having a granite countertop installed. Plus, I'll have a new computer. A lot of the files and stuff will be computerized. He's really into going paperless."

"Your doctor's a smart man. It will change the way the counter looks without costing a fortune. Frugal and good-looking, tell me more."

"Good-looking doesn't even begin to describe him. He's perfect. Dark hair, dreamy blue eyes, and a killer smile. He's smart, after all he is a dentist, and he's great with kids. I mean he hasn't met Kayla and JD, but I've seen him around other kids and he's a natural." Brittney looked at her watch. "Hey, I really need to run a few errands and then I'm going to stop by Mom and Dad's and have a quick bite of lunch. You'll be OK here by yourself, right?"

Considering Brittney was halfway to the door, Misty guessed it would be a smart idea to say yes. Besides, she'd get a lot more work done when her friend was gone. "No problem, catch you later." She watched Brittney leave then wandered back to the small dental library. She noticed the faded paint and nicked woodwork in the clinic, not to mention the sixties-style light fixtures. Old Doc Harris hadn't

updated a single thing since he opened the doors for business fifty years ago. The clinic needed a major facelift, and it sounded like the good doctor intended to give it one.

Misty slipped a green scrunchie from her pocket, pulled back her hair in a ponytail, popped in her earbuds, and cranked up the volume on her MP3 player. Christmas music filled her ears, and she let out a contented sigh. She sent up a silent prayer that this Christmas would indeed be the most magical time of the year for her. She filled three cardboard boxes with dental journals from 1975. Seemed Doc Harris never threw anything away.

*Achoo!*

Or dusted it.

She grabbed one of the boxes and started towards the front door. She loved Christmas and since no one was around to hear her, Misty allowed herself the freedom to sing along with the music—loud and off key. As she reached the end of the hall, she tripped, sending the box of journals flying through the air as she grabbed for the doorframe. Her fingers scraped it and one perfectly manicured fingernail snapped as Misty tumbled forward and landed in a heap on the floor.

Her elbow slammed into the hard tile floor, and she knew once the throbbing stopped she'd have a bruise the size of Rhode Island. Her chin was cushioned on a pair of brown loafers, the leg of perfectly creased jeans the first thing she saw.

“Are you all right?” a deep male voice asked.

Misty lifted her head and gazed into gorgeous indigo blue eyes. Her brain melted like butter, and she stammered, “I, uh, I think I’m fine. Nothing feels

broken."

"Let me help you." He reached down, grasped her hand, and pulled her to her feet.

A boyish smile flashed across his face revealing teeth as white as the fresh snow that had fallen before dawn. Oh man, oh man, talk about gorgeous. This guy rewrote the definition. Forget Rural Romance. The only date she wanted stood about six-foot-two right in front of her.

The gears in her mind whirled. This had to be the new dentist, Dr. Tyler Davenport. In a town the size of Winslow, the coffee shop would have been abuzz with news if another good-looking man had moved to town. Wait until she told Brittney she no longer needed to join Rural Romance. Well, at least not until she learned more about the new dentist. Now what had Britt said about him this morning?

Brittney. Uh oh, her best friend forever had already staked her claim, and Misty wasn't losing twenty-five years of church camps, sleepovers, and late night phone calls over any man.

"Are you sure you're OK?"

Finding her voice, Misty forced herself to answer. "Sorry, your teeth were so white they dazzled me. You must be Dr. Dreamy." She brushed the dust from her jeans.

He chuckled, and heat flooded her cheeks. Had she really said that?

"I, uh, I mean Dr. Davenport." She'd never be able to look him in the face again.

"Call me Tyler. And you are...?"

"Oh, sorry. I'm Mistletoe Joy Winslow, the town librarian. But please, just call me Misty. Brittney Peters, your receptionist, is a friend of mine. I volunteered to

come clear out Doc Harris's old dental library."

"Brittney mentioned you'd volunteered to help. I appreciate it, but I could have thrown everything in the school's recycling dumpster."

"Actually, I'm going to list the items on several online auctions. You'd be amazed at what people will buy. I'll split the proceeds fifty-fifty with Winslow Elementary."

"Nope, if you do the work I insist you take 100 percent of the profits for the library. Besides, that benefits the kids as well."

Oh, man, why did he have to be as nice as he was handsome? More importantly, why did Brittney have to see him first? Lowering her head, Misty looked at the stack of dusty journals littering the tile floor. "Thanks. Well, I guess I'd better get this mess cleaned up."

Tyler helped her, and in no time the journals were back in the box.

When they finished, he picked up the carton and their eyes locked. After a beat of time in which Misty couldn't take her eyes off him, he said, "Hey, I'm getting ready to have lunch and I hate the thought of eating alone. Would you care to join me?"

Misty opened her mouth to answer just as Brittney appeared in the doorway, a frown darkening her pretty face. Misty bit back the guilty urge to accept Tyler's lunch invitation. "Sorry, I can't. I need to run a few errands."

Brittney sashayed into the office. She held up a thermos and small paper sack. "Dr. Davenport, you don't want to eat out. After I finished my lunch I fixed you a couple of meatloaf sandwiches. I even brought along a container of fresh milk, straight from Daddy's

cow."

Misty forced a tight smile. "Britt makes the best meatloaf in the county."

Tyler's expression revealed his doubt. "Fresh from the cow?"

Misty stifled a grin at his green-tinged face. "Trust me, it's great."

He opened the sack and looked inside. "This is way too much for one person. Brittney, are you sure you aren't still hungry?"

"Gracious, no." Brittney's hand fluttered against her heart. "I ate half of one at home, and I couldn't eat another bite."

"How about you, Misty?" Tyler hefted the sack in her direction. "You haven't had lunch. I'm sure Brittney won't mind if I share with her friend."

Misty felt like a bone caught between two Rottweilers. She knew Brittney wanted her to turn down Dr. Davenport. But how could she without seeming like a total jerk?

"Meatloaf sounds fantastic. My errands can wait. The milk can't. Brittney, while we eat, you can tell Dr. Davenport about the gorgeous furniture you found for the waiting room."

Misty hated giving up a chance to have a private luncheon with the new dentist. Eligible bachelors, much less good-looking, successful ones, were few and far between in Winslow. But the look on Britt's face told her she'd made the right decision. Besides, he'd probably only offered out of politeness. A man like Tyler would never be interested in a bookish librarian who hadn't been on a date in eight years. Beautiful, outgoing women like Brittney were more his type.

They settled around an old oak desk in the middle

of what had been Doc Harris's office. Tyler bowed his head and said a silent prayer before starting in on the thick sandwich. His open display of faith impressed Misty, and she quickly did the same. She cut her sandwich in half and poured a generous cup of milk.

"Mmm, this is amazing," Tyler said between bites. Surprise lit his eyes, and Misty felt glad for her friend. Seemed good food really was the way to a man's heart.

As he devoured the last bite of his sandwich, Misty noticed he eyed the remaining half of hers.

She pushed it towards him, and he accepted with one of his dazzling smiles. Misty's heart danced like the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*. If she spent much more time around the good doctor, she'd need a pacemaker to steady her heartbeat.

The faint ringing of a phone interrupted their conversation.

"Whoops, that's my cell phone. I must have left it on the counter when I came in. I'll be right back." Brittney hopped up and went to answer the phone.

The second she left, Tyler poured half his milk into Misty's glass with a wink. She nearly laughed out loud. Instead she forced herself to take a huge swig before Brittney hurried back into the room.

Misty pushed away from the desk. "I need to get to work. There's a room full of books calling my name." She could still hear Tyler and Brittney's conversation as she walked down to the small library. *Lord, I need You to help me out here. I don't want to make a fool of myself, and I refuse to betray my friend,* she prayed as she started filling boxes. A few minutes later the clean, spicy scent of Tyler's aftershave wafted over to her, and she looked up to find him standing beside Brittney in the doorway.

"I'm not sure what to do with this room. I receive all my journals electronically," Tyler said. "My reference books will fit on the bookcase I plan on putting in my office."

"It'd make a great storage area," Brittney said.

"Nah, I hate clutter so I won't need this much space, and I don't need another exam room." Tyler walked into the small library and stopped at the bookcase Misty was emptying. His brow wrinkled in concentration. "There has to be a practical use for the space."

Misty grabbed another dusty book to keep from reaching over and covering his hand with hers. What was wrong with her today?

"The waiting room is on the other side of this partition," Misty said. "A carpenter could knock down the wall between them. Then you could section it off with maybe a half-wall or something and make a children's play area complete with toys and a DVD player."

"That's an excellent idea." Tyler flashed her one of his megawatt smiles.

Misty bent down and pulled books off the bottom shelf, letting her hair fall forward to hide the flush staining her face. She'd have to watch it. Those smiles could become addictive. "I oversaw a similar project at the library. I had the wall between an unused office and the reference section removed to create a nook to house computers."

"Since you've done this before, would you be willing to lend a hand?" Tyler asked.

She couldn't refuse. After all, Winslow was a small town and folks helped out each other. "Sure, I'd be glad to." One look at the storm raging in Brittney's

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eyes, and the smile slid off Misty's face. Maybe she'd been a little too eager to assist.

## 2

The sunny yellow color looked fantastic and brightened the walls in the new children's play area of the dental office. Misty felt a surge of satisfaction as she rolled paint on the last section of the wall.

Out of the corner of her eye, she watched Brittney place her still-dry paintbrush on the table. Her friend had shown up decked out in designer casual wear. Misty had known then she would have to paint the room herself. Temptation to drizzle a little yellow paint on her friend's immaculate jeans brought a smile to her face. Better yet, she could slide the paint tray over and when Brittney sat down... A chuckle escaped her mouth. She could hear the screams now as Britt jumped out of the chair and tried to examine the back side of her jeans. For once, Misty wouldn't be the only woman in the room with paint all over her clothes. Oh, she would never do it, but it was fun to imagine.

"Lucky for me you're like that lady on TV. You know, the one who's always going around fixing up old things. I'd feel guilty stealing all your free time otherwise." Brittney shrugged. "Cause if you weren't helping me, you'd be redoing a room in your house and you don't need to. It's perfect."

"Perfect? Hardly. Besides, if my life were a little more exciting, maybe I wouldn't be reduced to home-remodeling projects." An image of Dr. Tyler Davenport slid into her mind. Now, he would definitely add some