
Let It Snow

by
Melanie Shawn

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Chapter 1

“Can I tell you a secret?” the busty redhead Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) whispered loudly over the sounds of the jukebox and people laughing, talking, and playing pool in JT’s Roadhouse. The bar was exceptionally crowded, especially for a Wednesday night. “I’m not wearing any panties.”

Jake wasn’t sure if he should clue Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) her in that half the bar knew that little “secret.” Several times when she’d bent over the pool table to Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) aim and shoot, she’d flashed a beaver shot. Telling her would probably be the right thing to do.

Nah.

If she were drunk, he would definitely clue her in and even make sure that she didn’t embarrass herself—any more than she had!—or get into any trouble. But she was as sober as could be. She had to know that she was putting on a show. Besides, his brother Eric was the cop, not him. Firemen didn’t *have* to arrest people for indecent exposure.

Not to mention, several guys from the station house were seated on the barstools that lined the

wood-paneled walls surrounding the pool tables and they were enjoying the view. So instead of commenting, Jake just casually chalked his cue as a devilish smile spread across his face.

He Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) knew that Carrie...or...Cassie...or...Candy or whatever her name was, thought that she would be going home with Jake tonight. She'd been dropping hints about seeing his new house since she'd challenged him to a game of pool. Jake wasn't sure how he was going to break it to her that she would not be getting the grand tour of his abode anytime soon. Jake wasn't going to be bringing her home to his condo, which he still lived Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) in—or to his new home, which he had not spent a single night in.

It's not that she wasn't attractive. Standing five foot six, she had gorgeous red hair that flowed all the Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) way down to her lower back, big brown eyes—that she'd been batting at him all night!—and curves that reminded him of a pinup model. And it's not that he had an issue with her exhibitionist tendencies. If she wanted to give him a preview of the goods, hey, more power to her. She actually fit Jake's criteria for a hook-up hottie to a tee.

But Jake still wasn't interested. Since the day he'd gotten the keys to his new home three months ago—the home he'd wanted since he was ten years old and came across it his first day as a paper boy—he hadn't been “entertaining” as much as he normally did.

Or Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) at all.

The truth was that he hadn't brought a woman to his *new* home since Lauren, his friend, a realtor who also happened to co-host *Home Sweet Vacation* Home, which showcased vacation homes of the rich and famous—had placed those two little keys into his hands.

“Your turn, Jakey,” the redhead purred suggestively as she ran Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) her fingers up and down her pool cue.

“Yeah, *Jakey*, it's your turn.” Levi, who not only owned JT's Roadhouse but was also one Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) of Jake's good friends, smiled broadly as he set down another long neck on the tall round Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) table in front of Jake.

Out of the corner of his eye, Jake noticed Little Miss Flash-A-Lot's eyes scan Levi from head to toe appreciatively. It didn't bother Jake at all that she seemed interested. In fact, it gave Jake an idea.

“Come here, sweetheart.” Jake lifted his hand, motioning for the redhead to step Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) closer. When she did, he asked, “Have you met Levi? He owns this place.”

A flirtatious twinkle appeared in her big brown eyes as she said, “No, I haven't. Hi, I'm Courtney. I moved here about a month ago.”

Courtney. Right! Jake knew it had been something with a C.

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Levi grinned down at her. “Nice to meet you, Courtney,” he said, his six-foot-four-inch frame towering over her. “Welcome to Hope Falls.”

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Courtney smiled seductively before coyly dipping her head. When she did, Levi glanced over at Jake with a questioning look in his eye. One that silently asked why Jake would be introducing this girl, who was obviously “a sure thing,” to Levi after he’d already put in time with her.

Jake shrugged in response. He didn’t have an answer for that. He just wasn’t interested.

Levi shook his head a little, smiling as he walked back to the full bar—not one empty seat. Jake noticed several people already trying to get Levi’s attention. When JT, Levi’s uncle, had owned the bar, he’d always had at least two people, if not three, working—even on weeknights. Levi bought the bar almost two years ago and, except for a busboy, had run it on the solo tip. Jake didn’t know how he did it.

“Jakey, it’s your turn,” Randy, the fire equipment mechanic, sing-songed in a high-pitched voice.

Looking down at the table, Jake assessed his next move. He could easily end the game in four shots and head home. When the objective of the evening was *not* to find someone to share a couple hours with between the sheets, hanging out at the same bar five nights a week got a little old. But since the alternative was going back to his condo, turning on Sports Center, and being alone, he’d decided that playing pool at JT’s was the way to go. The peepshow was Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) an added bonus.

Leaning over, he lined up his shot. Then, gripping the pool stick a little too high, he pulled back and hit the cue ball just to the left, banking the six off the side, not sinking it into the corner—a Let It Snow (A Hope Falls Novel Book 8) shot he could have made one-handed!

Courtney giggled and jumped up and down, celebrating the fact that Jake had missed the shot. All four of Jake’s fellow firefighters nodded their heads in thanks. Chris, the station’s engine driver, even mouthed the words, “Thank you.”

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