

...CHARACTERS THAT YOU "LIVE" ALONG WITH, MOVING  
CONFLICTS, & IMPOSSIBLE ROMANCE...SNOW ANGELS IS  
A BOOK FOR YOU!

~ THE ROMANCE STUDIO, STEPH.B.



WHEN A BLIZZARD HITS  
IT'S NOT JUST THE WEATHER  
THAT SPINS OUT OF CONTROL

# *Snow Angels*

# WENDY DAVY

# Snow Angels

by

Wendy Davy

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales, is entirely coincidental.

## **Snow Angels**

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## **Dedication**

For Dad. Thanks...for everything.



## **Praise for Wendy Davy**

### **A Matter of Trust:**

Wendy Davy's debut novel is a poignant and charming story of forgiveness and the powerful love of family and friends...all while keeping the pages turning with suspense and mystery...The way those points of forgiveness are written are what make this book so powerful—it's not just a really entertaining story, but it also challenges you to reflect on your own life.

~Novel Editions ~ Molly Kozera

### **Drake's Retreat:**

The story flowed so well I couldn't believe when it ended...It is a great read, fun and well worth your time.

~ Brenda ~The Romance Studio

Drake's Retreat is a well-written look at the opportunity one has to overcome their circumstances when they are willing to step outside their comfort zone...Read this inspirational romance for a warm-hearted look at the transformation that takes place when someone places God at the center of his or her life.

~ Night Owl Romance

### **Night Waves**

This one's definitely a keeper....

~ Sheila Deeth ~ WRDF Review

This is a very entertaining inspirational romantic suspense! Very enjoyable!

~Martha E. ~ You Gotta Read Reviews







*For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*

*~Philippians 2:13 NLT*

# 1

Isabelle Rollins lay flat on her back looking up at the blinding snow falling from the darkened sky. Of all the foolish ways to die, this one was sure to come out on top.

“You had to take one last run before the slopes closed, didn’t you, Izzy,” she chastised herself. The wind picked up its speed, and snowflakes began to fall at an angle, sticking to her freezing cheeks. She swiped the flakes off her goggles and attempted to remove a patch of fog drifting over the lenses.

Sheets of ice underneath the snow threatened to suck the remaining heat from her body as she continued to lie on the iceberg they dared to call a ski slope. Frustration and regret slammed her. If she had used her common sense and not gone night skiing alone, she might have lived long enough to earn the respect she had been seeking. Instead, she was going to freeze to death on an unforgiving pile of ice.

She peeled her shivering arm from the slope and checked her watch, straining to see the numbers

through the darkness. Nine forty-three. It had been close to an hour since her skis had hit the patch of ice, sending her careening out of control and into the forest. By now, the ski patrollers would have already finished their last sweep of the mountain searching for any lost, injured, or slow skiers that remained on the slopes. They had probably passed by her several minutes ago while she had been trying to recover from her fall.

Counting herself lucky not to have broken any limbs or suffered serious injuries, she ignored the pain from her numerous bumps and bruises as she forced herself into a sitting position. The sore places would heal with time. Healing her injured pride would be another matter altogether—if she survived.

She peered through the darkness at the advanced ski slope she had been attempting to master, searching for any glimpse of a red ski coat. She hoped a ski patroller had decided to take another sweep down the mountain, and she hoped she had been wrong about her slim chances of survival. Realism outmatched her optimism as she reminded herself the lights had been switched off and the chairlifts had stopped moving, leaving no room for any realistic expectations of a rescue. Especially since she hadn't told anyone she planned to come out on the slopes tonight.

As the strong wind shifted into a driving gale, and the freezing temperature plummeted to what she guessed were sub-zero figures, a surge of fear coursed through her veins, bringing with it a hefty amount of adrenaline. Every nerve in her body switched into survival mode, every molecule became alert. Her survival instincts took over, and she forced herself to her boot-laden feet.

"Lord, You know I've gotten myself into some messes, and I've always counted on You to help me out. How about one more time?" She mumbled the prayer through frozen lips.

Izzy took a deep breath, swiped at her runny nose, and searched beyond the base of the slope for an indication of a house or another building. No lights or other signs of civilization penetrated the falling snow. She turned to search the top of the rugged terrain. None of the villas and chalets tucked around the trees on the mountaintop showed any glowing lights or shadowed silhouettes to indicate their exact locations.

She considered her options. If she could make her way to the end of the trail, she could use the telephone inside the chairlift building to call for help. But, if she slid off the edge of the ski run again, and into the thick line of trees, she would freeze to death.

Her fingers and toes began to feel numb. She would have to make a decision soon, or she would turn into a human Popsicle right where she stood. Stepping into her ski bindings and positioning her poles in her gloved hands, she took one more glance up the hill. She guessed the trip downhill would be a great deal easier than side-stepping up the slope to the top. Praying she had made the right decision, she pushed away, determined to keep her legs under her as she descended the mountain.

She thrust her legs to the side, slicing the snow first one way then the next as she traversed the steep terrain. But, with her vision hindered, navigating the moguls in the dark proved to be treacherous. She came close to falling twice before she finally lost her balance and landed on her rear in a bone-smacking fall. She gave herself no time to recover before climbing back to

her feet, afraid if she hesitated, fear would take control of her rational thoughts and keep her from attaining her goal. As she continued down the slippery slope, the snow fell thicker and faster, restraining her vision further.

After a few more close calls, Izzy reached the end. *Thank You, Lord!* She swished to a stop near the chairlift building, sending clumps of snow careening to thump against the wooden shack. She released her skis and shoved her poles into the hard-packed snow.

Cupping her hands together, she peered into the fathomless insides of the small building. Nothing but pitch-darkness greeted her. She tried the door. Locked. Her heart rate doubled its pace as anxiety spiked through her system. She had to get inside. She used her fist to bang on the door in the remote chance an attendant remained behind.

No luck.

Searching for something to break the window, she spotted her ski poles. She grabbed one and slammed the end against the window. Pain shot up through her arms and vibrated into her hands. The glass didn't break. Backing up, she ran the pole into the window a second time. The jarring impact sent new waves of pain into her limbs, but didn't crack the glass.

With rising desperation, she took off one of her ski boots and heaved it against the window. The boot bounced off with no results and slammed into her shin. Pain erupted and tears welled, freezing into ice pellets before they had a chance to roll down her cheeks. She wobbled on her one booted foot before losing her balance and landing with a smack on her rear again. A loud gasp escaped her lips. She would have a nasty bruise tomorrow, if she lived through the night.

"Great job, Izzy." She grabbed her boot and jammed it onto her foot.

Glancing around the immediate area, she noticed one of the chairs on the lift had come to rest across from the building's window. With a last-ditch effort to break inside, she shoved the chair. It swung toward the window, but did not come close enough to it to tap it, much less break it.

Her heart sank as she spun in a slow circle, searching for an escape from her dire circumstances. She found nothing and no one to help her. Her breathing quickened and her pulse raced as fear clawed its way through her chest. She fought to control the panic rising within as the snow fell haphazardly around her, enveloping her in a blanket of sheer terror.

Wind gusts slashed through the trees, shaking and cracking branches and limbs. With a sudden hitch in her stomach, Izzy wondered if the blizzard the forecasters had been calling for had arrived a day early. She would never survive a night in blizzard conditions. As the real possibility of not surviving crashed into her, she thought about who would miss her the most. Would it be her father, whom she had never been able to please? Her stepmother, who never had time for her? Or, her friends, most of whom were mere acquaintances. Of course, there was Lucky, her beloved calico cat. Well, at least Lucky would miss her, she was sure of it.

Swallowing, Izzy held back tears of frustration and regret. A severe gust of wind slammed into her, rocking her back and chilling her to her bones. She had to get somewhere safe.

Fast.

Only one option remained. She had to side-step up

the steep terrain, over the moguls and all the way to the top of the slope. With any luck, she would find shelter from the storm.

Wasting no more time, she stepped into her skis, grabbed her poles and began the arduous task of inching up the trail, avoiding as many moguls as possible. The exertion from her efforts and the thin mountain air caused her to gasp for breath, and she had to stop often to replenish her oxygen. By the time she had made it a third of the way up the hill, she could no longer feel her fingers, toes, or her nose. Her goggles had fogged to the point she couldn't see through them; she pulled them off. Biting wind stung her eyes, and she strained to see through the driving snow. Snowflakes stacked on her lashes, and she swiped them aside as she continued to climb.

Halfway up, she slipped on a patch of ice and fell, losing at least twenty feet of ground she had already covered. She looked up the hill and groaned. Tenacity and a strong instinct for survival motivated her back to her feet again. Resolving not to think about how far she had to go, she prayed.

She climbed step-by-step as she asked God for help. Tears blurred her vision when exhaustion took its toll. Desperate to survive, unwilling to give in to the overwhelming desire to lie on the snow-covered ice and rest, she continued.

When she managed to reach the top of the trail, her hope flared again, until she looked around and found the snowstorm had turned into a full-blown blizzard, and her visibility had decreased to a few feet.

She took a deep breath and concentrated. "You know this mountain. Think, Izzy. Where are the nearest buildings?"

She visualized the trail map. She had every ski run memorized and knew the location of every lift, every ski patrol building, the mountaintop café, and all of the snowmaking equipment. She'd thought she could traverse this mountain blindfolded. But now, standing in the white abyss, she knew better.

She let out a humorless chuckle. "Wrong again, Izzy."

Using her poles to propel herself forward, she scooted parallel with the top of the trail. Her supply of energy continued to dwindle, and the thought of losing strength sent a new round of terror coursing through her veins.

Several long minutes later, a large, looming object appeared a few feet in front of her. As she drew nearer, she recognized it as a tree. Had she gone too far? Had she managed to lose herself in the woods again?

Closing her stinging eyes, she dropped her head to ward off the chill and relentless wind. Goose bumps ran races along her arms, legs and spine. She stepped to the right—opposite the direction she had climbed up. Once. Twice. Then again and again. Her ski smacked against a hard object, and her eyes popped open as she fought to maintain her balance. The unmistakable shape of a wooden railing appeared through the dense snow. She had run into a snow-covered porch, attached to a snow-covered chalet. A faint light glowed through a window like a lighthouse welcoming wayward sailors home.

Relief doused her fear and hope emerged. Izzy smiled, cracking her frozen lips as she released her skis from her boots. She kept her poles clutched in her gloved hands to help retain her balance as she trudged up the slippery porch steps. Setting the poles next to

the threshold, she pounded her fist on the tall, wooden door.

*Be home. Be home. Be home.* She willed the owner to open the door. She imagined the life-saving warmth beyond her reach and shuffled her feet in anticipation.

A curtain fluttered in the window and a yellow porch light came on. The lock scraped out of the frame before the door cracked open. Warmth gushed out of the room, tantalizing her skin with the promise of salvation. Izzy lifted her gaze to the tall man who stood beyond the three-inch gap in the doorway. His astonished, cobalt gaze traveled over her as he held the door solid against the strong winds bashing against it.

"Are you crazy?" his deep voice penetrated the howling wind.

Izzy tilted her head. Those words were not the ones she had expected to come from the man who would save her life. But, she must appear somewhat insane to be out in such dangerous weather.

Instead of wasting energy defending her mental stability, she answered through her rattling teeth, "I-I'm stranded in th-the storm. I n-need help." She began to sag as her knees buckled with fatigue.

"I can see that." Concern creased his brow as he swung the door in a wide arc. Striding forward, he banded an arm around her waist and propelled her inside. "You're going to be OK. I've got you now."



## 2

The warmth in the chalet wrapped around Izzy in a welcoming cloak as the man released her and closed the door behind them. Adrenaline spent and exhaustion weakening her, she wanted to sink straight to the floor. It took all of her remaining willpower to remain standing.

"How long have you been exposed?" The man's deep voice rumbled in the quiet chalet as his gaze swept from the embroidered fleece hat on Izzy's head to the snow-encrusted boots on her feet.

"P-pardon me?"

"In the blizzard."

"Oh. Right. Well..." She searched for an answer but stood speechless as his fascinating blue eyes locked onto her. Warmth spread through her, not from the heat in the chalet, but from the deep concern evident in his gaze. "I-I'm not sure how long. I'm sorry to barge in like this." She didn't think she had woken him. Dressed in blue jeans and a navy sweater, he appeared very much awake and alert.

Izzy's teeth continued chattering as she placed her hand out in greeting. "I-I'm Izzy. I mean Isabelle Rollins." When the man hesitated, she noticed she hadn't taken off her gloves. She removed them, dropping one when it slipped from her frozen fingers.

The man scooped up the glove before she had a

chance to reach for it, and smacked it against his large palm, watching the snow and ice crystals fall to the rubber entrance mat beneath his feet. He set the glove aside and took her hand in his warm, firm grasp, but instead of shaking it, he inspected her fingers. "So, how did you manage to get stranded out in the blizzard?"

"I was night skiing down Bald Eagle's Nest when I hit a patch of ice and slid off the slope into the woods." She stumbled through the words as her lips began to thaw. "And the slopes closed before I could get back onto the trail."

His gaze snapped to hers. "You went night skiing alone?"

"Yes."

He dropped her hand and pierced her with an intense glare as he picked up her other hand. "That decision could have cost you your life."

Izzy knew he was right, but she couldn't find the words to reply as she stood, mesmerized by her small hand captured in his much larger one. His thumb traced a path down each of her fingers. She felt a slight pressure through the numbness, and warmth shot up her hand and into her arm at his touch.

"Did you see a ski patroller come by?"

"No. I'm sure they did a last check for skiers after the slopes closed, they always do, but I couldn't see the trail from the woods, and I know they couldn't see me."

A deep crease formed on his brow. "If they were doing their job properly, they would have found you." His bold statement left no room for question. His gaze captured hers again as he released her hand. "You didn't have a cell phone to call for help?"

Izzy reached into her coat pocket and withdrew what used to be her cell phone. The mangled pieces wouldn't fit back together if she tried. "It broke when I fell." She replaced the phone and rubbed her hands together.

"Don't do that." He stepped closer and placed a gentle hand on hers, stilling her movements.

Her breathing hitched as she gaped up at the tall, broad-shouldered stranger standing so close. His clean, masculine scent cascaded around her, and his touch sent shockwaves through her system. Confusion rocketed through her. Shockwaves didn't happen to her. At least, they never had before. Not like this.

Unnerved, she pulled from his grasp. "Don't do what?"

"Rub your fingers. You have the beginnings of frostbite."

Izzy studied her numb fingers. "That's why I'm trying to warm them." She glanced at the fire blazing in the fireplace. "I should get closer." She took a step toward it.

"No," he snapped, making her jump.

He must have seen her reaction, because the next time he spoke, his voice came out much gentler. "Warming frostbitten fingers by the fire could cause more harm than good. What you need is to soak in warm water."

"I knew that. I mean...I should have known." The emergency medical training courses she had taken as a ski patrol candidate had covered that topic. Why hadn't she remembered? Why was it so hard to come up with a coherent thought in this man's presence?

He stepped into the kitchen and returned with a chair, placing it behind her. "Have a seat so I can take a

look at your feet. Your toes may be in worse condition than your fingers."

Her face heated at the thought of the attractive man handling her toes. She didn't budge as she regarded his large, sturdy hands.

He nodded, indicating the chair behind her. "It's all right. I just want to make sure you're OK," he coaxed as if he detected her hesitancy.

The sincerity in his voice crushed her reserve. She sank into the chair, relieved to take the pressure from her overexerted muscles. When he knelt in front of her, he unclasped and removed her right boot with practiced, efficient movements.

"Have you done this before?" Izzy asked.

He removed her damp thermal sock and cupped her foot in his hands. "Done what before? Held a woman's foot in my hand?" The corners of his mouth lifted. "A few times." His brows tilted and the humor dancing in his eyes shot heat straight up her spine.

"I'm beginning to thaw out already."

His grin grew wider.

She swallowed, dropped her gaze, and wiggled her polished toes.

"Stay still." The relaxed moment disappeared, and his face grew serious again. "You need to soak in a warm bath before you try to move your toes or your fingers. You don't want to damage the skin or underlying tissue."

She sucked in a breath. "A-a bath?" Her gaze darted around the room for signs of another occupant. The place appeared to be a typical ski home rental. A normal living room sat to the left, a normal kitchen to the right and a normal hallway in between. Generic, framed photographs decorated the walls and a few

trinkets lay scattered around. A map of the slopes hung above the fireplace mantel. No music played, no television set buzzed in the background, and the quiet stillness made the crackling fire in the fireplace sound unusually loud. Only one thing was missing—another occupant. If she did as he suggested and took a warm soak in the tub, not only would she be stranded in a blizzard with a stranger, but she would be in an extremely vulnerable position.

She swallowed. "I'll be OK."

"Yes, you will. Because," he paused as he took the boot off her other foot and removed her sock, "you are going in the tub."

She shook her head. "No. I'm not."

His head shot up and his eyes held a challenge in them. "The moment you walked through my door and under my roof, you became my responsibility. If you want to be careless, again, you'll have to do it after you leave here."

Irritation flared to life deep inside. She had gone through an exhausting, life-threatening ordeal, and now as her fingers and toes began to thaw, she had a burning pain clawing at her skin. "Are you suggesting I'm here because I was careless?" she snapped.

He didn't answer in words. His left eyebrow lifted and twitched with annoyance. He bent his head, took a deep breath in and let it out slowly, as if mentally counting to ten.

Pulling her foot from his grasp, Izzy stood, taking a step to distance herself from the man. Pain shot through her feet, making her stumble. He sprang up and scooped her into his strong arms, keeping her from falling. Even with the heavy layers of thermal underwear, ski pants, turtleneck and the thick coat she